

## **Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Panel**

**Minutes of the Meeting Held on Thursday 23 January 2014  
2:00pm Edwards Room, County Hall, Norwich**

### **Present:**

Mrs J Chamberlin (Chairman)

Mr R Bearman  
Mr B Bremner  
Mr D Collis  
Mr D Crawford  
Mrs M Dewsbury  
Mr C Foulger  
Mr T Garrod  
Mr P Gilmour

Mr B Hannah  
Mr M Kiddle-Morris  
Mrs J Leggett  
Mr J Perkins  
Mr M Sands  
Mr R Smith  
Dr M Strong  
Miss J Virgo

### **Parent Governor Representatives:**

Dr K Byrne

### **Non-Voting Cabinet Member:**

Mr M Castle  
Mr J Joyce

Education and Schools  
Safeguarding

### **Non-Voting Co-opted Advisors:**

Mr A Robinson  
Mr A McCandlish  
Mrs C Smith

Norfolk Governor Network  
Primary Education  
Secondary Education

## **1. Apologies and substitutions**

- 1.1 Apologies were received from Ms D Gihawi (Mr B Bremner substituting), Mrs S Vertigan, Mrs H Bates, Mr A Mash, Dr L Poliakoff, Ms V Aldous (Mr A McCandlish substituting) and Ms T Humber. Apologies were also given by the Interim Director of Children's Services and the Interim Assistant Director, Improvement as they had been called to another urgent meeting.

## **2. Minutes**

- 2.1 The minutes of the meeting held on 21<sup>st</sup> November 2013 were received and signed as an accurate record. Mr R Smith recorded his thanks to officers for the comprehensive and cross-referenced written responses to questions from members.

- 2.2 The Chairman gave the following updates in relation to the minutes:

- A second round of workshops was being developed to take place in

February, during which Members would be asked to agree a series of visits to test the reported performance information, and report findings to the March meeting.

- The requested briefing on Restorative Approaches had been included within the January edition of the Improving Times. Officers were asked to ensure that the co-opted members of the Panel were receiving this publication.

### **3. Declarations of Interest**

3.1 There were no declarations of interest.

### **4. Items of Urgent Business**

4.1 There were no items of urgent business.

### **5. Public Question Time**

5.1 The Public Questions for the meeting are attached at Appendix 1.

### **6. Local Member Issues/Member Questions**

6.1 There were no local member questions.

### **7. Cabinet Member Feedback**

#### **7.1 Safeguarding**

7.1.1 The Cabinet Member for Safeguarding reported that the Directions Notice had been received, which required an Improvement Plan to be in place within two months of the date of the Notice. The Norfolk Safeguarding Children Board and the Improvement Board would comment on the Plan, and the date for final submission was mid-February. There was a need to examine strategic leadership, the sustainability of the Improvement Plan, and to demonstrate how the Overview and Scrutiny Panel had dealt with the problems in the department. Information was being supplied on a weekly basis from the agency appointed to recruit additional social workers. On 17<sup>th</sup> January the website had received 911 hits, which had risen to over 3,000 within the week.

#### **7.2 Education and Schools**

7.2.1 The Cabinet Member for Education and Schools reported that key stage 4 attainment results had been disappointing, with Norfolk slipping a further 20 places down the league tables. Although the authority was moving in the right direction it would take time for improvement to show within results and statistics.

7.2.2 During a discussion, the following points were noted:

- The decision to rescind the motion regarding the senior management structure was not expected to have a substantive effect on the OFSTED judgement of the Council. However it would result in some staff remaining in post longer than expected, including interims.

- The Cabinet Member confirmed that he would write to the EDP clarifying that the recent league rankings announcement was part of the overall picture, and was based on results from summer 2013.
- The Chairman highlighted to Cabinet Members a Scrutiny Report prepared by the Community Services Panel on Fuel Poverty which included a section on children, in particular relating to the links with low educational achievement. They were asked to ensure, through the appropriate Cabinet member, that papers such as this to be routinely referred to the Children's Panel for information.

## 8. **The Directions Notice issued to Norfolk County Council in respect of Children's Services**

8.1 The annexed report (item 14) by the Director of Children's Services was received. The report dealt with the Directions Notice issued by the Department for Education (DfE) on the 18<sup>th</sup> December 2013.

8.2 During the discussion, the following points were noted:

- The transition to the new governance arrangements would need to be as smooth as possible, with clear support for the department by councillors.
- It was agreed that the risk of failure in relation to the Improvement Plan would be reported within the next performance papers.
- It was confirmed that if the DfE were not satisfied with the progress made by Norfolk County Council, they could order alternative arrangements for the running of Children's Services in Norfolk.
- OFSTED would be returning to the authority to make checks on management and governance arrangements. They would expect to receive clear plans for improvement, followed by evidence that this is being embedded and that improvement is being sustained.

8.3 The Panel **RESOLVED** the following recommendations:

- To note the contents of the Directions Notice and the current programme of work in place to ensure full compliance with the content of the Notice.
- Agree that the work to respond to this notice should be carefully monitored during the transition to the committee system of governance, and ensure that members are also supported through this transition to maintain governance.
- To note risks to the Council, and to request inclusion of departmental risk register information in future performance reports.

## 9. **Children's Services Integrated Performance and Finance Monitoring Report for 2013-2014**

9.1 The annexed report (item 8) by the Interim Director of Children's Services was received. The report provided Members with an update on Children's Services

performance and finance monitoring information for the 2013/14 financial year. It was noted that paragraphs 1.2 to 1.5 of the report set out the corporate risks however further information would be provided in future.

9.2 During the discussion the following points were noted:

- There were sufficient places available to cover the additional load relating to the increased participation age in education and training. Schemes such as training or apprenticeships were applicable and there was a reliance on further education providers and work based training providers to absorb much of the extra demand. The local provision network in each district would examine the needs of industry and the economy. A progress report around this would be provided (Appendix 2).
- Although the statistic of 43.5% attainment in Early Years was concerning, the national average of 52% was equally concerning. Focussed work was underway around Early Years provision, ensuring that families were tuned in with the challenges.
- The number of looked after children was down by three, and there had been no significant changes in the numbers since November 2013.
- Education challenge was a major innovation, and the council was bringing in external expertise, some of whom already worked in Norfolk schools.
- It was agreed that the number of schools in each OFSTED category would be further broken down into types of school, and supplied as a written response (Appendix 2).
- There was an ongoing commitment to staff training and development, including the Best Practice training.
- A report would be presented to the March 2014 meeting detailing progress with the scheme to provide dedicated social workers in six school clusters.
- The Council routinely scrutinised the ability of governing bodies to self-evaluate, and was part of the regular reviews. This would influence the council's view of the school.
- Development of better standards within pre-school provision was central to the work within the Children's Centres. The strategy aimed to help parents to raise ambition and gain skills to help children to learn to read, realising that everyone had a role to play in early development. The council worked with key partners to identify delivery of services where a family was susceptible to poor parenting. A new Early Years strategy was being developed which would be reported in March.
- SureStart was still part of the Early Years provision. Take up of places in Children's Centres was improving, with Dereham cited as an example rising from 12% to 70% take up following targeted promotion. This was a key part of the strategy.
- The revenue budget showed an overspend due to the pressure of looked

after children costs; and due to pressure on the special educational need transport costs.

- The reduction within school balances related to removal of budget when a school converted to an academy. Some reduction also related to planned spending by schools.
- The use of Family Assessments had increased, and a quality framework had been introduced. There was evidence that Family Assessments were improving, however it was too early to evidence whether outcomes were improving.
- The Cabinet Members confirmed that they were happy with improvements in Children's Services to date.
- School governance was central to improvement. A successful recruitment campaign had resulted in volunteers coming forward to become governors. A 'governor hub' online area had been launched. Governing bodies should be reflective of the community, and be clear on the role of each governor. This would result in better links between the school and the community.

9.3 The Panel **RESOLVED** to note the general direction described and endorsed the new reporting format, subject to inclusion in future reports of the departmental risk register and detail about progress with reducing looked after children numbers.

## 10. **Putting People First: Service and Budget Planning 2014/17**

10.1 The annexed report (item 9) by the Interim Director of Children's Services was received. The report set out the latest information on the Government's Local Government Finance Settlement and specific information on the financial and planning context for Children's Services for the next three years. It set out any changes to the budget planning proposals for Children's Services and the proposed cash limit revenue budget for the service based on all current proposals and identified pressures and the proposed capital programme. The Cabinet Member for Safeguarding Children and the Cabinet Member for Education and Schools gave a presentation outlining service-specific responses to the Putting People First consultation (Appendix 3 to these minutes).

10.2 During the discussion the following points were noted:

- The budget being presented to Cabinet on Monday would include some revisions to the proposals published within the papers. Cabinet were expected to discuss reasonable risk around the Willows project in light of the most current information, and hoped to free up some money which was originally ringfenced for the Willows and which would be allocated to services to reduce savings requirements. This included committing an additional £3m funding to Children's Services to consolidate the improvement programme of safeguarding children, and retaining the post-16 educational transport subsidy for 2014/15. It was important to ensure that improvement continued at an accelerated pace which was not driven by budget constraints.
- It was confirmed that comments submitted with this consultation would be

considered when making budget decisions throughout the three year period from 2014 to 2017. Although the post-16 educational transport subsidy was remaining within the 2014/15 budget, no decisions had been made for future years.

- The wider benefits of restorative justice were highlighted as these could result in financial savings elsewhere in the work of Children's Services, Norfolk County Council, and partnership agencies.
- Free school meals funding was an important source of income for schools as it provided wider educational opportunities. It was the responsibility of the parent to register their eligibility, and it was acknowledged that proposals to offer free school meals to all infant school aged children could affect the parent's incentive to register. This would in turn have an effect on school funding in later phases. It was agreed that a link to the report presented to Panel in March 2013 on free school meals would be circulated (Appendix 2 of these minutes). It was acknowledged that the importance of registering for free school meals should be impressed upon the parents. Initiatives such as use of card payment could be introduced so that children were not exposed to stigma in receiving free school meals. It was noted that the link between registration of take-up of a free school meal and additional pupil funding as well as school OFSTED rating was not generally understood by the public.
- Officers were confident that savings could be made to the Looked After Children budget. New strategies around the movement of children in and out of the care system would address this issue.
- The proposed ICT savings related to rationalisation of software licences, together with negotiating bulk purchase where these had previously been bought individually. This would not affect the hardware supplied to staff.
- The importance of the music service and music lessons was highlighted. Although orchestras would continue, it was suggested that reduction of funding for lessons would result in fewer players in the orchestras, which provided a source of income through concert ticket sales. The contribution of music to the education of children was acknowledged.
- The Chairman thanked officers for the preparation of the papers, and thanked all those who had offered responses to the Putting People First consultation.

### 10.3 The Panel **RESOLVED**

- To note the provisional financial settlement for 2014-15 and the latest planning position for Norfolk County Council.
- To note the updated information on spending pressures and endorse the savings proposals for Children's Services as a result of responses received to the Putting People First consultation.
- To recommend to Cabinet the comments of the Panel as outlined above.

## 11. Update on Norfolk Family Focus

11.1 The annexed report (item 10) by the Interim Director of Children's Services was received. The report outlined the background to the local delivery of the Troubled Families Programme and progress to date, and highlighted current issues. It was noted that in relation to the DCLG funding claim, the Department had confirmed that they would not be expecting this to be repaid, recognising the cost of collecting evidence data.

11.2 During the discussion the following points were noted:

- Additional practitioners were being recruited, together with provision of more administration time, to allow increased capacity to work with more families.
- Further information would be provided regarding the impact that improved IT provision would have on Norfolk Family Focus, following the implementation of Digital Norfolk Ambition (Appendix 2).
- Families in need would be given immediate attention through the Programme as they were identified. It was agreed that information about the number of families who dropped out of the programme would be provided (Appendix 2).
- It was suggested that a real, anonymous example could be provided to illustrate the Family Story Board Journey. This could be provided within one of the workshop sessions.
- The Norfolk Family Focus Programme was linked in partnership with the Family Intervention Programme. This was provided by one commissioned organisation with an improved contract. However, it was not clear how this would be provided after 2015.

11.3 The Panel **RESOLVED** to note the report and to receive a further update report in six months.

## 12. Private Fostering Arrangements in Norfolk

12.1 The annexed report (item 11) by the Interim Director of Children's Services was received. The report provided an overview of the recent OFSTED inspection of private fostering arrangements in Norfolk, noting the low number of private fostering arrangement notifications which needed to be addressed by means of a marketing strategy.

12.2 During the discussion the following points were noted:

- It was acknowledged that in many cases, it was appropriate for a child to be placed with a person that they knew, however in all cases these fostering arrangements should be registered with the local authority.
- The benefits of notification included access to valuable advice and support, which would be emphasised within the communications strategy.

- Performance against statistical neighbours around private fostering would be reviewed once the latest figures were received. The last data set had shown that Norfolk was average which required improvement, however other authorities had reported similar issues.
- Concern was expressed regarding the suggestion that known cases of private fostering should be reported, however it was confirmed that Members of the Council did have a statutory duty to report any cases that they became aware of as part of their safeguarding role. The ultimate aim was the safety of a child, and the council wished social workers to be viewed as supportive rather than inhibitive. It was advised that Victoria Climbié had been in a private fostering arrangement.
- In relation to the February 2013 OFSTED inspection, significant improvement had been made in the assessment process which included scrutiny by a manager. Significant improvement had also been made regarding the timeliness and process of reporting.
- Work was underway to share knowledge with Suffolk County Council around service delivery and processes.

12.3 The Panel **RESOLVED** to note the report and endorsed the need to continue to raise awareness of private fostering arrangements within Norfolk's professional and public communities by means of the Private Fostering Communications Plan.

### 13. **Update on Recruitment and Well-Being Activity**

13.1 The annexed report (item 12) by the Interim Director of Children's Services was received. The report gave an update on the major investment in frontline social care following the two 'inadequate' judgements in relation to Safeguarding Children, and Looked After Children. It was noted that the recruitment campaign was in its early stages and a further update report would be brought to the Panel. 7 applications had been made, a further 9 had been filled in but were waiting submission, and there had been 70 expressions of interest. Newly Qualified Social Workers would form the next phase of recruitment, however they would need a reduced caseload and greater supervision. Work was underway with the UEA to see how this could be achieved.

13.2 During the discussion the following points were raised:

- Strong partnership links with UEA were in existence, with Norfolk County Council providing them with most of their Assisted and Supported Year in Employment (ASYE) placements. There was the potential to develop this further with a bespoke training 'academy'.
- Training was available to managers around sickness absence management. The department was good at dealing with long term sickness, however there was a need to address all elements of sickness absence.
- Although the council would welcome increased opportunities to assist family support workers to qualify as social workers, there was not an affordable training programme (that the council could fund) available to achieve this.



The recognised qualification route would cost £8,000 per year. Support was available for staff around for finding bursaries, together with time off for study and placement working.

- The time spent filling in paperwork had been significantly reduced with the use of technology, freeing up social workers to make maximum use of their time in face to face contact.

13.3 The Panel **RESOLVED** to note the report, commending the action being taken and progress being made to get staff in place, and noting that a further update report would be presented in May, and a report into staff well-being in July.

#### **14. Report in respect of the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH)**

14.1 The annexed report (item 13) by the Interim Director of Children's Services was received. The report provided an overview of the MASH in Norfolk, which evolved from a co-location of elements of Police Public Protection and representatives of Children's Social Care, sharing information to better safeguard children and vulnerable adults. It was noted that the challenge of technology was being addressed by exploring shared IT systems which could help pass information between all agencies. Difficulty also existed around the Police referral rates, with no mechanism for filtering by the Police.

14.2 During the discussion the following points were raised:

- The MASH worked in partnership with voluntary agencies in Norfolk.
- The Police were fully engaged with day to day work within the MASH, with specialist officers appointed to that area. High profile cases were highlighted and would be considered a priority.
- A Project Officer was in place, with a defined work plan including a reporting schedule to the MASH Board.

10.3 The Panel **RESOLVED**

- To note the report and commend the direction of travel.
- To endorse the work underway for enhanced data sharing between partners.
- To receive a further update report in six months time.
- That a visit be set up for the Chairman and Vice Chairman to attend a MASH Board meeting.

#### **15. Scrutiny Forward Work Programme**

15.1 The annexed report (item 15) by the Interim Director of Children's Services was received. The report asked Members to consider a refreshed scrutiny forward work programme.

15.2 During the discussion the following points were raised:

- The Chairman of the Pathway Planning for Care Leavers Working Group reported that visits had been made to the looked after children's teams, the disability team, the asylum seekers team and the emergency response team. The Working Group was formulating its recommendations, and was hoping to speak with foster carers and young people. It was expected that a report would be presented at the next meeting.

15.3 The Panel **RESOLVED** to make the following amendments to the Forward Work Programme:

- March 2014 add:- Looked After Children Reduction Strategy; and Early Help Strategy, including progress and impact of the pilot to deliver early help services through a locality, needs-led approach.
- May 2014 add:- success of the recruitment campaign (back office support, number of newly qualified and experienced social workers, progress with the in-house academy); and report on the progress being made to ensure that the correct level of additional learning places were available, following the Government's raising of the participation age.
- July 2014 add:- Norfolk Family Focus update; staff well-being (outcome of staff survey and sickness absence analysis); and MASH update.
- January 2015 add:- Private fostering arrangements.
- To receive a briefing on the educational arrangements of church schools.
- To receive a briefing on education and health information relating to young people who are in secure accommodation within the County, particularly those ages 16 – 18 years old.

The meeting closed at 5pm.

**CHAIRMAN**



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Public Questions

**5.1 Two Questions from Gemma Adams:**

- 5.1.1 The A parents guide to admissions to schools in Norfolk” states: If you believe there are exceptional reasons why your child should start school in the following year. We would expect there to be significant educational and/or social reasons supported by an appropriate professional.**

**The DfE's 'Advice on the admission of summer born children' doesn't mention the need for professional support or exceptional reasons.**

**I would like the council to consider that it is not applying the spirit of the advice to its admission policy and making it harder for parents to delay children than the DfE intends.**

Answer from the Cabinet Member for Education and Schools:

The Norfolk's Parents guide to school admissions advises parents how their application will be considered if they seek a place outside their child's chronological age group. It was produced to satisfy the requirements of the statutory School Admissions Code (2012) which states that an admission authority must consider any request for an alternative year group. The original guidance sought to clarify the information which would support a request.

- 5.1.2 Does the council plan on updating the policy to reflect the DfE's advice as other council have done so (eg Hampshire) to allow for greater flexibility with reception starting age?**

Answer from the Cabinet Member for Education and Schools:

Revised guidance has been produced to clarify the position following the non-statutory advice published by the DfE in July 2013 regarding summer born children and deferred admission. This has been confirmed by NPLaw as meeting the requirements of the statutory code and the more recent non-statutory guidance. The guidance is significantly expanded and highlights the complexity of decision making as more schools become own admission authorities with transfers to academy and voluntary aided status. The request must be considered by the admission authority for each preferred school but where a request to defer until the next academic year is accepted by an admission authority the application cannot be considered until the following year. It is possible that despite agreement to defer for a year that a place cannot then be offered to the family.

Updated guidance is now available online for all parents and this will be sent to any parent who has queried the approach in relation to summer-born children seeking to defer a Reception place since the new guidance was issued.

**Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Panel**  
**Thursday 23<sup>rd</sup> January 2014**

Agenda Item Number/ Minute Number	Report Title	Action	Response
9	Performance and Finance Monitoring	Update of the plans in place to meet demand for additional places following raising of the school participation age	<p>In 2014/15, there could be as many as 2000 additional 16-18 learners seeking education and training places. This is an estimate based on what we anticipate the number of learners will be, an estimate of Education Funding Agency (EFA) funded places based on 2013/14 learners, an estimate of the number of apprenticeships and an estimate of the number of learners from outside Norfolk taking Norfolk places.</p> <p>The estimate is based on us achieving the 2014 Raising Participation Age targets for both Yr 12 and 13. It is worth noting that in 2012 we estimated there would be a shortfall of 750 places and there were actually 1800 additional places.</p> <p>As learning providers are funded for the following year on the current number of students there is an expectation that they will grow provision to meet demand in advance of attracting the funding.</p> <p>We have made learning providers aware of the need to grow the capacity and highlighted the type and levels of provision required through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 11-19 Education &amp; Training Strategy Group</li> <li>• Local Provision Networks</li> <li>• Focussed work with individual providers</li> <li>• Apprenticeship strategy/Norfolk</li> </ul> <p>We have supported providers to bid for the Demographic Capital Growth Fund which will result in new provision and facilities for 120 – 140 students with learning difficulties and disabilities at City College Norwich and Sidestrand School .</p>

			<p>Learners with Learning Difficulties and Disabilities are one of the local authorities target groups to increase participation.</p> <p>We have highlighted gaps in provision to the EFA and were successful in gaining additional funding for provision in the north of the county and have influenced the nature of the ESF funded provision to include re-engagement provision outside of the urban areas and to target teenage parents.</p> <p>For further details, please contact Karin Porter, Participation Strategy Manager, in the Education Partnership Service. <a href="mailto:karin.porter@norfolk.gov.uk">karin.porter@norfolk.gov.uk</a></p>
9	Performance and Finance Monitoring	Break down the number of schools in each OFSTED category into types of school	<p>There are currently 18 Norfolk schools with published Ofsted outcomes indicating they require either special measures or serious weaknesses. 14 are primary phase schools. 4 are secondary phase. 14 are in special measures (11 out of the 14 of the Primaries and 3 out of 4 of the secondaries.</p> <p>2 schools are Academies – both are secondary phase. 1 is an academy conversion (Christian) and 1 is a sponsored academy.</p> <p>2 are church schools, 1 is a VC under the Ely Diocese, and 1 is a VA with the Norwich Diocese. 1 secondary academy retains a Christian denomination.</p> <p>Of the 14 primary phase schools 12 are primary schools and 2 are junior schools. 6 of the schools have numbers on roll for 120 pupils or fewer, 3 have fewer than 100, 2 have fewer than 50 pupils. 3 schools have numbers on roll of 121 to 220 and the remaining are over 220. 1 of the secondary phase schools has fewer than 500 pupils on roll.</p> <p>3 schools are in Breckland District, 2 are in Great Yarmouth, 2 are in Norwich, 4 are in the North and 7 are in Kings Lynn and West Norfolk District.</p>
10	Putting People First: Service and Budget Planning 2014 - 2017	Provide a link to the March 2013 report on Free School Meals	<p><a href="http://www.norfolk.gov.uk/Council_and_democracy/Your_Council/Committees/DisplayResultsSection/Papers/index.htm?Committee=Childrens%20Services%20Overview">http://www.norfolk.gov.uk/Council_and_democracy/Your_Council/Committees/DisplayResultsSection/Papers/index.htm?Committee=Childrens Services Overview</a> and Scrutiny Panel</p> <p>Select 14/03/2013 – Agenda – report is on page 91.</p>
11	Norfolk Family Focus	Provide further information on the impact that	Digital Norfolk will provide Norfolk Family Focus with a technical ability to identify families more efficiently. It will also provide better performance monitoring, quality assurance and more efficient operational case management. The team are also

		improved IT provision will have on Norfolk Family Focus, following the implementation of Digital Norfolk Ambition	working with Digital Norfolk to create a citizen portal so that families can participate in the creating and monitoring their own "story boards" which are presented in the NFF report to Overview and Scrutiny. The impact we hope this will have will be that families feel able to have more control over their plans and support them to better engage within the community and be less reliant on public services, and should lead to better outcomes for families.
11	Norfolk Family Focus	Provide information on the number of families who drop out of the programme.	Currently with the families we have worked with in year 2 we only have a "drop out" rate of 10% .Families will sometimes disengage for periods of time, however the ethos of Norfolk Family Focus is to ensure families know support is available to them and offer an " open door " to families when they need it. Although at times families will disengage at certain points, they are offered the opportunity to contact the NFF service should they feel they need further support at a later stage. Families take up this offer at varying intervals.



## Feedback 'Norfolk Putting People First' Budget Consultation 2014/17

Children's Services  
Safeguarding Children – James Joyce  
Education & Schools – Mick Castle

## Financial background

- £189 million gap to make up by 2016/17
- Proposals amounting to over £134 million savings identified so far – with more to be identified in years 2 & 3
- Around 56% of these are from “cutting our own costs” including efficiency measures, better procurement, improved technology and income generation

## The consultation – a quick overview

- Responses received by email, letter, online, telephone and social media
- Over 4,400 respondents submitted over 15,000 comments
- In addition there were petitions with over 2,100 signatures

## The consultation – a quick overview

- Panel feedback will form part of the consultation and will inform Cabinet's recommendations to be presented at their meeting on the 27<sup>th</sup> January

## The council's priorities (Excellence in Education, Real Jobs, and Good Infrastructure)

- General support for priorities but council challenged to deliver them
- Many respondents felt that supporting vulnerable people, public safety or the environment should be a priority

## The council's approach and strategy for bridging the funding gap

- Some support for the approach – “sound”, “pragmatic”, “common sense” – but should the council be more radical?
- Divided opinions on outsourcing services, technology and selling assets
- The council should reduce bureaucracy and “red tape” through more collaboration, better processes and improved procurement

### Most commented-on proposals

- P27 Reduce the transport subsidy for students aged 16-19 generated the most responses in the whole consultation
- Responses about libraries generated a lot of responses – making up 6 of the top 10 responded-to proposals
- Many respondents felt that overall the council's package of proposals affected vulnerable people the most

### Freezing Council Tax

- Around 26% of respondents supported the freeze – usually on principle or on the basis of affordability
- Around 55% of people in favour of an increase in Council Tax. The vast majority of these suggest a small increase (1-2% or in line with inflation)
- Many respondents wanted clarity about what any increase would be spent on

### Children's Services budget proposals

- |    |  |
|----|--|
| 21 | Increase the number of services we have to prevent children and young people from coming into our care and reducing the cost of looking after children   |
| 22 | Change services for children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities in response to the Children and Families Bill  |
| 23 | Reduce the funding for restorative approaches  |
| 24 | Stop our contribution to the Schools Well Being Service, Teacher Recruitment Service, Norfolk Music Service and Healthy Norfolk Schools Programme and explore if we could sell these services to schools |
| 25 | Change how we support childminders, nurseries and other childcare providers in response to the Children and Families Bill  |
| 26 | Reduce the cost of transport for children with Special Educational Needs   |
| 27 | Reduce the transport subsidy provided to students aged 16-19   |
| 28 | Reduce the amount of funding we contribute to the partnerships that support young people who misuse substances and young people at risk of offending   |
| 29 | Reduce funding for schools crossing patrols  |

### Overview

- 1,756 responses to Children's Services proposals and an additional 1,579 petition signatures
- Young people participated through consultation events, postcard campaigns, online and paper petitions, social media and organised protests
- The Children's Services proposals that generated the most responses were post-16 transport subsidy (P27) and the Music Service (P24)

### Looked After Children

- Reducing the cost of looked after children (P21) received significant support
- Generally people support the principle of earlier intervention and keeping children with their families where possible
- Many respondents qualified their support with caveats about children not being put at risk
- Some concern about having a target for numbers of looked after children

### Safeguarding

- Keeping all children safe – residents feel this remains important and this was often cited as a proviso to changes being accepted in proposals around Looked After Children (P21), SEN provision (P22 & 27) and school crossing patrols (P29)
- Protecting the most vulnerable – residents feel that this is a key role for NCC and was cited in relation proposals about SEN (P22&27), Looked After Children (P21), Youth Offending and substance misuse (P28)



### 16-19 Transport

- To reduce the transport subsidy provided to students aged 16-19 (P27) was the proposal that had the most responses in the whole consultation – and the least support
- Impact on rural areas and family finances as well as participation in post-16 education
- Concerned about further education becoming “unaffordable” for some; for others choices of course will be limited to their nearest college

### Responses relating to the Music Service

- P24 proposes stopping our contribution to 4 distinct services: Music, Healthy Norfolk Schools, Teacher Recruitment and Schools Wellbeing
- Many people only responded in relation to one or two service areas and may have supported cuts in one area but not in another
- The majority of responses about just one service related to the Music Service and most were opposed to any cut

### Other comments

- **Alternatives** – many alternatives were put forward by residents, all detailed in the report and appendices. There was frequent support for greater use of volunteers and for more partnership working including with public, private and voluntary sector organisations
- **Need more information** – particularly in response to ‘P22 Changing SEN Services’ – residents felt the proposal lacked detail and that more work was needed

### Other considerations

- Important disproportionate impacts were identified on protected groups through Equality Impact Assessments
- Overall there will be a significant impact on children and young people, particularly vulnerable and disabled children, their families and carers
- Some mitigating actions suggested through EQIAs

### Finally...

- Thank you to everyone who has contributed to the consultation
- Lots of time spent preparing and submitting written views and attending events
- Every response has been read and considered
- Responses have, and will continue to, inform how we shape services and mitigate risks as we make savings