

Norfolk County Council

Date: Tuesday 20 February 2024

Time: 10 am

Venue: Council Chamber, County Hall, Martineau Lane,
Norwich NR1 2DH

Supplementary Agenda Three

5. Norfolk County Council Revenue and Capital Budget 2024-25 to 2027-28

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 - 1. Cllr Alexandra Kemp (Amendment 4) Page C25
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Date Agenda Published: 16 February 2024

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AMENDMENT 1

Liberal Democrat Group amendments to the Cabinet's proposed 2024-25 Budget

For Consideration at Full Council (20 February 2024)

Purpose of report

- 1) To present to Full Council proposed amendments from the Liberal Democrat Group to the budget recommended by Cabinet on 29 January 2024, with officers' technical comments on the impact to the budget.

Background

- 2) The Liberal Democrat amendment to the administration's proposed budget aims to alleviate the unfair burden placed upon the most vulnerable members of our county. Additionally, the following amendments are proposed in order to protect our vital social care sector and ensure that our residents are provided the best services available at a time of great need and pressure.
 - a) The Liberal Democrat Group have been vocal in their opposition to the reduction in the Minimum Income Guarantee (MIG) proposed by the administration. The group recognises the announcement was made before the £9.5m uplift by central government, however, this uplift should be used to reverse this 'saving' that disproportionately impacts our most vulnerable residents.
 - i) The Liberal Democrat Group is concerned that the reduction in MIG will cause a number of our vulnerable residents to fall through the cracks and therefore rely further on the council's services, rendering the original £1.2m proposed saving redundant.
 - b) The Liberal Democrat Group are concerned about the crisis facing the 'cost of giving'. Most recently, West Norfolk Carers, a charity which supported more than 4,000 people announced its closure after losing its funding from NCC.
 - i) The Liberal Democrat Group recognize the vital role played by unpaid carers in Norfolk, they're the bedrock of our social care sector and without them we would face immense uncertainty.
 - ii) The threat to these organisations and charities cannot go unchecked, the Liberal Democrat Group would therefore set up a Cost of Giving fund allowing unpaid carers and charities to apply for funds to help with their needs.
 - iii) Initially, £200,000 would be put into this pot. This amount will be reviewed in 2025/26 and will be adjusted accordingly. Any monies leftover would be passed over to the next year.
 - c) The Liberal Democrat Group has concerns around the position of

Norfolk's SEND service. Delays in producing and completing EHCPs for Norfolk's vulnerable children risks escalating further, and the current backlog is growing by the day. The council is spending £100,000s per year in the courts in tribunals against families of children with SEND.

- i) Our neighboring authority, Suffolk County Council, has had well documented troubles within its SEND service which has resulted in an external review and high level political and corporate resignations. It is vital that Norfolk do everything in its power to avoid such trouble, which can prove to be even costlier in the long term as a result of redundancy pay and consultancy costs.
 - ii) Central Government has indicated that the majority of the £9.5m uplift should be spend on Children's Services. The Liberal Democrat group believe that it is vital that the backlog is dealt with in order to ensure future EHCPs are turned around within the 20 week government suggested target.
 - iii) It is recognized by the group that specialist provision is not always immediately available, but this does not excuse the radio silence experienced by users of the service. The backlog in EHCPs is predominantly a staffing issue. The Liberal Democrat amendment would seek to alleviate this issue by making a portion of the £9.5m uplift available for the hiring of two extra EHCP Reviewing Officers focused exclusively on historic cases within the backlog.
- d) Alongside the £8.7m uplift in social care funding, Norfolk is also set to receive an additional £737,000 within the Rural Services Delivery Grant. Norfolk's geography means it has unfortunate vulnerabilities to flooding. Every year, we see flooding ruin the lives of our residents across the County. The council must ensure that the county is prepared for the next wave of floods, which will only worsen with the impact of climate change.
- i) In order to tackle this, the Liberal Democrat Group proposes to use a portion of the Rural Services Delivery grant to employ an additional Flood Risk Officer to help with the growing backlog in assessments.
- e) The Liberal Democrat group also sees this extra Rural Service Delivery Grant funding as an opportunity to fund an innovative pilot hub and spoke network.
- i) A hub and spoke transport network works by placing park and ride-style car parks in out of town locations across the county, allowing people to drive a few miles to their nearest hub which will take them to other towns across the county – not just Norwich. This networked approach would revolutionise Norfolk's public transport network into an efficient and affordable service, furthermore, it would connect Norfolk's rural communities and unlock the county's full potential.
 - ii) In the Liberal Democrat Group amendment, a pilot scheme for this project would be undertaken. If successful, this scheme would be expanded county-wide.

3) The proposals are set out below:

Liberal Democrat Group Budget Amendment Proposals 2024/25

Amendment 1

REVENUE

Ref	Proposal	2024-25 £m	2025-26 £m	2026-27 £m	2027-28 £m	Total £m
1	Remove saving proposal to reduce the Minimum Income Guarantee.	0.600	0.600	0.000	0.000	1.200
2	Employment of two additional EHCP Review Officers.	0.085	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.085
3	Employment of Flood Risk Officer	0.047	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.047
4	Cost of Giving Fund	0.200	0.000*	0.000*	0.000*	0.200
	Total	0.932	0.600	0.000	0.000	1.532

*To be reviewed in line with the 'background' information above.

Revenue proposals funded from the following areas:

- 4) Revenue proposals to be funded from additional funding announced at Final Settlement. In the event that this funding is one-off, 2025-26 pressure to be added to the budget gap and addressed as part of the budget process for that year.

Ref	Funding	2024-25 £m	2025-26 £m	2026-27 £m	2027-28 £m	Total £m
1	Social Care Funding Uplift	0.885	(0.885)	0.000	0.000	0.000
2	Rural Services Delivery Grant	0.047	(0.047)	0.000	0.000	0.000
	Total	0.932	(0.932)	0.000	0.000	0.000

CAPITAL AMENDMENTS / ADDITIONS

Ref	Capital Project / Proposal	2024-25 £m	2025-26 £m	2026-27 £m	2027-28 £m	Total £m
1	Pilot Rural Hub & Spoke Transport scheme	0.500	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.500
	Total	0.500	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.500

Revenue Implications of Capital Expenditure to be funded by:

- 5) If funded by Rural Services Delivery Grant (as revenue contribution to capital), there would be no borrowing requirement for 2024-25. Use of RSDG will allow some flexibility to meet either Revenue or Capital costs for this pilot scheme.

Section 151 Officer technical comments

- 6) The proposals in this amendment involve an alternative application of the additional funding announced at the final Settlement compared to the proposed approach set out in the Covering Report to Council. Consequential revisions to the Budget would be required to reflect this alternative proposed usage (i.e. if the amendment is approved, the Administration will need to adjust the proposed use of the additional funding set out in the Covering Report by an equivalent amount to that used in the amendment). In line with the planning assumption that additional social care grant and Rural Services Delivery Grant funding announced at the final Settlement is one-off, these proposals would give rise to a pressure of approximately £1.532m which would need to be added to the budget gap for 2025-26 and addressed as part of the budget process for that year.

Monitoring Officer technical comments

- 7) None.

Head of Paid Service technical comments

- 8) None.

Conclusion

- 9) Council is able to consider these proposed amendments.

AMENDMENT 2

Labour Group amendments to the Cabinet's proposed 2024-25 Budget

For Consideration at Full Council (20 February 2024)

Purpose of report

- 1) To present to Full Council proposed amendments from the Labour Group to the budget recommended by Cabinet on 29 January 2024, with officers' technical comments on the impact to the budget.

Background

- 2) The proposals are set out below:
 - **Capacity funding for review and development of a new organisational structure:** One-off funding to provide capacity / backfill to enable a fundamental organisational review to be undertaken in order to make recommendations and with the aim to implement a new organisational structure for 2025-26.
 - **Specialist accountancy advice to deliver key worker housing:** One-off funding to commission specialist support to undertake a feasibility study and progress to business case / investment prospectus for a scheme to ultimately deliver key worker housing in Norfolk.
 - **Funding to commission a market strategy for CS / ASS social care:** One-off funding to commission the development of a holistic Norfolk care market strategy to cover Adults and Children's social care and identify practical options and levers for the County Council to play a greater role in shaping the wider care market.
- 3) Further details of the ultimate strategic objectives to be achieved by this initial feasibility work are set out in the appended strategy.

REVENUE

Ref	Proposal	2024-25 £m	2025-26 £m	2026-27 £m	2027-28 £m	Total £m
1	Capacity funding for review and development of a new organisational structure	0.100	(0.100)	0.000	0.000	0.000
2	Specialist accountancy advice to deliver key worker housing	0.200	(0.200)	0.000	0.000	0.000
3	Funding to commission a market strategy for CS / ASS social care	0.200	(0.200)	0.000	0.000	0.000
	Total	0.500	(0.500)	0.000	0.000	0.000

Revenue proposals funded from the following areas:

- 4) Revenue proposals to be funded from additional Rural Services Delivery Grant funding announced at Final Settlement.

Ref	Funding	2024-25 £m	2025-26 £m	2026-27 £m	2027-28 £m	Total £m
1	Additional Rural Services Delivery Grant at final settlement	(0.500)	0.500	0.000	0.000	0.000
	Total	(0.500)	0.500	0.000	0.000	0.000

Section 151 Officer technical comments

- 5) The proposals in this amendment involve an alternative application of the additional funding announced at the final Settlement compared to the proposed approach set out in the Covering Report to Council. Consequential revisions to the Budget would be required to reflect this alternative proposed usage (i.e. if the amendment is approved, the Administration will need to adjust the proposed use of the additional funding set out in the Covering Report by an equivalent amount to that used in the amendment). The planning assumption is that additional Rural Services Delivery Grant funding announced at the final Settlement is one-off. As these proposals require one-year pilot funding, they would not give rise to a pressure for 2025-26. Any resulting proposals for 2025-26 would potentially need to be added to the budget gap for 2025-26 and addressed as part of the budget process for that year, to the extent this was not covered in the Business Case to be developed.

Monitoring Officer technical comments

- 6) None.

Head of Paid Service technical comments

- 7) None

Conclusion

- 8) Council is able to consider these proposed amendments.

APPENDIX 1: Medium term policy objectives to be achieved

Norfolk Labour group amendment to the 2024 – 25 budget

The Statement by the Secretary of State accompanying the final settlement details a productivity plan to be produced by July 2024. This provides us with the opportunity to propose a thorough transformation programme that would meet the government's objectives of developing and sharing on that timescale, better use of data to inform decisions, reduce wasteful spending on consultants and highlight barriers the government could remove.

At time of writing, the government has yet to identify the structure of the productivity plan they expect but that should not stop us planning for the changes we need.

Funding is proposed to be found from additional Rural Services Delivery Grant and/or general Services Grant at final settlement.

The proposal is multi-year so the implementation plans and budget impact can be planned across a multi-year productivity programme.

The proposal to council delegates decisions on virement between budgets to facilitate changes which would be reported to Cabinet as part of the regular finance reports.

The amendment requests the Chief Executive (CEO) to develop a robust and deliverable financial business case for each of the proposals to include a sustainable funding strategy for implementation from 2025-26, or earlier if possible. The options to be considered to include (but not be limited to):

- Flexible use of capital receipts to fund transformation;**
- Review of available reserves (business risk reserves or earmarked reserves where appropriate);**
- Invest to save options within the revenue budget; and**
- Any additional flexibilities or funding which may be offered by Government in future.**

1. Introduction

It is clear whichever government emerges after the next general election will not have the resources to immediately and fully undo the damage done by fourteen years of austerity and real terms funding cuts to local government. Even with a government committed to better and more secure funding we will still need to find better ways to spend the resources we have and drive value for money. The recent announcement from the current government of a productivity plan requirement is welcome. Although the council has been in a period of transformation it would be beneficial to have that properly set out, measured, evaluated and in a form that could be benchmarked with other councils. It also provides the trigger for the long overdue complete overhaul of how the council operates.

It is time for a full scale review of how the council works internally, how it works in partnership with others and commissions services, how we integrate services and make the customer/resident experience more effective and efficient, how we build on the assets and commitments in our communities to strengthen the sense of working together for Norfolk. That lead has to come from Norfolk County Council as the

strategic lead authority but requires a change of style, culture, values and behaviour to make it a success. The following proposals that form the Labour budget amendment for 2024-25 are encouraged by the recent government announcement.

That offers support to removing barriers five core values, and behaviours will drive the style and culture of the county council as the changes take hold:

1. Decisions should be evidenced by data, priorities informed by surveys and success measured by stories – qualitative lived experience must be properly respected and used to influence policy development.
2. Eliminating inequality resulting from geography, disparity in wealth, access to services and protected characteristics underpins the key outcome of improving and extending the quality of life for Norfolk residents.
3. We have no ambition to always do things on our own, but we do take responsibility for making sure our priorities are delivered. We will work in partnership with others that share our values and priorities enabling them to lead and develop their role and contribution accordingly including working to remove the barriers to joint and collaborative working. We will seek to remove barriers that prevent delegating decisions to partners where they can be more responsive to local needs.
4. We will improve how we listen, demonstrate how we have taken account of what we hear and adopt as a default willingness to change our proposals in response to the views of others.
5. We will respect differences and work collaboratively to find the best available solutions through innovation and use of technology whilst ensuring nobody is left behind because of lack of access to technology for whatever reason.

There are three further presumptions that underpin the proposals:

1. The impact on climate change will be assessed, measured, mitigated, eliminated and monitored as far as possible before any new policy is implemented within a developing county wide framework.
2. Value for money will be a key driver and needs to be defined and measured for every change against what we are trying to achieve, not just how much it costs.
3. Reserves are not to be used to balance the books for short term day to day spending on services. Therefore, all changes must be financed from within the existing envelope with virement between budgets where necessary. Reserves can be used only for spend to save and one-off costs associated with changes unless for a specific urgent reason.

2. Proposed changes to how the council operates

As part of this year's Norfolk County Council budget, Labour is proposing core changes in the culture and organization of the council. We have made it clear we support strategic change and the Strategic Review does not go far enough, is not ambitious enough, does not drive value for money, reflect the challenges the county faces or recognise the important contribution the people of Norfolk can bring. It has not been set in the context of the challenges we are facing – climate, care and not just finances.

Our priorities would not be the same as those of the current administration. We cannot invent money although we would spend it differently. What cannot be in doubt is there is not enough money for the needs and challenges so we need to ensure we change the council to get best value for the money we have, and embed a culture of partnership and productivity into whatever policy is being pursued.

These changes presuppose virement between budget heads depending on the detail and speed of implementation. Other than where specified, and subject to business case or spend to save justification, we expect these proposals to be delivered within the existing budget envelope.

2.1 Addressing the Care Crisis in Norfolk

Different parties may not agree on the words to describe the condition of care provision in the county but we do all agree it can't go on like this. Demand outstrips our capacity to deliver increasing demand. There is common accord that promoting and maintaining independence is the choice of most people in need of care, and a better societal and financial option.

The government has consistently failed to deliver a long-term solution, the money to meet increasing demographic trends and long-term funding at any level in order to enable us to plan. A general election in 2024 will deliver a new government to confront the growing crisis. Whatever government is returned, the solution will take time to develop and deliver. Whatever the shape of that solution, we must assume Norfolk County Council will be at the heart of implementing it. Whether it continues to be delivered as a county council responsibility, through a National Care Service, or through a new or hybrid organization, we will be at the centre of events.

We can also reasonably expect that if funding increases it will not be sufficient to put care delivery on a sustainable footing without a fundamental rethink of the care 'market'. There are flaws in the current care market that lead to extra avoidable costs. Soaring costs of care are becoming unaffordable while at the same time there are workforce shortages. It cannot be right that we contract with more than 400 care providers with associated management costs, transaction costs, quality assurance costs, and profits. We know we are being overcharged by equity fund owners for some care. There are companies in the Norfolk care market about which we are not confident in their resilience, or the care they provide. We would rather they weren't there but capacity in the market leaves us little choice but to continue to support them.

We continue to pour money into care to prop up a flawed and broken market that is inefficient, unable to meet our growing needs, and faces a workforce crisis that will simply increase costs if we are to enable providers to recruit and retain staff.

There has to be a better way.

2.2 Unified Directorate of Care Delivery

At the outset let us be clear that this is not a short-term fix. It is a medium- and long-term reconfiguration of care services intended to get best value for the provision of quality services, build a larger, stable, well qualified and well rewarded workforce, and enable NCC to set and ensure high standards. The county council will have to live within the budget it has. This proposal is about getting the best value for money by reducing unnecessary costs, improving value for money and tackling underlying problems.

In approving this proposal, we are also asking council to request the CEO to develop the delivery, structures and timetable for Cabinet's approval quickly so a start can be made. This will include how best to allocate the legal requirements for a Director of Children's Services and Director of Adult Services. We have been advised to assume implementation of changes would not take place until 2025-26 financial year. However,

we would prefer to see earlier steps towards implementation and where necessary existing resources repurposed in year to enable the benefits to accrue sooner.

These are the key points:

1. Create a unified care directorate responsible for all care services for all age groups and abilities delivered directly, in partnership or commissioned from a third party including wholly owned companies.
2. Through Norse Care, begin to buy out or takeover care providers looking to exit the market and bring them into Norse Care and repurpose any buildings in accordance with Note 1.
3. Initiate a long-term programme of reprovion and expansion through wholly owned companies to ensure the supply of high-quality accommodation for all types of supported and residential care.
4. Create a Norfolk Care Workforce standard to provide for:
 - a. Common standards of training and recognition so that carers can move between care settings easily at all levels from front line care to care management.
 - b. Career development structures that are consistent between employers.
 - c. Consistent pay and conditions including union recognition.
 - d. Care workers bank/agency arrangement based on the consistent training and common standards to enable flexibility for care staff between employers and eliminating excessive agency fees.
5. Create a key worker housing scheme for care staff in Norfolk predominantly in those areas of the county where high housing costs makes it difficult for lower paid staff and where consequently there is a shortage of care staff – see 2.3 *Key Worker Housing* below.

Note 1 – care companies taken over may well have built assets that are not fit for purpose, short life or not required in the location they are in. Part of this proposal includes investment in reprovion by Norse Care. The circumstances would be assessed on a case-by-case basis, but surplus property provides opportunities for sale to reinvest in reprovion, upgrade and reuse for alternative types of care, or adding to the portfolio for key worker housing. We would like to explore opportunities for wholly owned companies in order to keep control and the economic benefits as local as possible.

2.3 Key Worker Housing

Staff shortages in high demand areas is exacerbated by the lack of housing those on lower pay can afford. Increasing pay does not always help to keep up with escalating housing costs despite being a good thing in itself. Staff shortages lead to the use of agency staff where fees can be excessive. Agency staff will not have the same loyalty or knowledge of those they care for and there is a lack of consistency. We propose the creation of a workforce framework as set out in 2.2.4 above but that will not tackle the root cause. Key worker housing will.

The proposal is to create a vehicle that will buy progressively into the market, new build off plan (especially from Repton), or as in Note 1, take on surplus buildings from acquisitions to convert into residential accommodation, to let at a level equivalent to a social rent or appropriate proportion of their earnings to care workers to support the consistent availability of care staff in areas they are most needed.

We propose funding this proposal through a partnership with pension funds. We expect

there could be interest for a plan based on a minimum investment of £100-150m which would equate to 500-600 dwellings of various sizes acquired progressively. We would require one of the big accountancy firms with specialist knowledge not available within the council, to design a package to take to market to the pension funds. Preliminary indications are that they would be interested because:

1. It is an investment at scale and scalable in the future.
2. The client is blue chip public sector.
3. The investment is in domestic property that can't relocate and is likely to increase in value.
4. There is a long-term stable, low risk return that meets the requirements of pension funds.
5. The beneficiaries are potentially those who look after people in receipt of pensions.
6. It is an ethical alternative for those looking to switch out of investments that are no longer consistent with the values of their members.

Potential benefits for Norfolk County Council are:

- a. Increased attractiveness of care jobs when linked to fair cost housing – aids recruitment and retention in the sector and high demand areas.
- b. Mitigates against pressures on workforce pay by reducing cost of living pressures caused by the housing market.
- c. Key working housing provided at no cost to Norfolk County Council.
- d. Housing provided would be leased from the delivery investment vehicle so not subject to right to buy.
- e. Secures local homes for local residents and workers as those living in them are likely to be working nearby.
- f. Brings substantial external investment into an important sector of the Norfolk economy.
- g. Offers potential business opportunities for wholly owned companies and other local businesses in building work, maintenance and domestic goods supply chain.
- h. Reduced travel to work with some impact on emissions.

We are recommending to council to agree to the proposals set out in 2.2 above:

- 1) Create a unified care directorate responsible for all care services delivered directly, in partnership or commissioned from a third party including wholly owned companies, for all age groups and abilities.***
- 2) Through Norse Care begin to buy out or takeover care providers looking to exit the market and bring them into Norse Care and repurpose any buildings***
- 3) Initiate a long-term programme of reprovion and expansion through wholly owned companies to ensure the supply of high-quality accommodation for all types of supported and residential care.***
- 4) Create a Norfolk Care Workforce standard.***
- 5) Create a key worker housing scheme for care staff in Norfolk.***

3. Consequential impact on other areas of the council

The creation of a care directorate on this model provides opportunities to restructure the rest of the council. Consistent with the values outlined, we propose Council ask the CEO to prepare proposals based on the following.

3.1 Directorate of Protection, Prevention and Support

The new directorate of Prevention, Protection and Support brings together all of the protection and support offered by the county council and provides opportunities to work in conjunction with partners across health, other councils and the voluntary sector to properly assess the needs of those seeking help and organise support without their having to retell their story, risk duplication of provision or missing out support they should have.

This further develops the potential for shared use of data and AI for working across partners to identify and meet needs sooner to aid prevention and early intervention representing the government's wish to find 'Opportunities to take advantage of advances in technology and make better use of data to inform decision making and service design.'

This builds on existing work within the council and moves it to becoming a fundamental building block. Although there have been examples of closer working and we gained experience through the single point of contact during the pandemic we are proposing a shift towards breaking down the boundaries and providing a universal front door service that will ensure those presenting with problems are helped. This is a further development of early intervention. Perceived difficulty in access, presenting with one problem when in fact there may be multiple problems or simply not seeking help until matters have escalated adds to the complexity, difficulty and cost of solutions. Working in partnership encounters barriers that government seems to be saying they will help overcome and we should seek to make use of that by reducing and removing restrictions on our ability to delegate and make joint decisions.

Existing social care assessment and support would be amalgamated to provide an all age all need service. This will provide a more seamless service with less transition and the ability for needs to be addressed in a longer-term context. Transitions are often the most difficult events so an all through service with links to partners will help reduce problems and cost.

There will be opportunities working alongside the new Public Health and Community Directorate – see 3.2 for colocation in hubs and utilising a remodeled mobile library service to innovate services including use of technology.

Distinguishing delivery of care from Protection, Prevention and Support offers the opportunity to build a wide multi agency universal gateway. We believe it will prove cost effective once operational and provide a channel for cross agency working to take advantage of data driven decision making and advances in technology. Nonetheless it needs careful design both internally and with partners and will need to be trialed before being rolled out. There will be issues of geographically based inequality and access that will require tailored solutions.

As a result we are asking council to:

- 6) Agree to request the CEO to prepare a report on the feasibility of creating a Directorate of Prevention, Protection and Support taking account of resources, views of partners and potential timescale to bring to Cabinet via Select Committees by autumn in time for budget preparation for 2025-26.***

3.2 Directorate of Public Health and Community

The Covid pandemic showed us how powerful our communities can be when there is a sense of purpose. In some parts of the country they have maintained and harnessed that spirit. Norfolk has not realised the full potential we saw during that period. This proposal reminds us that local government was founded on the public health principles of keeping communities healthy, thereby extending the quality and length of our lives.

Libraries are increasingly being used as a source of information and access to advice. Post pandemic their use to distribute winter support and become warm spaces has developed. It now makes sense to take the further step and recognise libraries and other community support functions are an important part of the public health mission to tackle inequality and support community resilience by formalising and developing that role.

Working with partner organisations and agencies will open the door to more local involvement of towns and parishes, voluntary and community groups and volunteers to add value and get better value for money from what council spends. Funding priorities informed by expert local opinion will help target the right priorities and eliminate duplication and waste.

It would provide opportunities to repurpose and expand the mobile library service. Whilst keeping their traditional role the service could be expanded to take for example advice services, health checks, banking services, and IT support into rural areas. This would be a further opportunity to reduce rural isolation caused by a lack of access to services, identify issues for people and avoid problems that would later become a draw on council resources and the quality of life for individuals and communities in more remote areas.

This amendment proposes the transfer of community development and libraries to a new Public Health and Communities Directorate. Whilst the proposal is for that to happen, there are options for other functions to be part of this new directorate and identify how the mobile library service can be repurposed. This will need a business plan to show the impact of any expansion to the service. We would like members to have a say in how that might develop and for officers to present options to select committees or cross select committee task and finish groups to consider those options in conjunction with external partners. In particular this could have resonance with town and parish councils so we would like to see their involvement throughout.

We are asking council to:

- 7) Agree to the creation in principle of a Public Health and Community directorate as outlined in 3.2 with the configuration designed in conjunction with interest groups and partners and request the CEO to draw up an implementation plan.***
- 8) Request the CEO to develop a business case for the expansion of the mobile library service to provide services to rural communities and those isolated by lack of access to services.***

3.3 Directorate of Education and Learning - Lifelong Learning

With the reconfiguration of care and social work services together with the reduced role for council since MATs were created, there is an opportunity to create an all through education service. Eventually Labour councillors would like to see the return of children's centres in some form and the reestablishment of a full youth service and careers service. We may not have the resources to achieve that at the moment, but it

should be an ambition.

It is unlikely if future that many will have the same career throughout their working life that we provide every opportunity for them to learn, adapt, get advice, requalify and are supported in their lifelong learning journey. Even those who don't change careers will face similar challenges as the work environment changes.

The learning journey begins at home and continues through preschool and school. It is influenced by the needs of the child and family circumstances. As we have responsibility for the quality of many aspects of young people's upbringing and education it makes sense to set that in the context of providing support and a pathway for their development into work and later life, particularly as we can see the speed and nature of the world of work will change rapidly. We are engaged in some youth provision, have an advanced adult education service. Apprenticeships, and services such as museums and records are an important learning resource.

There is a clear significance for the economy as it will be a way for people to become and remain economically active and confident. We propose bringing together adult education, apprenticeships, museums service, records and other appropriate services to form a new Lifelong Learning Directorate.

Although learning is crucial to the economic wellbeing of the individual and economy it is also an important component of leisure, arts, community activity, self-development and wellbeing. Learning for its own sake should be valued.

This proposal creates a pathway by bringing together all those elements of council activity that have an education element into one service. The exception is libraries, but the education aspects of libraries can be matrixed into this new structure as there are clear community links. There are opportunities to work with partner organisations. We would like to see them included in the pathway development. There are inequalities across the county in provision and access because of the rural nature of the county and levels of deprivation that should be addressed in the delivery of this coordinated service.

This proposal should be cost neutral but the development of proposals is funded through the request to the CEO to bring forward. If the devolution deal is confirmed and adult education is fully devolved to the county that would form a core for this proposal. That therefore makes it timely to prepare the ground for the devolution deal provisions in this area but nonetheless the underlying need for a pathway for lifelong learning to meet the requirements of the future needs to be addressed in a value for money and cost-effective way.

We recommend council to:

- 9) Agree in principle to create a new Lifelong Learning directorate to bring together those elements of children's services, adult education, apprenticeships, records, museums and other service including collaboration with the library services and involving partners to create a service that supports lifelong learning reflecting the demands and challenges of the future.***

Ask the CEO to draw up an implementation plan.

3.4 Directorate of Productivity, Efficiency and Performance

We welcome the Secretary of State's intention to introduce productivity plans. Labour are proposing a shift towards a culture of improved productivity and performance by creating a centralised driver that will embed resources into our own organisation rather than buy in expensive consultants, and set integrated organisational and cultural standards for performance, measurement and productivity.

We are proposing the consolidation and strengthening of all the productivity, performance, risk and efficiency work of the council into one directorate. With oversight of the rest of the work of the council under the direction of the CEO to ensure productivity is maximised against clear measures and targets. We are used, perhaps too used, to judging on financial cost benefit when other benefits like impact on environment, climate change, community impact, health outcomes and productivity are given a lesser priority. Social value and value for money are as important as cost and should be integrated much more measurably, explicitly and in targeted ways so they can be reported on and scrutinised by members and form the basis of future policy development.

We expect this may initially bring an additional cost as we are expecting strengthening resources to help deliver our climate and environmental policies and drive productivity. However this should be a spend to save proposal that will deliver savings by embedding a new cultural norm in the organisation. It will also avoid the need to engage consultants to do a job that we should have internal capacity to do.

We have included risk and audit though could see the argument for audit to remain under the Director of Finance although we would support an independent chair of the Audit Committee in line with CIPFA guidance and best practice elsewhere. Also included are IT as we view developments in technology as crucial to productivity and performance and a core tool. The inclusion of Human Resources recognises the greatest asset of the council will always be its staff so any change must have the staff as a central consideration.

We recommend to council to:

- 10) Agree the establishment of a combined Directorate of Efficiency, Performance and Productivity and request the CEO to bring forward an implementation plan after considering the breadth of functions it would be appropriate to include.***

3.5 Other departments

For the moment we are not proposing further changes to other functions although clearly proposals on this scale will result in consequential changes. We expect the CEO will as a matter of course consider the consequential impacts and include those in the implementation plans this amendment includes.

A new economic strategy and revisions to transport policies locally or as a result of changes in government policy are expected and we support a full review being undertaken when as soon as a policy direction becomes clear based on the same principles. Other functions of the council like Democratic Services will be reviewed as part of considerations around governance and the County Deal so have been excluded from this proposal. The County Deal is primarily focused on the economy and development. The underlying values, culture and behaviours should apply to the application of the county deal as it is implemented.

Summary of Labour group proposal

To approve the revenue allocations as set out in the table amounting to £500k in order to enable the CEO to develop a robust and deliverable financial business case for each of the proposals to include a sustainable funding strategy for implementation from 2025-26, or earlier if possible.

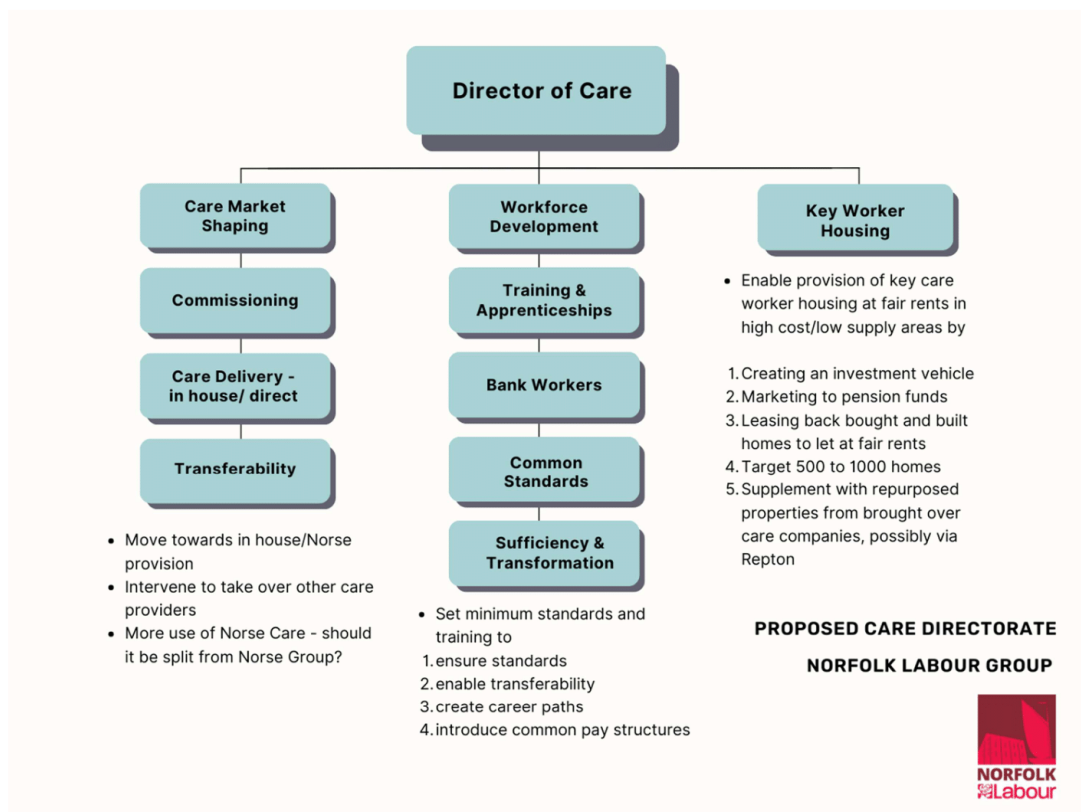
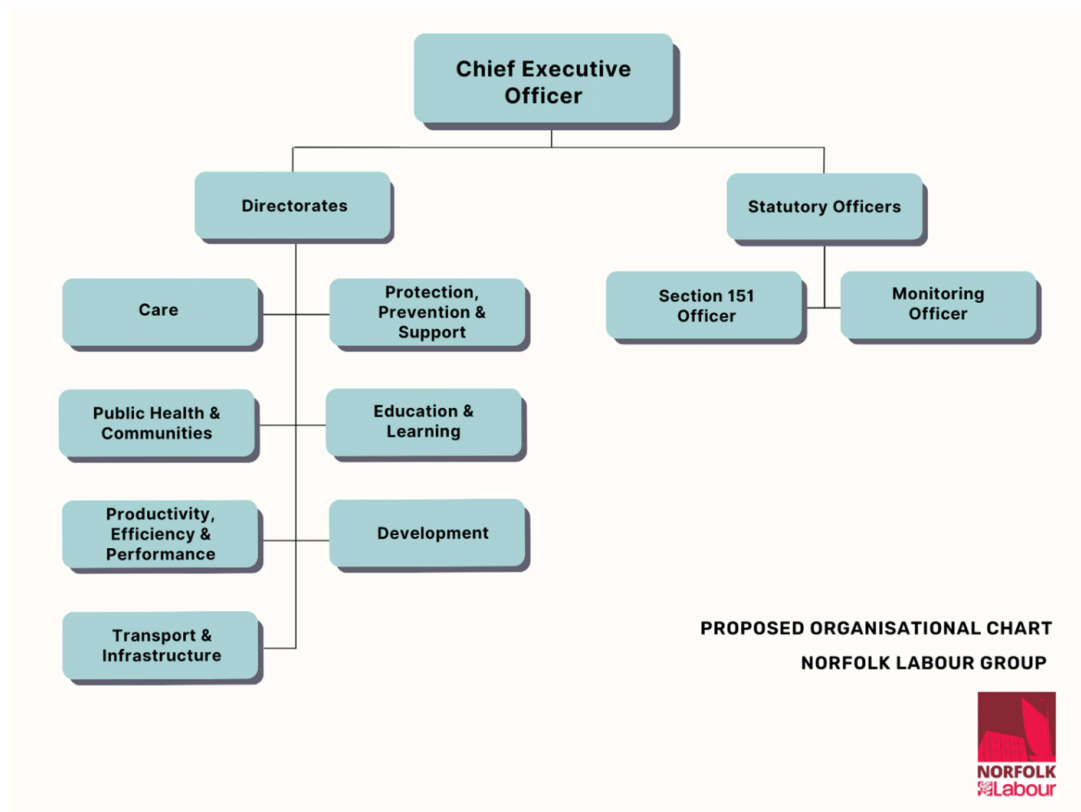
The options to be considered to include (but not be limited to):

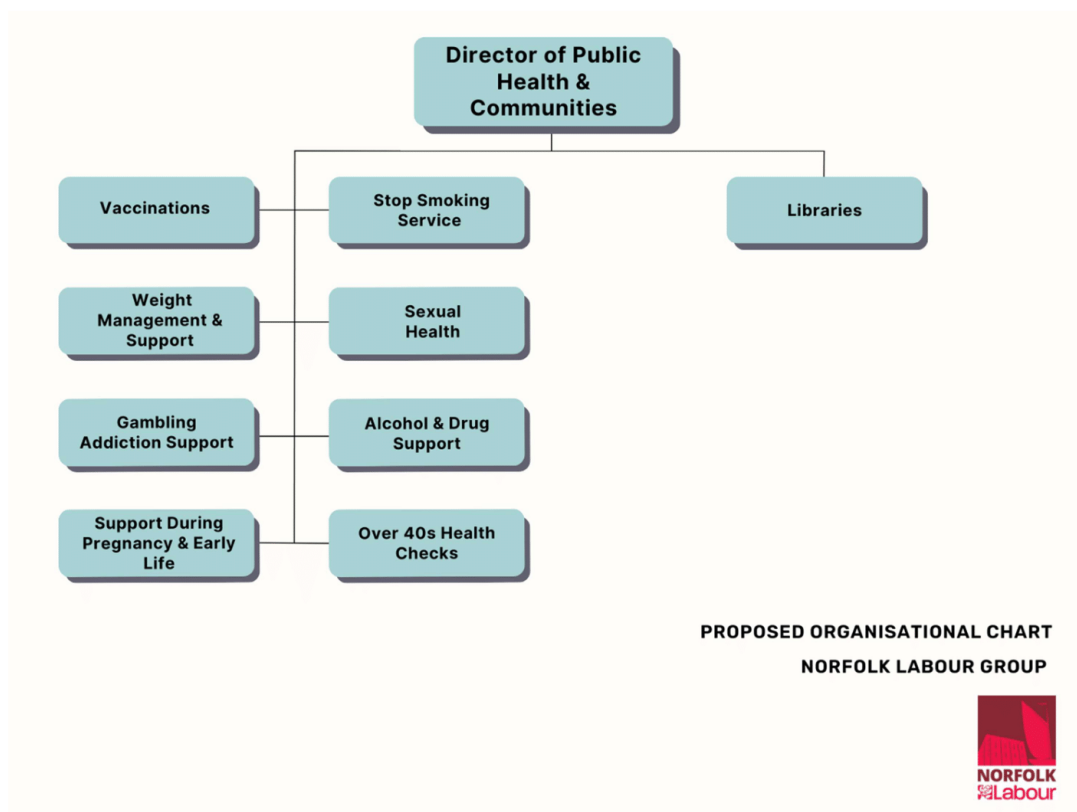
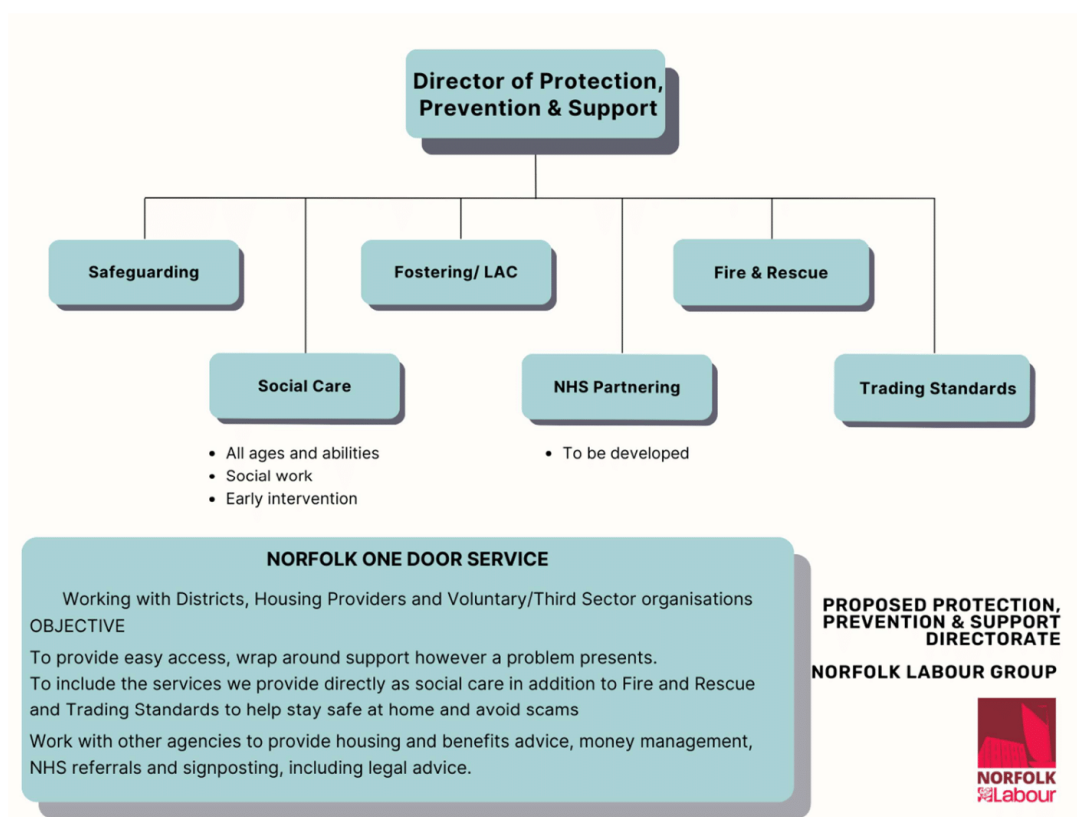
- **Flexible use of capital receipts to fund transformation;**
- **Review of available reserves (business risk reserves or earmarked reserves where appropriate);**
- **Invest to save options within the revenue budget; and**
- **Any additional flexibilities or funding which may be offered by Government in future.**

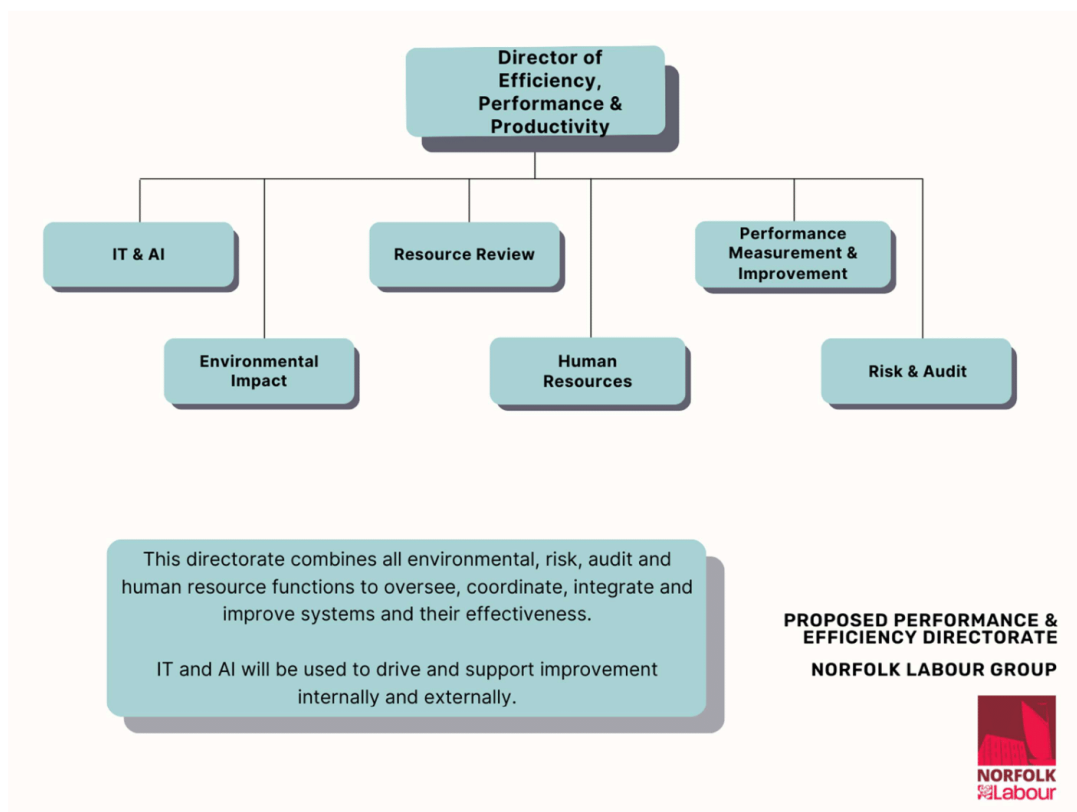
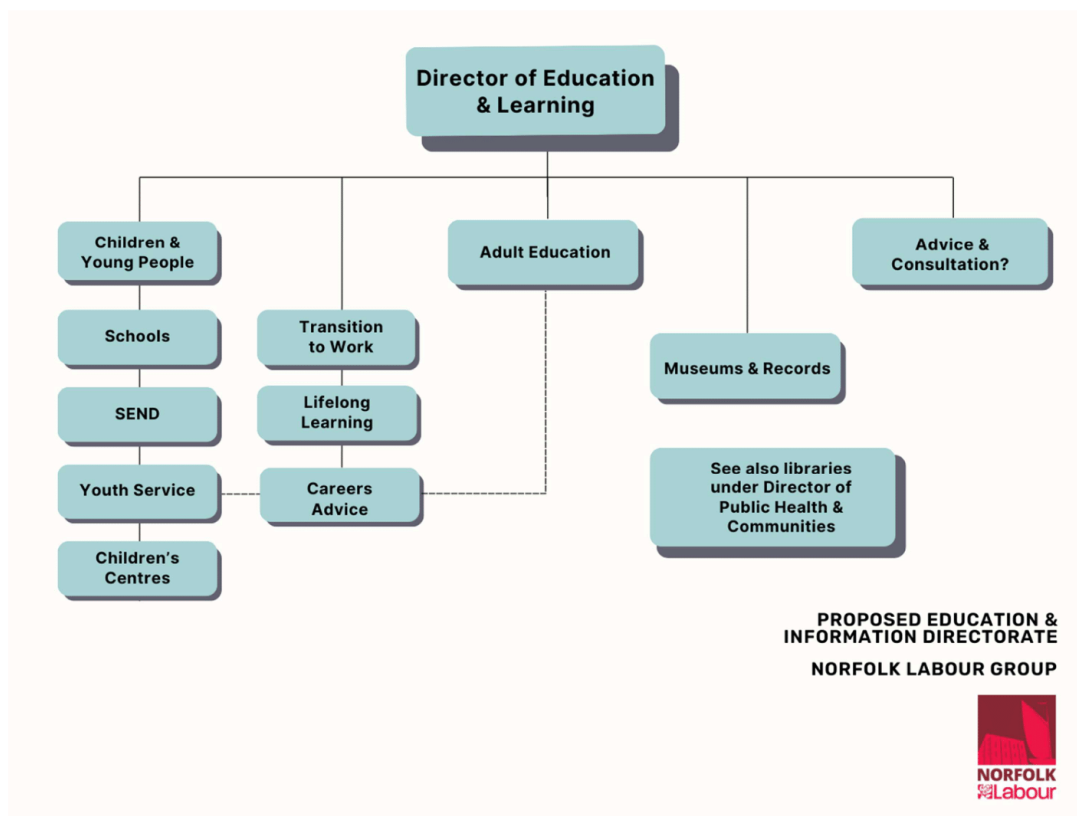
to

- 1) **Create a unified care directorate responsible for all care services delivered directly, in partnership or commissioned from a third party including wholly owned companies, for all age groups and abilities.**
- 2) **Through Norse Care begin to buy out or takeover care providers looking to exit the market and bring them into Norse Care and repurpose any buildings**
- 3) **Initiate a long-term programme of reprovision and expansion through wholly owned companies to ensure the supply of high-quality accommodation for all types of supported and residential care.**
- 4) **Create a Norfolk Care Workforce standard.**
- 5) **Create a key worker housing scheme for care staff in Norfolk.**
- 6) **Request the CEO to prepare a report on the feasibility of creating a Directorate of Prevention, Protection and Support taking account of resources, views of partners and potential timescale to bring to cabinet via select committees by autumn in time for budget preparation for 2025-26**
- 7) **Create a Public Health and Community directorate on the principles outlined in 3.2 with the configuration designed in conjunction with interest groups and partners.**
- 8) **Request the CEO to develop a business case for the expansion of the mobile library service to provide services to rural communities and those isolated by lack of access to services.**
- 9) **Create a new Lifelong Learning directorate to bring together those elements of children's services, adult education, apprenticeships, records, museums and other service including collaboration with the library services and involving partners to create a service that supports lifelong learning reflecting the demands and challenges of the future.**
- 10) **Establish a combined Directorate of Efficiency, Performance and Productivity**

APPENDIX 2: Potential Structure Charts following Review







AMENDMENT 3

Green Group amendments to the Cabinet's proposed 2024-25 Budget

For Consideration at Full Council (20 February 2024)

Purpose of report

- 1) To present to Full Council proposed amendments from the Green Group to the budget recommended by Cabinet on 29 January 2024, with officers' technical comments on the impact to the budget.

Background

- 2) The proposals are set out below:
 - **Breakfast clubs:** Norfolk has one of the worst malnutrition rates in the country. The county council can fund breakfast clubs in key schools to ensure that children are not going into school hungry.
 - **On-demand bus services:** Norfolk's economic attainment is held back by poor public transport links. Despite welcome improvements, some rural parts of Norfolk still lack buses, or have a very limited service that does not meet the needs of vulnerable, low-waged and elderly populations with no access to a car. A flexi-bus service can address these isolated needs efficiently for a relatively affordable subsidy.
 - **Adult Social Care non-residential charging policy (including MIG):** Removal of the proposed saving which is subject to consultation and final decisions during 2024-25.

Green Group Budget Amendment Proposals 2024/25

Amendment 3

REVENUE

Ref	Proposal	2024-25 £m	2025-26 £m	2026-27 £m	2027-28 £m	Total £m
1	Breakfast clubs	1.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	1.000
2	On-demand bus services	0.500	0.500	0.000	0.000	1.000
3	Removal of proposed saving from changing Adult Social Care non-residential charging policy (including MIG)	0.600	0.600	0.000	0.000	1.200
	Total	2.100	1.100	0.000	0.000	3.200

Revenue proposals funded from the following areas:

- **Additional funding at Final Settlement:** Social Care grant

funding to be applied in 2024-25 to fund Breakfast clubs proposal and removal of proposal relating to ASC non-residential charging policy. Additional Rural Services Delivery Grant to fund expansion of on-demand bus services.

2025-26 pressures to be funded by additional income from the following sources:

- **ANPR cameras:** These could bring in revenue via additional enforcement of traffic violations.
- **Workplace parking levy:** This could be applied in the greater Norwich area and bring in approximately £1m to fund improved access via public transport. It would build on the success of the Workplace Parking Levy scheme in Nottingham, which has generated over £90m in revenue in 10 years, while improving air quality and reducing carbon emissions from transport.
- **County farms rent:** Rent from the agricultural land purchased with a view to creating Long Stratton station and associated car park. Rent is calculated on the assumption that this land would be tenanted from 2025 for five years.

Ref	Funding	2024-25 £m	2025-26 £m	2026-27 £m	2027-28 £m	Total £m
1	Additional social care funding at final settlement	(1.600)	1.600	0.000	0.000	0.000
2	Additional Rural Services Delivery Grant at final settlement	(0.500)	0.500	0.000	0.000	0.000
3	ANPR cameras / workplace parking levy / County Farms rent	0.000	(1.100)	0.000	0.000	(1.100)
	Total	(2.100)	1.000	0.000	0.000	(1.100)

CAPITAL AMENDMENTS / ADDITIONS

ANPR cameras These would enable the council to implement school streets programmes and support opening of streets to pedestrians and businesses in Norwich and other urban areas. Enforcement against traffic offences would be facilitated, which could bring in revenue for the council.

Affordable energy seed funding This funding pot could be accessed via bids from district councils, businesses, community groups and training providers in Norfolk to help build capacity and deliver insulation and renewable energy for Norfolk homes (retrofitting). This would help reduce energy bills and build the foundations for Norfolk's greener economy.

Purchase of land for Long Stratton station and Hethersett parkway station There is land available currently to purchase on both sides of the railway where Railfuture recommends the revival of the former Fornsett station, to provide access to the main line railway for many residents of

growing parishes in South Norfolk. Purchasing this (currently agricultural) land, and adding it to the County Farms portfolio in the short term, would be an investment towards decarbonising and modal shift of our transport system. A similar pot of money could be used to make an advance purchase of relevant land for a Hethersett/Cringleford/Research Park station on the Cambridge line. £1.25m for each site. As County Farms these would yield an annual revenue from the year after purchase.

Ref	Capital Project / Proposal	2024-25 £m	2025-26 £m	2026-27 £m	2027-28 £m	Total £m
1	ANPR cameras	0.000	1.000	0.000	0.000	1.000
2	Affordable energy seed funding	0.000	2.500	0.000	0.000	2.500
3	Land adjacent to the railway lines	0.000	1.250	1.250	0.000	2.500
	Total	0.000	4.750	1.250	0.000	6.000

Revenue Implications of Capital Expenditure to be funded by:

- 3) Interest costs in 2024-25 would be £nil, with proposals 2 and 3 to be funded via capital funding arising from the County Deal in 2025-26. The cost of borrowing to fund proposal 1 to be incorporated into the 2025-26 budget process.

Section 151 Officer technical comments

- 4) The proposals in this amendment involve an alternative application of the additional funding announced at the final Settlement compared to the proposed approach set out in the Covering Report to Council. Consequential revisions to the Budget would be required to reflect this alternative proposed usage (i.e. if the amendment is approved, the Administration will need to adjust the proposed use of the additional funding set out in the Covering Report by an equivalent amount to that used in the amendment). In line with the planning assumption that additional social care grant and Rural Services Delivery Grant funding announced at the final Settlement is one-off, these proposals would give rise to a pressure of approximately £2.100m which would need to be added to the budget gap for 2025-26 and addressed as part of the budget process for that year.

Monitoring Officer technical comments

- 5) None.

Head of Paid Service technical comments

- 6) None, although it is to be noted that ANPR camera income would be ringfenced – either to cover running costs, or to support wider transport delivery.

Conclusion

- 7) Council is able to consider these proposed amendments.

AMENDMENT 4

Individual Member amendments to the Cabinet's proposed 2024-25 Budget – Cllr Alexandra Kemp

For Consideration at Full Council (20 February 2024)

Purpose of report

- 1) To present to Full Council proposed amendments from the Non-Aligned Member to the budget recommended by Cabinet on 29 January 2024, with officers' technical comments on the impact to the budget.

Background

- 2) **This Amendment is really necessary to fulfill the County's Objective of Caring for Our Communities.**
- 3) West Norfolk Carers is the only charity based in West Norfolk that provides services to Carers including Young Carers, including hospital discharge and adaptations, Carer and Dementia Support Groups, Young Carer Groups and events, work in schools with Young Carers and with Home-Educated Young Carers and benefits advice. As such, West Norfolk Carers' work cuts across Children's and Adults' Services and provides County priorities of Early Help, Prevention and Support for Carers.
- 4) West Norfolk Carers is highly cost-effective and has run on a shoestring for 23 years, with one-off grant funding streams but no core funding but is now set to close next month (end of March) following the recent withdrawal of funding from Carers-Matter/ Voluntary Norfolk the distributors of County Council funding.
- 5) West Norfolk Carers provides its services much cheaper than the public sector could. Were it to close, there would be an ongoing cost back to the Council and the NHS, including Mental Health services, and the heightened risk of more disabled resident entering full-time residential care sooner, when Carers can no longer access the level of personalized support they now can from West Norfolk Carers.
- 6) West Norfolk Carers has 4,000 carers on its books and provides active support to 2,500 local carers, with just 9 members of staff, on a budget of £240,000 per annum.
- 7) West Norfolk Carers works with the local NHS and Borough Council and Adult Social Services; the Queen Elizabeth Hospital and the Borough Council have expressed concern about the great gaping hole that will be left in West Norfolk, if West Norfolk Carers closes.
- 8) West Norfolk Carers also provides a bridge-building function, where relationships have broken down between Carers and the NHS or

Council. Voluntary Norfolk/Carers Matters (who are based elsewhere in the County) have said they are unable to provide this highly personalized level of service.

- 9) In view of the current challenging economic environment for carers charities, and the strategic fit with Council priorities for vulnerable adults and children, it is proposed that NCC will provide core funding going forward for West Norfolk Carers.
- 10) The proposals are set out below:
 - **Carers West Norfolk:** An amendment to provide core revenue funding of £100,000 recurring to establish a budget contribution to be made for Carers' Services in West Norfolk for a locally-based charity.

Budget proposals to fund Carer's Services in West Norfolk

Cllr Kemp Budget Amendment Proposals 2024/25

Amendment 4

REVENUE

Ref	Proposal	2024-25 £m	2025-26 £m	2026-27 £m	2027-28 £m	Total £m
1	Funding for Carers' Services in West Norfolk	0.100	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.100
	Total	0.100	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.100

Revenue proposals funded from the following areas:

- 11) Revenue proposal to be funded from additional social care grant funding announced at Final Settlement. In the event that this funding is one-off, 2025-26 pressure to be added to the budget gap and addressed as part of the budget process for that year.

Ref	Funding	2024-25 £m	2025-26 £m	2026-27 £m	2027-28 £m	Total £m
1	Additional social care funding announced at final settlement	(0.100)	0.100	0.000	0.000	0.000
	Total	(0.100)	0.100	0.000	0.000	0.000

Section 151 Officer technical comments

- 12) The proposals in this amendment involve an alternative application of the additional funding announced at the final Settlement compared to the proposed approach set out in the Covering Report to Council. Consequential revisions to the Budget would be required to reflect this alternative proposed usage (i.e. if the amendment is approved, the Administration will need to adjust the proposed use of the additional

funding set out in the Covering Report by an equivalent amount to that used in the amendment). In line with the planning assumption that additional social care grant funding announced at the final Settlement is one-off, this proposal would give rise to a pressure of approximately £0.100m which would need to be added to the budget gap for 2025-26 and addressed as part of the budget process for that year.

Monitoring Officer technical comments

13) None.

Head of Paid Service technical comments

14) None.

Conclusion

15) Council is able to consider these proposed amendments.

AMENDMENT 5

Individual Member amendments to the Cabinet's proposed 2024-25 Budget – Cllr Maxine Webb

For Consideration at Full Council (20 February 2024)

Purpose of report

- 1) To present to Full Council proposed amendments from the Non-Aligned Member to the budget recommended by Cabinet on 29 January 2024, with officers' technical comments on the impact to the budget.

Background

- 2) These budget amendments seek to begin to redress some areas of inequality for Norfolk's children and young people, adults living with a disability and those who care for them.
- 3) The proposals are set out below:
 - **Changes to the Minimum Income Guarantee (MIG):**
 - Remove MIG saving proposal permanently.
 - Increase the MIG by £10 p/w.
 - **Community short breaks:** Increase the budget to provide further access / additional funding for community short breaks.
 - **Children's Services advocacy – Legal costs:** Shift resources on an invest to save basis from spend on SEND tribunal legal costs to pilot a number of new, specific officer roles which will identify and work with families to resolve disputes over appealable sections in Education, Health and Care Plans. Co-produce project with families with lived experience of SEND Tribunal, pilot for two years and evaluate impact.
 - **Support for working carers within the NCC workforce:** Support for working carers (defined for the purposes of this policy as those who provide care to a **member of their household** who is in receipt of attendance allowance, medium higher rate Disability Living Allowance or Enhanced Daily Living Rate of PIP) through the provision of an additional 5 days of paid leave per year (pro rata for part time).
 - **Exam entry fees for home educated pupils:** Fund 5x GCSE exam entries for any home-schooled student that wishes to undertake them (for households eligible for Child Benefit who do not pay the High Income Child Benefit Charge). Funding for initial two-year pilot.
 - **Additional investment in Sustainable Housing Partnership**

Service: Provide upstream housing prevention for adults with a Learning Disability or Mental Illness who cannot access current interventions to fund activity on an invest to save basis to reduce the cost to NCC of tenancy failure for those with LD or mental health support needs.

Cllr Webb Budget Amendment Proposals 2024/25

Amendment 5

REVENUE

Ref	Proposal	2024-25 £m	2025-26 £m	2026-27 £m	2027-28 £m	Total £m
1a	MIG: Remove requirement for MIG saving proposal	0.600	0.600	0.000	0.000	1.200
1b	MIG: Increase by £10 p/w (working age adults).	0.760	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.760
2	Community short breaks (8% increase Y1, 5% Y2)	0.230	0.150	0.000	0.000	0.380
3	Children's Services advocacy – Legal costs	0.360	(0.180)	(0.180)	0.000	0.000
4	Support for working carers within the NCC workforce (assume 5% of workforce)	0.490	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.490
5	Exam entry fees for home educated pupils	0.160	0.000	(0.160)	0.000	0.000
6	Investment in Sustainable Housing Partnership Service	1.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	1.000
	Total	3.600	0.570	(0.340)	0.000	3.830

Revenue proposals funded from the following areas:

- 4) Revenue proposal to be funded from additional social care grant funding announced at Final Settlement. Total of £7.770m funding to be used over the two financial years 2024-25 and 2025-26. In the event that this funding is one-off, residual 2026-27 pressures arising (estimated as £3.830m) to be added to the budget gap and addressed as part of the budget process for that year.

Ref	Funding	2024-25 £m	2025-26 £m	2026-27 £m	2027-28 £m	Total £m
1	Additional social care funding at final settlement applied over two years	(3.600)	(0.570)	4.170	0.000	0.000
	Total	(3.600)	(0.570)	4.170	0.000	0.000

CAPITAL AMENDMENTS / ADDITIONS

School streets: Provide capital funding to roll out a pilot School Streets

programme to 10 schools in Norfolk.

Ref	Capital Project / Proposal	2024-25 £m	2025-26 £m	2026-27 £m	2027-28 £m	Total £m
1	School Streets	0.700	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.700
	Total	0.700	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.700

Revenue Implications of Capital Expenditure to be funded by:

- 5) Assuming that roll out of the pilot would not take place immediately due to the need to identify sites, consult, and procure equipment, then interest costs in 2024-25 would be minimal, with the cost of borrowing to fund the proposal to be incorporated into the 2025-26 budget process. Income from fines would be received from approximately six months after the pilot goes live.

Section 151 Officer technical comments

- 6) The proposals in this amendment involve an alternative application of the additional funding announced at the final Settlement compared to the proposed approach set out in the Covering Report to Council. Consequential revisions to the Budget would be required to reflect this alternative proposed usage (i.e. if the amendment is approved, the Administration will need to adjust the proposed use of the additional funding set out in the Covering Report by an equivalent amount to that used in the amendment). In line with the planning assumption that additional social care grant and Rural Services Delivery Grant funding announced at the final Settlement is one-off, these proposals would give rise to a pressure of approximately £3.830m which would need to be added to the budget gap for 2026-27 and addressed as part of the budget process for that year.

Monitoring Officer technical comments

- 7) None.

Head of Paid Service technical comments

- 8) None.

Conclusion

- 9) Council is able to consider these proposed amendments.

Annual Investment and Treasury Strategy 2024-25 - Report from the Scrutiny Committee to the Leader of the Council

1 Background

- 1.1 At the meeting held on the 14 February 2024, members of the Scrutiny Committee received the final draft of the Annual Investment and Treasury Strategy 2024--25. This document is revised annually, and sits among the suite of documents that make up the annual NCC budget. It is also a distinct item that sits as part of the council Policy Framework.
- 1.2 The Scrutiny Committee has a clear role in providing challenge to any refresh or amendment to items that make up the policy framework. This is set out in section 11b of the NCC constitution, alongside guidelines around communication with members and the process leading to Full Council approval. The item must be considered by the Scrutiny Committee in good time, and the Committee are asked to provide a report to the Leader of the Council outlining a summary of discussions and any recommendations put forward by the Scrutiny Committee. This report will include details of any minority views expressed as part of the debate at the Scrutiny Committee. Having considered any report by the Scrutiny Committee, the Leader or Executive will agree proposals for submission to the Council and report to Council on how any recommendations from the Scrutiny Committee have been taken into account.

Summary of discussions

- 1.3 The committee discussed the Annual Investment and Treasury Strategy 2024-25 with the Cabinet Member and Officers, raising the following points:
- A member referred to the issue of overseas investments and the criteria NCC uses to ensure the security and robustness of NCC funding. The member questioned whether criteria could be relaxed to encourage greater investment opportunities, with comparisons drawn against other local authorities with less strict criteria. The committee was assured that this criteria was reviewed on an annual basis through a risk based calculation, with advice from relevant organisations.

Following discussion the committee noted the Annual Investment and Treasury Strategy, but made no formal comments or recommendations. No items were added to the Scrutiny Committee forward work programme as a result of discussions.

2 Actions and recommendations

- 2.1. No formal recommendations were moved or agreed by the committee regarding the content of the Annual Investment and Treasury Strategy 2024-25 for consideration by the Cabinet Member or the Leader of the Council.