

People and Communities Select Committee

Date: **15 September 2023**

Time: **10am**

Venue: **Council Chamber, County Hall, Norwich**

Advice for members of the public:

This meeting will be held in public and in person.

It will be live streamed on YouTube and, members of the public may watch remotely by clicking on the following link: https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCdyUrFjYNPfPq5psa-LFIJA/videos?view=2&live_view=502

We also welcome attendance in person, but public seating is limited, so if you wish to attend please indicate in advance by emailing committees@norfolk.gov.uk

Current practice for respiratory infections requests that we still ask everyone attending to maintain good hand and respiratory hygiene and, at times of high prevalence and in busy areas, please consider wearing a face covering.

Please stay at home if you are unwell, have tested positive for COVID 19, have symptoms of a respiratory infection or if you are a close contact of a positive COVID 19 case. This will help make the event safe for attendees and limit the transmission of respiratory infections including COVID-19.

Persons attending the meeting are requested to turn off mobile phones

Membership:

Cllr Fran Whymark (Chair)
Cllr Ed Connolly (Vice-Chair)

Cllr Tim Adams	Cllr Julian Kirk
Cllr Sharon Blundell	Cllr Brian Long
Cllr Claire Bowes	Cllr Paul Neale
Cllr Michael Dalby	Cllr Mike Smith-Clare
Cllr Brenda Jones	
Cllr Mark Kiddle-Morris	

**For further details and general enquiries about this Agenda
please contact the Committee Officer:**

Hollie Adams on 01603 223029
or email committees@norfolk.gov.uk

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A g e n d a

1 To receive apologies and details of any substitute members attending

2 Minutes

Page **4**

To agree the minutes of the meeting held on 14 July 2022

3 Members to Declare any Interests

If you have a **Disclosable Pecuniary Interest** in a matter to be considered at the meeting and that interest is on your Register of Interests you must not speak or vote on the matter.

If you have a **Disclosable Pecuniary Interest** in a matter to be considered at the meeting and that interest is not on your Register of Interests you must declare that interest at the meeting and not speak or vote on the matter

In either case you may remain in the room where the meeting is taking place. If you consider that it would be inappropriate in the circumstances to remain in the room, you may leave the room while the matter is dealt with.

If you do not have a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest you may nevertheless have an **Other Interest** in a matter to be discussed if it affects, to a greater extent than others in your division

- Your wellbeing or financial position, or
- that of your family or close friends
- Any body -
 - Exercising functions of a public nature.
 - Directed to charitable purposes; or
 - One of whose principal purposes includes the influence of public opinion or policy (including any political party or trade union);

Of which you are in a position of general control or management.

If that is the case then you must declare such an interest but can speak and vote on the matter.

4 To receive any items of business which the Chair decides should be considered as a matter of urgency

5 Public Question Time

Fifteen minutes for questions from members of the public of which due notice has been given. Please note that all questions must be received by the Committee Team (committees@norfolk.gov.uk) by **5pm Monday 11 September 2023**.

For guidance on submitting a public question, please visit <https://www.norfolk.gov.uk/what-we-do-and-how-we-work/councillors-meetings-decisions-and-elections/committees-agendas-and-recent-decisions/ask-a-question-to-a-committee>

6 Local Member Issues/Questions

Fifteen minutes for local member to raise issues of concern of which due notice has been given. Please note that all questions must be received by the Committee Team (committees@norfolk.gov.uk) by **5pm Monday 11 September 2023**.

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|--|----------------|
| 7 Integrated Winter Plan (Health and Wellbeing) for 2023/24
Report by the Interim Executive Director of Adult Social Services | Page 23 |
| 8 SEND & Alternative Provision (SEND & AP) Policy & Inspection Framework, inc. Local First Inclusion Programme
Report by the Executive Director of Children's Services | Page 34 |
| 9 Children's Social Care Review and Norfolk Response – Phase of Change
Report by the Executive Director of Children's Services | Page 61 |
| 10 Forward Work Programme
Report by the Executive Director of Adult Social Services | Page 70 |

Tom McCabe
Chief Executive
County Hall
Martineau Lane
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NR1 2DH

Date Agenda Published 7 September 2023



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**People and Communities Select Committee
Minutes of the Meeting Held on 14 July 2023 at 10am
in the Council Chamber, County Hall, Norwich**

Present:

Cllr Fran Whymark (Chair)	Cllr Michael Dalby
Cllr Ed Connolly (Vice-Chair)	Cllr Brenda Jones
Cllr Tim Adams	Cllr Brian Long
Cllr Sharon Blundell	Cllr Paul Neale

Substitute Members Present:

Cllr Chrissie Rumsby for Cllr Mike Smith-Clare

Also Present

Titus Adam	Head of Strategic Finance
Susanne Baldwin	Assistant Director Workforce, Markets and Brokerage; Adult Social Services
Debbie Bartlett	Interim Executive Director of Adult Social Services
Michael Bateman	Assistant Director, SEND Strategic Improvement and Partnerships, Children's Services
Samantha Fletcher	Interim Assistant Director, Education Strategy and Infrastructure, Children's Services
Christine Futter	Chief Operating Officer of Norfolk & Suffolk Care Support, representing Norfolk Care Association
Isabel Horner	Sufficiency Delivery Manager, Children's Services
Tim Weller	Head of Integrated Quality Service, Adult Social Services
Helen Wright	External Workforce Manager

1. Apologies for Absence

- 1.1 Apologies were received from Cllr Claire Bowes, Cllr Julian Kirk and Cllr Mike Smith-Clare (Chrissie Rumsby substituting)

2. Minutes of last meeting

- 2.1 The minutes of the meeting held on 19 May 2023 were agreed as an accurate record and signed by the Chair.
- 2.2 The Select Committee noted the following information which was circulated to them following the meeting of the 19 May 2023:
- At the meeting of 19 May Select Committee members requested:
 - officers' definition of health as applied in the Public Health Strategic Plan.
 - information on what chemicals were in vapes and information about the tobacco control alliance
 - information on the programme of safe accommodation provided to sufferers of domestic abuse across Norfolk and the predicted future demand

- Responses to these requests for information were circulated to the Select Committee on 7 July 2023; see appendix A of these minutes
- An update on Carers Matter Norfolk was circulated to the Select Committee on 12 July 2023 following an earlier request for an update on the Carers Social Impact Bond. See appendix B of these minutes.

3. Declarations of Interest

3.1 No interests were declared

4. Urgent business.

4.1 No urgent business was discussed.

5. Public Questions

5.1 No public questions were received.

6. Member Questions and Issues

6.1 No Member questions were received.

7. Norfolk Adult Social Care Quality Framework

7.1.1 The Select Committee received the report giving information on the work and progress of the Integrated Care System Social Care Quality Improvement Programme and the framework approach we are taking to address quality improvement from all parts of the Council and the wider health and social care system.

7.1.2 The Interim Executive Director of Adult Social Services and the Assistant Director Workforce, Markets and Brokerage, introduced the report to the Select Committee:

- At the last meeting in May 2023, a report was brought discussing the Market Position Statement and work being carried out in the care market. This report set out how work was progressing in this area.
- External organisations were working with the Council on this piece of work.
- A 0.1% drop in care quality had been seen this month, however, overall, an incremental improvement had been seen.
- There was a focus on feedback, working with Healthwatch Norfolk, to ensure a strong voice from providers and people using the services, their carers and families.
- The commissioning strategy and contract management was important as there was a lot of care commissioned by the council.
- Data and culture were key components of the work, including links with Adults Safeguarding Board and looking at the culture in the council and more widely to ensure people were confident
- This programme had been fully operational for around 8 months and there were strong developments to keep this piece of work on track.

7.1.3 The Chief Operating Officer of Norfolk & Suffolk Care Support spoke to the Select Committee via video link:

- Norfolk and Suffolk Care Support Ltd had supported the quality improvement board as the voice of Norfolk Care Association. There were 6 workstreams,

the first of which was provider lead. This workstream were undertaking 2 pieces of work: peer to peer support and workshops on excellence in practice

- The framework had been created by providers for providers and was created to enhance and promote work to ensure providers could put quality at the forefront.

7.2 The following points were discussed and noted:

- At the last meeting in May 2023, it was noted that meeting the target of 85% good and outstanding care providers would be hard to achieve. This target would be kept, with recognition that there was a complex issue within the re-inspection system. Quality monitoring visits were carried out to care providers in the interim between re-inspection. It was **agreed** that this data could be circulated to members of the Select Committee.
- The Chief Operating Officer of Norfolk & Suffolk Care Support agreed that achieving the 85% target would be challenging and depended on the Care Quality Commission returning to reinspect providers. Norfolk and Suffolk Care Support Ltd worked with the council to bring providers together to support each other with quality improvement. Good and outstanding providers were matched with those rated inadequate or requires improvement for 3 day peer support. This allowed for quick improvements to be made. Workshops were also provided, focussing on key areas to allow providers to work together, mitigating some of the issues around lack of funding. The Chief Operating Officer of Norfolk & Suffolk Care Support was encouraged by the level of interest for the 3-day peer to peer support, with 13 expressions of interest from good and outstanding providers and 9 from those needing support to improve.
- Concern was raised that inspectors did not visit private care settings and learning disability settings and whether contract monitoring would be provided for such settings. Officers reported that there was a pilot in place for people with learning disabilities living in residential services to support Provider Assessment and Market Management Solution (PAMMS) activity; training had been provided for these experts who would support reviewing officers by speaking to residents one to one or along with an officer.
- Officers clarified that some learning disability and mental health settings were commissioned by health; in this case, Norfolk County Council did not review them. If a setting was jointly commissioned by Health as well as Social Care, Norfolk County Council did review them. There were about 6 mental health settings registered by the Care Quality Commission which were commissioned by Health. Discussions were underway around how issues around how quality reviewing of these settings could be remedied moving forward.
- It was confirmed that contract monitoring was not a single function within social care but happened across a range of areas. This was a recognised area for improvement and there would be a contract segmentation approach moving forward.
- Concerns were raised about the amount of change needed at some care providers, and in some cases that this may be impacted by staffing shortages. The Chief Operating Officer of Norfolk & Suffolk Care Support replied that the three days of peer support may not be enough to make required changes for all providers. Non-compliant providers would either be taken out of the market or choose to leave; however it was important to note that most providers in the county provided good care.

- The Interim Executive Director of Adult Social Services added that officers were aware of the issues of poor care, and there had been a renewed focus from the safeguarding summit on how organisations focussed on safeguarding individuals. The Interim Executive Director of Adult Social Services **suggested** that the approach to commissioning, setting out the standards and expectations which partners signed up to was brought to a future Select Committee meeting.
- It was suggested that the Council should lobby for the Care Quality Commission to inspect providers in a more reactive way, with more timely re-inspections. The Chair agreed that this would be beneficial; the Provider Assessment and Market Management Solution (PAMMS) inspections helped provide information on the quality at providers in-between Care Quality Commission inspections.
- The Council had increased the fee levels given to providers as much as possible to allow providers to pay their staff higher wages. A care sector job evaluation framework had been carried out, benchmarking the skills and expertise of care staff against those of other sectors. On average, care workers with similar experience were paid £1 less per hour, increasing up the scale. This tool was planned for use in campaigning about the value of social care. It was agreed that the care sector should have more parity of pay with similar jobs in other sectors such as health.
- It was noted that staff vacancies in the sector would likely be having an impact on quality.

- 7.3 The Select Committee noted and discussed the content of this report, providing the following suggestions:
- That the Council pursue a more timely regime of review inspections from the CQC following requires improvement or inadequate inspection outcomes.
 - That data on quality visits be provided to the Select Committee

8 Adult Social Care Reform update

- 8.1.1 The Select Committee received the report providing an update on the work underway in readiness for the implementation of social care reform.
- 8.1.2 The Interim Executive Director of Adult Social Services introduced the report to the Select Committee
- The report followed up from a previous report to the Select Committee, and set out the work continued from the original piece of work in this area
 - key areas being looked at included reviewing: the skills mix to support increased demand; the digital offering for working with people; and engaging with people on reform
- 8.2 The following points were discussed and noted:
- Officers were asked what new funding would be provided to ensure this piece of work was meaningful and what more could be achieved with the digital offer. The Interim Executive Director of Adult Social Services replied that officers were reviewing to see what could be done to make processes simpler to help staff capacity, for example providing data at a quick glance.
 - Officers would continue to review the online offer to ensure that as many services could be carried out easily online by customers, while also ensuring that those who did not have access to the internet could have access to alternative options.

- The Interim Executive Director of Adult Social Services confirmed that the overlay to the case management system to allow care account functionality was being tested on a small group of people and staff to ensure it was easy to use.

8.3 The Select Committee:

- a) Considered the readiness opportunities for the introduction of Supported Self Assessment
- b) Reviewed the work under this programme

9 Refresh of the Norfolk and Waveney Adult Social Care Workforce Strategy

9.1.1 The Select Committee received the report setting out background to the workforce strategy published in 2021, an overview of the challenges, funding and priorities since the launch of the strategy, an overview of the current adult social care workforce landscape in Norfolk, actions and progress achieved to date, findings from the review of the Strategy and Implementation plan two years on and the proposed priority actions for the refreshed implementation plan

9.1.2 The Assistant Director Workforce, Markets and Brokerage, Adult Social Services, introduced the report to the Select Committee:

- Some of the workforce challenges seen were not unique to the social care sector. These challenges were critical for the sector to ensure staff had access to good careers, training and development and that providers were good employers.
- Achievements to date included the Social Care Academy, work with schools and colleges and work with Norfolk and Suffolk Care Support Ltd, which had allowed the recruitment campaign and careers site to be extended.
- A key priority was working with Suffolk County Council to develop a sector skills plan working with schools, colleges, Norfolk and Suffolk Care Support Ltd and others to provide a range of training opportunities.
- The service would link up with economic development teams to link with wider skills strategies and the county deal to unlock future funding to support the work of the strategy.

9.2 The following points were discussed and noted:

- The Chief Operating Officer of Norfolk & Suffolk Care Support reported that North Norfolk, Broadland and South Norfolk District Councils were supported through the Health and wellbeing Partnerships and further support had been given by Norfolk County Council to run the 3 Care Academies. The most recent one was in King's Lynn, working with the College of East Anglia and the job centre. This was promoted through local papers and social media and involved a week-long training course followed up by seeking employment for trainees.
- A Select Committee Member raised concern about MPs campaigning against this strategy noting that it was important to see wages rise in this sector and that senior qualified staff should not be removed from the sector due to their nationality.
- The importance of ancillary staff who support the good running of care homes alongside care workers was noted, such as cooks, cleaners, maintenance workers, advocates and porters. Health Education England funding was being used to highlight the importance of such roles; they were

discussed in schools and colleges alongside putting in specific training where appropriate.

- It was noted as a concern that the social care training programme was no longer funded.
- Placements and apprenticeships were carried out in social care settings as a way to introduce people to care.
- The Interim Executive Director of Adult Social Services thanked the Chief Operating Officer of Norfolk & Suffolk Care Support for her work over the years as a driver of improvement and advocate of social care. The Select Committee thanked the Chief Operating Officer of Norfolk & Suffolk Care Support for her work and wished her a happy retirement.
- The Chair asked about the figures on page 102 of the report which showed an 8.7% vacancy rate. He asked if records of retention rates of people who had been through Norfolk and Suffolk Care Support Ltd were kept for future support. The Chief Operating Officer of Norfolk & Suffolk Care Support replied that data on how long people stayed required a high level of resource to obtain due to GDPR (General Data Protection Regulations) meaning staff had to seek out the data. Vacancies in social care had dropped by 7% and there had been a 1% increase in posts filled, showing a positive trajectory. It would be important to have an appropriately funded workforce plan for social care to make real changes in the sector.
- The Skills for Care survey was carried out nationally and would help improve the Norfolk strategy.

9.3 The Select Committee reviewed and discussed the paper and revised priorities.

9.4 The Select Committee took a break from 11:52 until 12:05. Cllr Michael Dalby left the meeting during the break.

10 Schools' capital programmes

10.1.1 The Select Committee received the report setting out the schools' capital programmes for mainstream and specialist places across Norfolk.

10.1.2 The Sufficiency Delivery Manager, Children's Services, introduced the report to the Select Committee:

- There was external grant funding available, but the programme was dependent on borrowing for its delivery.
- Paragraph 2.10 of the report showed that a number of schemes were completed in 2023-23, including a new primary school in Cringleford. More schemes were in progress to ensure the Council was meeting its requirements for adequate school places.
- Expansions to existing schools and new schools would be built in response to housing developments, with a demographic peak being seen in secondary schools.
- A key project to note was the relocation and expansion of the Fred Nicholson school to Swaffham.
- Governance for programmes was overseen by the Capital Priorities Group and the Executive Director of Children's Services, with delegation from Cabinet, made decisions on changes to the budget.

10.2 The following points were discussed and noted:

- It was noted that the amount of delegated capital to schools had reduced.

- The Vice-Chair queried a proposed school development in their local area which was being discouraged by Norfolk County Council. The Sufficiency Delivery Manager replied that officers considered the impact of building additional classrooms in an area on other schools and the surrounding area. If a project would have an impact on existing schools, then the Council would discourage it. The Sufficiency Delivery Manager, Children's Services to discuss this specific query if required with the Vice Chair.
- The provision available for children with Special, Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) older than 16 was queried. The Assistant Director, SEND Strategic Improvement and Partnerships, confirmed that complex needs schools provided provision for children aged 3-19 and schools specialising in support for Autism and Social Emotional and Mental Health provided provision for children aged 5-16 so that these children could be supported into mainstream further education. A decision was being awaited on two more special schools; one of these would specialise in support for autism and one for complex needs.
- The expansion of Downham Market school was noted as positive, which would help reduce travel times for children. It was further noted that Local First Inclusion would support reducing travel time for children to their places of education, although this may take time to implement due to not moving children from their existing schools unnecessarily.
- A multiplier was used to calculate the number of children likely to live in new housing developments, which was used alongside real data of children being born in that area.
- Work was being done with housing teams to look at the obligations standards to see what could be done to develop contributions for pupils with SEND.
- The Chair asked about availability of Educational Psychologists. There was a grow your own strategy in place for Educational Psychologists which was supporting improvement in this area.
- Officers were not aware of any schools requiring replacement due to structural issues. There was a greater issue seen around the suitability of existing buildings to meet the changing needs of children, which could give a high capital cost to the Council.

10.3 The Select Committee:

1. Received the report on the proposed schools' capital programmes for mainstream and SEND investment prior to the presentation to Cabinet, including:
 - understanding the proposed SEND programme of capital investment in the context of the DFE 'safety valve' in support of the Local First Inclusion Strategy
 - noting the individual projects set out at Annex A of the report.
2. Considered the revised draft Terms of Reference for Capital Priorities Group at Annex B of the report and agreed proposed plan for future oversight of the development of the schools' capital programmes

11 Financial and Strategic Planning 2024-25

- 11.1.1 The Select Committee received the report setting out the beginning of the Council's budget setting process for 2024-25 and providing an opportunity for the Select Committee to give its view on priorities and the approach to preparing budget proposals for the services within its remit.

11.1.2 The Head of Strategic Finance introduced the report to the Select Committee:

- The report marked the start of the process for preparing a 2024-25 balanced budget to go to council in February 2024
- Work was underway to develop budget proposals and forecast savings were currently around £46m, which was lower than for 2023-24
- There was a focus on developing savings that would provide transformation and not impact on frontline services.
- Costs were driven by the rural nature of Norfolk, the demography of the county and the complexity of demand for services; inflation continued to be high and would continue into 2024-25.
- Council continued to work with Government, relaying information on the financial issues being experienced and the need for more funding. The financial settlement for 2023-24 was a one year settlement and there were indications for the 2024-25 settlement however the clear picture would not be known until around November 2023.
- Table 1 of the report showed the medium term financial statement position and table 2 showed modelling of cost pressures provided for in 2024-25, resulting in a £146m gap over the years 2024-28
- Savings would be sought in the context of the whole council. £10m would be sought through transformation from the strategic review work.
- There would be two opportunities for the select committee to be engaged with throughout the process before February 2024.

11.2 The following points were discussed and noted:

- The Head of Strategic Finance confirmed that historically there had been an assumption when planning budgets that there would be a roll-over of settlements; the Government was thinking that there would be a similar settlement in 2024-25 but recognition had been given for inflation in the planning.
- There had been an allocation in 2023-24 budget around pay. The current year's pay award had not yet been agreed so this was recognised but there was sufficient in the budget to fund this unless a higher award was agreed.
- Officers were asked if the Council was close to defaulting on paying any care providers. The Head of Strategic Finance confirmed that at that time the Council was cash-rich and not close to defaulting on payments, with no issues on paying bills being seen at that time. There was a focus on ensuring a balanced budget to ensure financial stability across the Council.
- The Council had repeated its ask to Government on what it needed financially however it was unlikely that there would be a substantial overhaul of the Government funding system. The concerns expressed by the care sector had been heard which was that they would like a longer term settlement and funding to deliver services in a rural area.

11.3 The Select Committee:

1. **CONSIDERED** the Budget and Medium Term Financial Strategy position as reported to Cabinet in June 2023 (Appendix 1), noting in particular the following elements as set out in the appended report, which form the context for 2024-25 budget setting:
 - a) the budget gap for 2024-25 and the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) period.
 - b) The Departmental saving targets.
 - c) The overall timetable and approach to developing the 2024-25 Budget.

2. **AGREED** that the Select Committee will provide input to the 2024-25 Budget process in July (this meeting) and in November, with the latter (November) report providing an opportunity to comment on the detailed savings proposals being taken to public consultation.
3. **CONSIDERED** the key issues for 2024-25 budget setting as they pertain to the services within the Select Committee's remit (as set out in this paper, the appended Cabinet report, and the 2023-24 Budget Book), and in particular to endorse:
 - a) The overall service strategies as set out within the 2023-24 Budget Book.
 - b) The budget setting principles set out in Section 3 of the appended Cabinet report, which will provide the broad framework for savings development for services within the Select Committee's remit.
4. **CONSIDERED** specific areas of activity that the Select Committee would recommend exploring for savings development, in order to provide input to the 2024-25 budget process and inform the saving proposals put forward to Cabinet later in the year.

12 Forward Work Programme

- 12.1 The Select Committee reviewed the Forward Plan.
- 12.2 It was noted that the school transport report would be moved to November.
- 12.3 The Vice-Chair thanked the Chair for his work on the alcohol and drug task and finish group.
- 12.4 The Select Committee:
 1. **AGREED** the forward plan
- 12.5 The Select Committee agreed:
 - That the briefing on Home Schooling would be removed from the forward plan. A training session to be arranged for all members on this topic, following on from this being considered at Children's Services Performance Review Panel.
 - That the briefing on the music service would be removed from the forward plan and that information on successes and achievements of this service be collated to go in the weekly briefing to all Councillors. Officers would keep this topic under review and bring a report to the Select Committee if any changes relevant for the Select Committee to review and discuss arise.

The Meeting Closed at 12:51

**Cllr Fran Whymark, Chair,
People and Communities Select Committee**

Appendix A: response to Committee Member request for definition of health as applied in the Public Health Strategic Plan

Response to request by Member for definition of health as applied in the Public Health Strategic Plan:

The Public Health Strategic Plan 'Ready to Change...Ready to Act' presented at People & Communities Select Committee on 19 May 2023 refers to health starting from definition of Public Health as being, "The science and art of preventing disease, prolonging life and promoting health through organised efforts of society". With health defined by the World Health Organisation (WHO) as 'a state of complete physical, mental and social wellbeing and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity' (WHO, 1948). In the context of the NCC Public Health strategic plan applying this to being about physical health, mental health, and wellbeing.

In addition, national government sets out the statutory duties of Directors of Public Health (DsPH) in Local Authorities which includes:

'DsPH will continue to play a key role as we face ongoing and new challenges, including action to increase healthy life expectancy, tackle health disparities and protect our communities from communicable and non-communicable diseases and other threats to health.'

Along with a leadership role spanning all 3 domains of public health – health improvement, health protection and healthcare public health. In doing so required to lead work to improve local population health by understanding the factors that determine health and ill health, and how to change behaviour and promote health and wellbeing in ways that also reduce health inequalities.

The Public Health Strategic Plan 'Ready to Change...Ready to Act' sets out approach to population health by working to improve and protect our population's health by promoting healthy lifestyles and supporting people to make healthy choices. Furthermore, to provide focus to some of the wider, indirect health impacts as highlighted by the pandemic, for example on mental health, healthy weight, children's health, and engagement with public health services. Public Health taking a leadership role in providing data and evidence to inform on improving health outcomes and promoting access to preventative health and wellbeing support services. Working closely with place-based organisations in efforts to secure better public health including considering the health aspects of planning, housing and air quality.

Tobacco Control Alliance

The Norfolk Tobacco Control Alliance was reformed following the Covid19 pandemic in 2021 with an inaugural workshop in October 2021.

Norfolk Tobacco Control Alliance provides strategic leadership for tobacco control in Norfolk and for the delivery of the Norfolk Tobacco Control Strategy.

The vision for the TCA is a '**Smokefree Norfolk by 2030**'.

The Alliance works in partnership across agencies within and outside Norfolk to ensure robust tobacco control practice. It will:

- a) Tackle the priorities set out by Tobacco Control Plan for England and associated policies and guidance.
- b) Provide leadership for the Tobacco Control agenda in Norfolk
- c) Revise, develop and implement the Norfolk Tobacco Control Strategy and action plan.
- d) Monitor the performance of tobacco control activities against targets set for each priority
- e) Highlight/promote current practice of the Alliance and its partners
- f) Provide a forum for the development of multi-agency funding opportunities
- g) Continue to develop partnerships with relevant organisations
- h) Maintain a clear understanding of mainstream funding and ensure smoking cessation links closely with the tobacco control work stream.
- i) Sharing best practice
- j) Provide a forum to understand health need in the population
- k) Stimulating innovation to reduce smoking in Norfolk

The Alliance is chaired by the Consultant in Public Health with a lead for adult health improvement and reports to the N&W NHS ICS's Health Improvement Transformation Group. A core group has been established to drive forward the work, with two other sub-groups focusing on Smoking in Pregnancy and Children and Young People.

Tobacco Control Alliance includes the following member organisations:

Local Government:

- Norfolk County Council Public Health
- Norfolk County Council Trading Standards
- Norfolk County Council Communications
- District, Borough and City council Environmental Health Services

Other Public Sector organisations:

- Fire and Rescue Service
- Children Centres

Third Sector:

- Voluntary Norfolk
- Community Action Norfolk

NHS:

- Norfolk Stop smoking service provider(s)
- Local Pharmacy Committee
- Health Psychology
- ICS/HITG
- Acute Trusts
- Community Trusts
- Mental Health Trust
- Norfolk Healthy Child Programme (Cambridgeshire Community Services)
- Primary care

Academic

- UEA
- School Governors
- Further Education representative

Other Organisations/Communities

- Housing associations
- User groups

Others may be invited to attend the meetings to discuss specific items or proposals as the project progresses, for example to provide specialist/expert information.

For any further questions please contact the Chair

Ciceley Scarborough

Acting Consultant in Public Health

ciceley.scarborough@norfolk.gov.uk

Vaping information - Technical

E-cigarettes are a battery-powered device that heats a solution, usually containing nicotine, to produce a vapour that is inhaled by the user and simulates the sensation of smoking. An e-cigarette user is often referred to as a 'vape' with the action referred to as 'vaping'. Other components of the solution are vegetable glycerine, propylene glycol and, usually, flavourings. Unlike tobacco cigarettes, they do not contain tobacco, and using an e-cigarette does not involve burning, meaning they don't produce tar or carbon monoxide which are two of the most harmful components of tobacco smoking¹

Vapes are not recommended for people under 18 years old and cannot be sold to people who are under 18 years old.

To find out more about vaping go to this NHS website:

[Using e-cigarettes to stop smoking - NHS \(www.nhs.uk\)](https://www.nhs.uk/stop4me/stop-smoking/using-e-cigarettes-to-stop-smoking)

For any further questions please contact

Ciceley Scarborough

Acting Consultant in Public Health

ciceley.scarborough@norfolk.gov.uk

¹ [adph-south-east-position-statement-on-electronic-cigarettes-dps-v8-opt.pdf \(stopforlifeoxon.org\)](https://www.stopforlifeoxon.org/adph-south-east-position-statement-on-electronic-cigarettes-dps-v8-opt.pdf)

Appendix A: response to Committee Member request for information on the programme of safe accommodation provided to sufferers of domestic abuse across Norfolk and the predicted future demand

Duties under Part 4 of the Domestic Abuse Act 2021 requires Tier 1 authorities to:

- Conduct a comprehensive needs analysis of the prevalence and support needs of adults and children as victim-survivors of domestic abuse.
- Formulate and enact a strategy that meets the identified support needs of both adults and children.
- Operate a Local Partnership Board, with designated representation/membership to oversee and monitor the implementation of the strategy.

The Norfolk Office of Data and Analytics (NODA) was published in September 2021 the main point in relation to Member request is that in Norfolk (at that time) it was estimated that 38 bedspaces were required (over and above the 54 bedspaces in refuge for women only already provided). The information provided by the Needs Assessment were used to help formulate the Support in Safe Accommodation Strategy for Norfolk (which was agreed by the Norfolk Domestic Abuse Partnership Board – NDAPB). There are 5 clear aims of the Strategy:

1. **Increase the amount and flexibility of safe accommodation**
2. **Improve engagement with victim-survivors of domestic abuse**
3. **Improve the quality of support and safe accommodation**
4. **Support children in safe accommodation**
5. **Improve data intelligence**

Over the past year (April 2022-March 2023) we have:

Accommodation

- 10 new properties (amounting to 30 new bedspaces) have increased capacity and additional support has been commissioned. 11 bedspaces are exclusively for women, but 19 can be used by any adult and their children. This creates greater flexibility as to how we use capacity efficiently and effectively. In addition, victim-survivors have greater choice and there is less pressure on refuges. The additional properties have increased our ability to accommodate those who require accessible accommodation; an increase of 3 units (7 in total).
- Grant funding to the 7 districts in Norfolk now means that victim-survivors at standard and medium risk can stay safely in their own homes, regardless of tenure type. The Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner for Norfolk (OPCCN) commission NIDAS to provide a Sanctuary Service to those at high risk. This has resulted in a full Sanctuary Service offer to victim-survivors in Norfolk. The use of target hardening measures (such as additional locks or cameras) means that victim-survivors can choose to stay safely in their own homes. This ensures that adults and children can maintain their education and family networks, and employment can be sustained where required. In addition, this decreases pressure on the demand for refuge and dispersed accommodation (as forms of safe accommodation).

Victim-survivor engagement

- An Engagement Framework has been produced, and an engagement working group has been created to further our commitment to future co-production. Representation includes victim-survivors, representation from district councils, commissioned providers, and Registered Providers. Work is currently focused on finalising an engagement tool through a test and learn process.

Quality

- A Quality Assessment Framework (QAF) has been produced to drive and continuously improve quality of safe accommodation, through regular auditing and scrutiny of commissioned services.
- Funding has been provided to district authorities and Registered Providers who own safe accommodation, to achieve Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance Accreditation. This ensures our continued commitment to the whole housing approach in Norfolk.

Children

- We commissioned additional support in refuges where previously support had not been provided; this has ensured a consistent approach across safe accommodation. In addition, a new Specification now includes a clear overview of the types of support that should be provided to children. This ensures the quality of support being provided in all safe accommodation is consistent and of a high standard, and able to be monitored through the new QAF and our regular contract review meetings.

Intelligence

- A new monitoring workbook has been designed and completed by providers. This ensures data collection is streamlined to meet our DELTA return requirements and improve intelligence for our needs assessment.

A refreshed Needs Assessment (in draft) has estimated that, bearing in mind the additional accommodation secured during the year that the case is that 8 additional bedspaces are required. However, it is worth noting that as there is little data evidencing the needs of males and/or LGBTQ+ communities that this need may be higher, so we will endeavour to go look beyond this current unmet need. In the pipeline we have an additional 4 properties in South Norfolk (again dispersed accommodation which has greater flexibility) and 6 flats for those facing multiple disadvantage (i.e. complex needs – higher levels of mental health acuity/drug and/or alcohol use etc).

People and Communities Select Committee

Report Title: Carers Matter Norfolk - Briefing

Date of Meeting: 14.7.23

Responsible Cabinet Member: Cllr Thomas (Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care)

Responsible Director: Debbie Bartlett

Executive Summary

This briefing details the successes of our commissioned Carers Matter Norfolk service, which launched in 2020, and supports adult carers caring for adults. The service supports thousands of carers in Norfolk each year, with information, advice, assessment and support.

It is delivered via a Social Impact Bond, and the contract is outcomes based. We are supported by the Life Chances Fund, who part fund our outcomes payments to Carers Matter Norfolk.

We are also supported by the Institute for Public Care, who act as an external evaluator to the Social Impact Bond. They are currently working on a report which will tell us how well the Carers Matter Norfolk service is doing at preventing Carer Breakdown. They have previously shared with us the carer's experience of using the service, and changes have been made to the assessment process so that carers are better supported moving forward.

1. Background and Purpose

1.1 On 1 September 2020, we launched the new Carers Matter Norfolk service, which offers an enhanced service for adult carers caring for adults in Norfolk. Under the Carers Matter Norfolk service, carers can access:

- A single integrated service for Carers in Norfolk that will help improve the quality and number of services for carers
- A flexible service that can respond to individual carers needs more effectively
- Information, advice, guidance and Carers Assessments
- A health and wellbeing fund to support carers when they need it
- A short breaks service for carers who need a break from their caring role,
- All being delivered by experienced, value driven, outcome focussed third sector providers

1.2 The Carers Matter Norfolk contract is delivered as a Social Impact Bond, meaning the service is only paid once they achieve one of three main outcomes for a

carer. Alongside this, we are working with the Life Chances Fund, who support a number of Social Impact Bonds across the country. As part of their support to this contract they offer top up funding of £4.1m which part funds each of our outcome payments to Carers Matter Norfolk.

1.3 The contract is focussed on three main outcomes. Our three key outcomes are:

- Sustainment of the caring role – measured by prevention of carer breakdown at 6 and 12 months
- Increased numbers of carers known and understood by Norfolk – measured by the number of unique, new to the service, carers referred into the service.
- Carers wellbeing improvement – measured by carers improving their wellbeing assessment score at 6 and 12 months

2. Carers Matter Norfolk Performance

2.1 Overall, the Carers Matter Norfolk service is performing well. In 2022/23 they had over 3,587 unique carers referred to them, of which 3,184 carers were new to the Carers Matter Norfolk service. In 2022/23 they also:

- Triaged 2,061 carers
- Offered low level support to 1,258 carers
- Offered high level support to 493 carers
- 219 carers were received support from the Health and Wellbeing Fund
- 529 carers breaks were received, totalling 2,713 hours

2.2 To ensure Carers Matter Norfolk are delivering good outcomes for carers, and offer us good value for money, an external evaluation of the contract is being completed by the Institute of Public Care as part of Oxford Brookes University. They are currently undertaking a large piece of research which aims to:

- Develop a better understanding of “carer breakdown” and implications for services
- Explore the relationship between needs and risks, wellbeing and carer breakdown
- Understand the success of the Carers Matter Norfolk service in preventing carer breakdown, and associated care costs with this
- Seeing how the service has acted on the Year 1 Institute of Public Care Report

In undertaking this research the Institute of Public Care are utilising:

- Carer Surveys
- Carer Interviews
- Professional Surveys
- Carers Matter Norfolk Staff Interviews
- Analysis of Case Files

2.3 Following the Year 1 Evaluation Report from the Institute of Public Care, we learnt that carers felt the level of assessment they underwent in the service was disproportionate to the level of support they then received from Carers Matter Norfolk. Based on this feedback Carers Matter Norfolk have reduced the number of assessments being undertaken, whilst ensuring carers are afforded the same level of support.

2.4 It was also identified that carers were having to tell their story a number of times as they moved through the Carers Matter Norfolk system. To combat this, over the previous six months Carers Matter Norfolk have invested in a new self-assessment tool which allows carers to explain their situation at a time and pace which suits them. This allows Carers Matter Norfolk to use this information to have more meaningful conversations with carers about what matters to them. It also enables Carers Matter Norfolk to get carers to the appropriate team for support without having the carer go through a lengthy assessment process involving multiple different professionals. Carers who were involved in developing the new self-assessment approach reported that they felt the self-assessment form put carers first, made them feel listened too, and the questions made them feel valued as a carer. They preferred having a form to fill in at their own pace, when it suited them to fill it in, and found the subsequent conversations more positive.

2.5 Carers Matter Norfolk is committed to putting carers at the heart of everything they do. As part of their approach to service development, Carers Matter Norfolk carry out regular targeted focus groups with Carers accessing the service to understand carer experience and discuss service changes. They also gather feedback from individual carers, through Locality Meetings and at Carers Advisory Board to understand the thoughts and feelings of carers who don't necessarily access the service.

2.6 Overall, since the introduction of the new Carers Matter Norfolk Social Impact Bond, we have seen an increase in the number of carers being referred to and supported by the service. We have also seen the service respond to feedback from carers and our external evaluation partner, Institute for Public Care, and improve their services to better support carers in Norfolk. The current work being undertaken by the Institute for Public Care will help us understand how the service is reducing carer breakdown, and further our understanding of how carer wellbeing will affect carer breakdown.

3. Background Papers

[A Social Impact Bond for Carers Report](#)

Norfolk County Council – Cabinet – 2 December 2019

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People and Communities Select Committee

Item No: 7

Report Title: Integrated Winter Plan (Health and Wellbeing) for 2023/24

Date of Meeting: 15 September 2023

Responsible Cabinet Member: Cllr Alison Thomas (Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care) and Cllr Bill Borrett (Cabinet Member for Public Health and Wellbeing)

Responsible Director: Debbie Bartlett, Executive Director of Adult Social Services

Executive Summary

The winter period can impact on the health and wellbeing of our population, with health conditions that can be caused or worsened by cold weather, higher incidences of seasonal illnesses, and impact on wider social wellbeing. Our system often faces greater pressures in winter which are managed by all partners across our Integrated Care Partnership. Through partnership working we can alleviate and address these seasonal challenges to help support communities to remain resilient, address inequalities and prioritise prevention.

As with last year, we have not experienced a summer where pressures have abated. Three key areas of learning from last winter have been reflected on in this year's planning, centred around demand, capacity, and communities. The Office of National Statistics (ONS) completed an analysis of the impact of last year's winter pressures, with a series of findings related to health and wellbeing than can also inform targeted action over winter.

This winter there are an increased number of national planning priorities for local implementation, including adult social care workforce and care market priorities, urgent and emergency care requirements and NHS recovery targets and. Ensuring sufficient balance of action to meet national priorities and challenges specific to our local system will be critical.

The report appraises committee members of work being undertaken to support a resilient system able to face the impact of the 2023/24 winter on health and wellbeing, and the specific role of Norfolk County Council in that preparedness. It highlights the developing winter framework with key initiatives that will help our population live as healthy life as possible during winter - the four key strategic priorities being: 1.) Meeting people's needs, 2.) Resilient communities, 3.) Supporting our workforce, and 4.) Working together in Winter conditions.

Recommendations

The Select Committee is asked to:

1. Receive the report on the draft Integrated Winter Plan for 2023/24 and offer guidance and comment on the council's winter planning.

1. Background and Purpose

- 1.1 As with last year, our health and care system has not experienced a summer where pressures have abated. Although winter is not an emergency or considered an unusual event, it is recognised as a period of increased pressure due to demand both in the complexity of people's needs and the capacity demands on resources within social care, health and the wider partners.

Learning from last winter

- 1.2 The winter framework last year was designed to support the maintenance of high quality and safe service provision in a climate of increasing pressure and as we continued to recover from the COVID-19 pandemic. The framework was utilised by partners in health and social care, and that collaborative working is being further strengthened in this year's winter planning approach. There were four priority areas that have been built on and developed in this year's winter plan: 1.) Meeting people's needs; 2.) Resilient communities and care systems; 3.) Supporting the provider market; 4.) Business recovery.

- 1.3 Across our four priorities last year, three key themes emerged in our experience that have been reflected on in this year's planning - demand, capacity, and communities:

1.4 Demand:

- As a result of continued focus on hospital discharge, reducing ambulance handover delays and support in the community, we achieved positive benefits as a system across community-based support and urgent and emergency care performance. We saw an increased demand for support and consequent management of that demand.
- Through the implementation of a tactical winter plan for home care, to address pressures in the care market, social care reduced the interim care list of people awaiting care by 75%.
- Transfer of care hubs stabilised through permanent funding, reducing vacancies and supporting our frontline health and social care workforce

1.5 Capacity:

- Norfolk was the subject of a national NHS England Case study for its 'Housing with Care' flats being used to support people who are medically fit to be

discharged from hospital but need care at home to leave. People were temporarily moved from a hospital bed to a flat in a 'Housing with Care' scheme, where they received 24/7 support before moving back home. 21 'Housing with Care' flats deployed.

- Discharge Incentive – capacity to support 10 additional hospital discharges per week has been created by incentivising homecare providers with financial support to pick up new packages of care within 24 hours and covering increased complexity of discharge requirements
- Non-Emergency Patient Transport – increased provision to support discharge of patients from hospital and reduce transport related delays.

1.6 Support in communities:

- Keep Well, Keep Warm' campaign - Prevention campaign focused on supporting people to keep well in winter, including a focus on mental health, hardship and fuel poverty support.
- Home Support Rate Increase – Increase of £1.08 to the hourly rate to increase workforce and enable providers to take on additional work that supports flow in to, and through, community care, supporting increased discharge activity.
- Carers Hardship Support – Additional Information and advice support for unpaid and family carers at point of discharge (acute and community), focused on winter hardship support.

National analysis

1.7 The Office of National Statistics (ONS) completed an analysis of the impact of last year's winter pressures on different population groups in Great Britain. A number of these findings related to health and wellbeing and included learning that could inform local planning this year, including how adults more likely to be classified as food-insecure included those who had moderate-to-severe depressive symptoms, were economically inactive but not retired, were unemployed, or had at least one dependent child. The ONS have also highlighted how those experiencing moderate-to-severe depressive symptoms living in the most deprived areas in England or aged 16 to 29 years were also significantly more likely to report difficulty keeping warm.

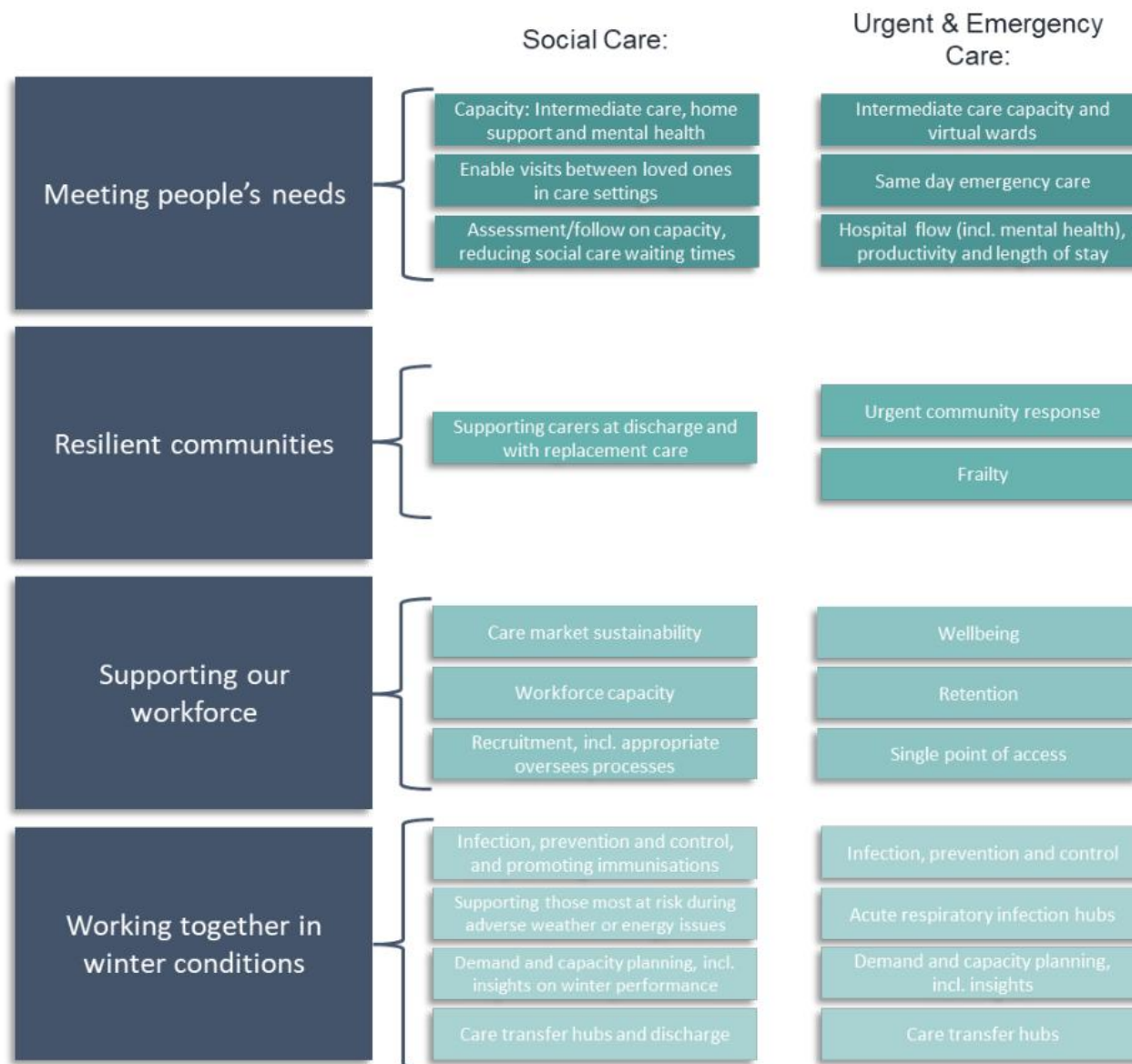
1.8 Norfolk County Council is engaged in partnership working with local agencies supporting people's health and wellbeing via 'Health and Wellbeing Partnerships'. These partnerships lead on wide ranging initiatives that support residents in their communities, and are an opportune space to further consider how winter could lead to hardship and cost of living pressures, with subsequent impact on mental health and well-being, such as those identified in national analysis.

2. Proposal

- 2.1 A local winter framework for 2023/24 establishes a dynamic plan, where activity will adapt and change to respond to developing needs and policies. It sets out initiatives across our partnership, and the following framework highlights the initiatives relating to social care and interface with urgent and emergency care.

Draft Winter Plan Framework – 2023/24

Helping people live as healthy life as possible during winter, through working together and ensuring communities remain resilient, addressing inequalities and prioritising prevention



3. Impact of the Proposal

Meeting People's Needs

3.1 Ensuring people can access the support they need during the pressures of winter is important in delivering consistent health and wellbeing outcomes across the year. Our winter framework will address this by focusing on:

- **Supporting access in the community** - enabling visits between loved ones in care settings
- **Targeted tactical home care winter support** - A targeted set of deliverables to ensure winter readiness and support providers during the winter period, to sustain significant improvements in capacity seen over last winter and continuing in to 2023. Provider support as a vital component of the work with a collaborative approach to respond swiftly to increasing demand. Building on the community step down model with housing with care flats, for people who are awaiting a care package to return home but are currently in an Intermediate Care bed.
- **Assessment capacity** – supporting social care teams to reduce waiting times.
- **Prioritising Mental Health** – schemes to support seasonal pressures for people with mental health needs, with specific focused plans including flow in hospital care and intermediate care
- **Supporting flow in hospital care** – Working with NHS and wider partners to enhance flow through inpatient and community services and improved length of stay, including acute and mental health provision,
- **Collective action on intermediate care** - working together to deliver intermediate care capacity that recovers people after a hospital stay. Supporting home-based recovery through an increase in home-based reablement capacity and expanding reablement approaches through home support used at discharge. Delivering home support enhanced discharge incentives to support people who need long term care after recovery. Supporting NHS-commissioned intermediate Care Beds for those that require bedded support, including wrap-around support such as social work.

Resilient communities

3.2 Support for people in the communities in which they live will ensure that we mitigate some of the challenges we see during winter. This will be addressed by:

- **Health inequality actions** – building a health inequality focus into our delivery of all our collective actions over winter. This includes empowering people in care through care tools they can use to manage their own health and wellbeing.
- **Supporting carers** – ensuring the Better Care Fund (BCF) includes replacement care opportunities and at point of discharge we are taking carers views and circumstances into account at discharge. The Carers Matter Norfolk and Family Carers Suffolk services offer Information

advice, assessment and support, carers breaks, access to a health and wellbeing fund and welfare advice. Over the winter continue additional resource from last winter in to providing advice focussing on enable carers to access additional financial support to cope with cost of living concerns such as heating and food resources.

- **New Step-up/down model from 2023/24** – commencement of a new VCSE-lead service from September 2023, with additional investment, to support people being discharged home from hospital and in the community when in need. Self-directed support and use of Direct Payments is being promoted to give access to untapped support in the community.

Supporting our workforce

3.3 Our workforce is our key asset in supporting people with their health and wellbeing, and this is more important than ever during the winter period. Supporting our workforce, both in recruitment and in their welfare, will be addressed by:

- **Care market sustainability and improvement** - increasing adult social care workforce capacity and retention. Focusing on recruitment including appropriate overseas processes.
- **Supporting our collective workforce** – joining up between health and social care to carry out a large scale recruitment drive, coordinating activities across system organisations to improve recruitment, retention and well-being of our staff. Working to improve the welfare and resilience across health and social care working in operational roles. Targeting recruitment for specialist groups such as therapists.
- **Collaborative training** - training through the Enhanced Health and Wellbeing in Care programme to support providers to safely help individuals with a growing complexity of need exacerbated by winter conditions.

Working together in winter conditions

3.4 Winter presents a series of external challenges relating to weather, energy and illness, that require individual and collective action:

- **Energy and adverse weather** – preparing for, and responding to, winter conditions including identifying and prioritising those most at risk during the colder winter period.
- **Infection Prevention and Control (IPAC)** - protocols in place to manage and contain outbreaks of flu and COVID-19, and supporting and monitoring the care market to ensure a consistent IPAC approach.
- **Promoting winter immunisations with staff** - joint working across health and social care to promote vaccination programmes for staff and care residents.
- **Care transfer hubs** – continuing to implement and strengthen our hubs supporting discharge and escalation avoidance, now supported through recurrent funding.

- **Using data to support effective system working** - completing operational and surge planning to prepare for different winter scenarios and understanding our position during winter using data. Developing our demand and capacity plans established through the Better Care Fund, that enables us to understand the impact of making changes in our system on future activity, demand and the supply of services. Ensuring a single plan that projects hospital discharge demand, capacity to respond to that demand and the impact of actions on both. Increasingly base decisions (including commissioning, service design and strategic operational planning) on a greater evidence base provided by demand and capacity planning.

Better Care Fund and Discharge Funding

3.5 The Better Care Fund provides opportunities to bring system partners together to agree Integrated priorities, including actions to address winter pressures relating to urgent and emergency care. The Additional Discharge Fund (ADF) is a new fund established in 2022-23 that has enabled system partners to focus on schemes that improve and enhance support for discharges. The ADF is recurrent, over 2023-24 and 2024-25. The recurrency of this funding has helped build a programme where the services being funded support intermediate care and a HomeFirst approach that will be instrumental in delivering capacity to support people home during winter. Norfolk's Health and Wellbeing Board will confirm funding plans, including delivering home-based discharge capacity, continuation of Housing with Care Flats for step-down, and the baseline Home Support Rate Increase of £1.08 implemented last winter.

3.6 In addition to the ADF, the Core BCF continues to fund short term intermediate care services delivering reablement and rehabilitation across the Norfolk and Waveney footprint which are either provided by the Local Authority or the community healthcare organisations.

4. Evidence and Reasons for Decision

4.1 This winter there are an increased number of national priorities for local implementation, including urgent and emergency care requirements, NHS recovery targets and adult social care workforce and care market priorities. Ensuring sufficient balance of action against national priorities and challenges specific to our local system will be critical.

Social Care

4.2 The Department of Health and Social Care have established a set of key actions to support adult social care systems to remain resilient and be able to provide people and their carers with the support they need this winter. The approach also established expectations for how NHS organisations will work with adult social care in both the planning and delivery of support. These

priorities have been reflected in our local winter framework and include workforce, care market sustainability, intermediate care and adverse weather. All parts of the adult social care sector play a critical role over the winter period.

4.3 There are also a series of local priorities that have been identified by Norfolk County Council adult social care, to ensure continued improvements during the winter season that align with its wider strategic plans. These include

- Discharge - people who stay in hospital have their independence maximised so that fewer people require long term bedded care and more people going home with support.
- Prioritising addressing pressure in mental health support.
- Supporting social care assessment - National surveying through the Association of Directors of Adult Social Services (ADASS) identifies that there is a risk that care waiting lists could rise again this winter without more capacity, with social care teams needing to support more people coming out of hospital with complex health and support needs.
- Continued targeted action with home care providers to sustain capacity improvements.

Urgent and Emergency Care

4.4 NHS England have published a winter letter and associated supporting documents related to system roles and responsibilities. Within the letter there is a strong reference to building resilience through planning and urgent and emergency care recovery plans, with particular focus on 10 high impact interventions of which some also impact on wider partners including social care. Six key lines of enquiry (KLOEs) have been identified that systems need to address in their urgent and emergency care winter preparations:

- KLOE 1: How will the system work together to deliver on its collective responsibilities?
- KLOE 2: high-impact interventions
- KLOE 3: discharge, intermediate care, and social care
- KLOE 4: H2 numerical submission
- KLOE 5: Escalation plans
- KLOE 6: Workforce

4.5 NHS England have also set out associated primary care responsibilities over the winter period which also have resonance with local authorities planning, such as increasing self-directed care support and enhancing navigation through services.

Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise Sector

4.6 The Empowering Communities Partnership have identified a series of challenges facing the sector, which could be further impacted by the winter period winter period. These include impact on income, and demand increases. The partnership is using networks to drive partnership

opportunities, sharing of properties, cross border collaborations and negotiating better support. It is also vital that in our system planning for winter, we increasingly ensure the role, opportunities and challenges faced by our sector are as central as those felt by other partners in our Integrated Care System.

5. Alternative Options

- 5.1 Planning for winter is a critical part of the delivery of safe and effective services for our residents. In development of the winter framework, options for the efficient use of collective resource between partners is being considered.

6. Financial Implications

- 6.1 There are no financial implications foreseen as a direct result of this report. Any investment will be wholly contained within the specific discharge grant supplied by government for this purpose.

7. Resource Implications

7.1 Staff:

Workforce is a key component on winter planning. Actions are outlined in this report to stimulate and strengthen workforce as part of collective system action.

7.2 Property:

There are no property implications foreseen as a direct result of this report.

7.3 IT:

There are no IT implications foreseen as a direct result of this report.

8. Other Implications

8.1 Legal Implications:

N/A

8.2 Human Rights Implications:

N/A

8.3 Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) (this must be included):

An Equality Impact Assessment is being completed as part of the final Winter Plan.

8.4 Data Protection Impact Assessments (DPIA):

A Data Protection Impact Assessment is being completed as part of the final Winter Plan.

8.5 Health and Safety implications (where appropriate):

N/A

8.6 Sustainability implications (where appropriate):

N/A

8.7 Any Other Implications:

N/A

9. Risk Implications / Assessment

9.1 As part of our system's local preparation for winter, a series of key risks will need to be considered and mitigated that have connections with the delivery of our own responsibilities within the health and social care system. These includes how people are discharged home after a hospital stay, how infection is prevented, and how we collectively support our workforce across the system.

Officer Contact

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People and Communities Select Committee

Item No: 8

Report Title: SEND & Alternative Provision (SEND & AP) Policy & Inspection Framework, inc. Local First Inclusion Programme

Date of Meeting: 15 September 2023

Responsible Cabinet Cabinet Member for Children's Services)

Responsible Director: Sara Tough (Executive Director Children's Services)

Executive Summary

Norfolk's SEND & Alternative (AP) policy and improvement programme is being guided by a combination of our local priorities, through the Area SEND & AP Strategy, and our response to national policy. The national policy landscape for SEND & AP is currently comprised of the DfE SEND & AP Improvement Programme, the Ofsted/Care Quality Commission Area SEND Inspection Framework and the DfE 'Safety Valve' programme. The latter, is the DfE programme for those local authority areas with the highest High Needs Block budget pressure and Norfolk joined this programme, following Secretary of State approval, in April this year. In Norfolk the safety valve programme is known as Local First Inclusion.

The Local First Inclusion programme builds on, and replaces, the previous SEND & AP Transformation programme and it complements our Area SEND & AP Strategy. Both the Local First Inclusion programme and the Area SEND & AP Strategy are based on the principles for improving outcomes for children, young people and their families that have been developed in co-production. Both of these SEND strategic improvement programmes will provide the evidence base for our self-evaluation within the Ofsted/CQC Area Inspection framework.

The report to Committee this September is focussed on the Local First Inclusion programme and sets out the information provided to Scrutiny Committee in May this year. It was agreed as part of that reporting process that the People & Communities Select Committee would receive a report on a bi-annual basis and Scrutiny on an annual basis.

The Local First Inclusion Programme is all about improving outcomes for children and young people with SEND ensuring, wherever possible and appropriate, they can attend school close to their home/in their community with the support they need to make progress in their learning alongside other children of the same age.

Local First Inclusion is a six-year programme which has been agreed by the Secretary of State, as part of the DfE 'safety valve' programme, securing DfE investment of £70m alongside NCC investment of c. £35m. This investment is aimed at ensuring we can collectively improve assessment, support, services and provision for children and young people with SEND whilst also achieving a balanced High Needs Block budget over the medium / long term.

Local First Inclusion complements our Norfolk Area SEND Strategy and ensures that we can address the range of issues that have been identified over the past few years through co-production with parents/carers, young people and the professionals that support them within NCC, early years settings, schools, colleges and the health commissioned providers.

This six-year programme is ambitious and complex. To ensure that we can deliver on our aims and objectives and the outputs and outcomes signed off by the Secretary of State, we have designed a programme of 80 projects within 5 overarching workstreams:

- Workstream 1 – Mainstream School Inclusion, Culture and Practice
- Workstream 2 – Early Help & Inclusion / School & Community Teams
- Workstream 3 – School Led Alternative Provision Models
- Workstream 4 – Commissioning/Using Independent Sector Differently
- Workstream 5 – SEND Sufficiency & Capital Delivery

The DfE are working with over 30 Local Authorities that are experiencing ongoing budget pressures within their High Needs Block budget (the budget from government within the overall 'Dedicated Schools Grant' that is used to pay for Norfolk special schools, specialist resource bases, additional funding for SEND in mainstream schools, alternative provision and commissioned services, e.g Speech and Language Therapy). This programme of work by the DfE with local authorities is known as 'Safety Valve' and has an explicit aim to develop a joint investment package between the DfE and LAs to ensure that transformational change to meet current and future needs of children and young people with SEND can occur alongside addressing historic underinvestment and associated cumulative budget pressures and deficits.

Norfolk was invited into the 'safety valve' programme in May 2022 and the culmination of the negotiation resulted in a published agreement by the DfE, following Secretary of State approval, in March 2023. The combined investment within this programme is over £100m revenue in addition to new capital funding agreed in principle by the DfE in excess of £25m.

In summary, Local First Inclusion has been designed to achieve these aims and objectives:

Norfolk's Plan...Aims and Objectives

Aim:

- Local First Inclusion - system approach
- Improving and expanding the landscape of SEND provision across Norfolk
- Achieving a balanced in-year budget for the High Needs Block by 2027/2028

Objectives:

- Tackling current, and reducing future, demand
- Re-shaping the landscape of provision – shifting left away from high cost/Independent non-maintained
- Redirecting pupil flow from high-cost/low quality independent specialist to state-funded special, resource-base and mainstream
- Intervening earlier, more holistically to prevent escalation of need
- Improving confidence in mainstream provision to meet need
- Increasing accountability and incentivising mainstream inclusion
- Increasing local, maintained specialist provision/ alternative provision within the mainstream
- Driving down costs through improved focus on commissioning and contract management



Recommendations / Action Required [delete as appropriate]

The Select Committee is asked to:

- a. Note and discuss the programme of work detailed within this report, known as Local First Inclusion, including the overall strategy, providing feedback and recommendations where appropriate
- b. Note and discuss the key risks and mitigations of this programme given the system-wide and transformative nature of it, providing feedback and recommendations where appropriate
- c. Agree the proposed programme of annual reports to Scrutiny committee and bi-annual reports to the People and Communities Select Committee

1. Background and Purpose

1.1 Ongoing improvements for special educational needs and disability assessment, support and provision are currently the focus of changes at both national and local level. At a national level the DfE are implementing their SEND & Alternative Provision Improvement Plan and Ofsted/Care Quality Commission are implementing a new inspection framework for Local Area SEND. In Norfolk we are refreshing our Area SEND Strategy, and will also ensure that it covers Alternative Provision (AP) too in line with the governments national plan, and we are implementing our new Local First Inclusion programme.

1.2 DfE SEND & Alternative Provision (AP) Improvement Plan

1.2.1 The SEND & Alternative Provision Improvement Plan was published by the DfE in March 2023 and is the government response to the SEND Green Paper national consultation carried out in spring/summer 2022. This government plan is designed to respond to the SEND reforms set out in the 2014 Children and Families Act, to continue to improve services and provision for SEND but to also tackle challenges within the SEND system.

1.2.2 The DfE have identified 4 main issues with the current SEND system across the country

- Outcomes for children and young people with SEND are consistently worse than that their peers – across almost every measure
- Experiences of navigating the SEND system to secure support are poor
- There is too much inconsistency across the country – with decisions made based on where a child lives, not on their needs
- Despite unprecedented investment, the SEND system is not delivering value for money for children, young people and families

and have set out 3 key priorities for improvement

- Fulfil children's potential
 - CYP with SEND enjoy their childhood, achieve good outcomes and are well prepared for adulthood and employment
- Build parents' trust
 - A fairer, easily navigable system that restores parent and carer confidence that their children will get the right support, in the right place, at the right time
- Provide financial sustainability
 - LAs make the best use of the high needs budget to meet CYP's needs and improve outcomes, while placing them on a stable financial footing

1.2.3 Beyond these high-level principles these changes at a national level do provide the opportunity to support changes that we are making through our two local SEND strategic improvement plans - Area SEND Strategy and Local First Inclusion.

- 1.2.4 DfE have confirmed that there will not be legislative changes within the current Parliament and instead will be seeking to implement their improvement plan within current regulations and the SEND Code of Practice. Examples of tangible changes are the renewed focus on SEN Support, rather than a reliance on Education, Health and Care Plans, and, alongside this, greater clarity on the respective responsibilities of the Local Authority, Integrated Care Board and individual education and health providers. There will also be a move to 'national standards' to ensure greater consistency of support and provision across the country and, to monitor this the development, of 'data dashboards' to monitor the effectiveness of 'Local Inclusion Partnerships' and their associated 'Local Inclusion Plans'.

1.3 Ofsted/CQC Inspection Framework

- 1.3.1 Within the previous inspection framework Norfolk underwent an Area Ofsted/CQC SEND Inspection in February 2020 which resulted in the need for a Written Statement of Action to address weaknesses within our arrangements for Education, Health and Care Plans, 18-25 Services and Communication and Co-production. In November 2022 Ofsted/CQC carried out their 're-visit' and published their judgement in February 2023 confirming that a Written Statement of Action was no longer required as we had made sufficient progress in addressing the weakness areas.
- 1.3.2 The new inspection framework will continue to monitor elements of our SEND 'system' in a similar way to the previous framework, for example our joint commissioning arrangements and compliance and effectiveness of our Local Offer. However, the focus of the new inspection framework is about the impact on individual children, young people and their families and, in this way, builds on the inspection framework experienced within our social work arrangements through the Inspection of Local Authority Children's Services (ILACS).
- 1.3.3 Due to the successful outcome of our Ofsted/CQC Revisit (which took place in November 2022 with the report published in February this year) we anticipate that inspection within the new framework could be in approximately two years' time. However, we are already planning our self-assessment and will use this as part of an annual 'engagement' meeting with Ofsted/CQC and the DfE Regional Director's Office, to monitor our progress and to learn from the local areas who have already been assessed within the new framework.

1.4 Area SEND Strategy

- 1.4.1 Norfolk's Area SEND Strategy was launched in 2019 and has been subject to regular refreshes and updates which reflect engagement with parents/carers and young people and with the professionals who support them. The current strategy sets out four priority areas:

Our priorities

- **Priority 1** Working together with children and young people (CYP) with SEND
- **Priority 2** Improving what is in place for families and professionals to support CYP with SEND
- **Priority 3** Communicating the SEND services and support available in Norfolk
- **Priority 4** Preparing young people for adult life

- 1.4.2 The SEND Strategy is co-produced and a multi-agency working group, including the parent carer forum (Family Voice Norfolk), oversee the implementation of the strategy and an iterative assessment of impact. Earlier this year we published a 'You Said We Have Done' response to last year's Annual SEND Survey and we are currently analysing the responses to this year's survey.

1.5 Local First Inclusion

- 1.5.1 DfE are working with over 30 Local Authorities that are experiencing ongoing budget pressures within their High Needs Block budget (the budget from government within the overall 'Dedicated Schools Grant' that is used to pay for Norfolk special schools, specialist resource bases, additional funding for SEND in mainstream schools, alternative provision and commissioned services, e.g. Speech and Language Therapy). This programme of work by the DfE with local authorities is known as 'safety valve' and has an explicit aim to develop a joint investment package between the DfE and Las. This investment is to ensure that transformational change to meet current and future needs of children and young people with SEND can occur alongside addressing historic underinvestment and associated cumulative budget pressures and deficits.
- 1.5.2 Norfolk was invited into the 'safety valve' programme in May 2022 and the culmination of the negotiation resulted in a published agreement by the DfE, following Secretary of State approval, in March 2023. The combined investment within this programme is over £100m revenue in addition to new capital funding agreed in principle by the DfE in excess of £25m.

1.5.3 In Norfolk we have designed this programme on the basis of equal emphasis on mainstream inclusion and further development of specialist provision and this new programme is known as Local First Inclusion. We have set out 5 workstreams (containing 80 individual projects) to implement these changes over the next 6 years:

- Mainstream school inclusion, culture and practice
- School and Community teams
- Responsibility based model of decision making, funding and commissioning for Alternative Provision
- Commissioning / Use Independent Sector Schools differently
- SEND Sufficiency and Capital Delivery

1.5.4 These workstreams have been developed to address a range of issues in Norfolk that have been identified through previous co-production work with parents/carers, young people and education and health professionals, within our Area SEND Strategy joint working. These workstreams also provide the basis for us to respond to the evidence base set out in the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment for SEND. In summary these issues are:

- Ongoing rise nationally and locally of the identification of special educational needs:

	EHCP 2022	SEN SUPPORT 2022	EHCP 2023	SEN SUPPORT 2023
Norfolk	4.1%	13.6%	4.7%	13.9%
National	4.0%	12.6%	4.3%	13.0%

- Historic over-reliance, in Norfolk, on the independent specialist sector and a need to build more state-funded special schools and specialist resource bases
- A difference, on average, between independent specialist schools and state-funded special schools in terms of quality (as judged by Ofsted) and costs (with, on average, state-funded special schools costing c. 50% less)
- Historic and current over-reliance on referrals for EHCP rather than taking advantage of the range of funding and specialist support available at SEN Support
- Need for greater co-ordination of advice, guidance, support and services for early years settings, schools and colleges from the LA and Health commissioned services
- A lack of confidence from parents/carers that their children's needs can be fully met from within local mainstream schools and the perception that EHCPs are required to guarantee support

- 1.5.5 Therefore, Local First Inclusion is Norfolk County Council's next stage SEND Improvement Programme covering the period 2023-29. It marks the end of the first phase of our improvement planning, through the completion of the initial SEND & Alternative Provision Programme and our Written Statement of Action, having built the initial special schools and specialist resource bases and having had a positive experience within the Ofsted/CQC inspection revisit in November 2022.
- 1.5.6 Local First Inclusion is all about improving outcomes for children and young people with SEND ensuring, wherever possible and appropriate, they can attend school close to their home/in their community with the support they need to make progress in their learning alongside other children of the same age.
- 1.5.7 We are improving support to schools/school leaders and increasing funding to schools to ensure they have the resources and expertise to provide the right support for children and young people with SEND.
- 1.5.8 We anticipate fewer EHCPs will be issued to children and young people because there will be better support available in the mainstream system.
- 1.5.9 Our state-funded special schools offer an excellent and high-quality education for children and young people with higher needs SEND and we're investing in more state specialist provision for those children and young people with higher needs.
- 1.6 Development of the Local First Inclusion plan with the DfE
- 1.6.1 In Spring 2022, the Council was invited to join the Department for Education's (DfE) 'Safety Valve' process due to the significant and growing level of year-on-year deficit on the High Needs Block budget, thus leading to a growing and significant cumulative deficit for the ring-fenced Dedicated Schools Grant for Norfolk. The intention of the process is to identify a multi-year plan that will return the High Needs Block to a balanced position in-year and to repay the cumulative deficit, with the potential to enter a 'safety valve' agreement with the DfE. The term 'safety valve' is a DfE phrase which describes a series of agreements that they have entered into with a range of local authorities.
- 1.6.2 Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) funding includes funding for high Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) through the High Needs Block (HNB). The DSG is allocated to local authorities and the annual budget for 2023-24 for Norfolk was set by Cabinet at its 30 January 2023 meeting.
- 1.6.3 Without any agreement with the DfE, Norfolk was forecast to carry a cumulative deficit of £75.976m at the end of the 2022-23 financial year. On the basis of the accounting treatment introduced in 2020 by the Government:

- the DSG is a ring-fenced specific grant separate from the general funding of Local Authorities;
- any deficit an authority may have on its DSG account is expected to be carried forward and is not required to be covered by the authority's general reserves;
- the deficit should be repaid through future years DSG income.

1.6.4 Following the development of a multi-year plan that will bring the HNB back into balance in-year by 2027-28 and for the cumulative deficit to be repaid by 2028-29, the outcome of negotiations between Norfolk County Council and the DfE is a 'safety valve' agreement for Norfolk¹, with the Secretary of State approving our plan in March 2023. **In Norfolk, this programme of work is now known as 'Local First Inclusion'.**

1.6.5 In addition to revenue elements the DfE have agreed in principle to capital bids from NCC for two more Free special schools alongside the council's ongoing £120m SEND capital investment. Local First Inclusion will continue the expansion of specialist provision, to reduce our reliance on high-cost, lower quality independent sector provision but will also have a renewed focus on mainstream inclusion and a reduction in the reliance on Education Health and Care Plans.

1.6.6 The reduction in the cumulative deficit will have a positive impact upon the cash balances held by the Council, supporting maximisation of investment income to underpin other Council activities.

1.6.7 Under the plan, the Council will need to continue to consult maintained schools each year on the Fair Funding consultation request block transfers from the Schools Block to the High Needs Block. The multi-year plan presumes annual transfers of 1.5% from the Schools Block to the High Needs Block. Norfolk Schools' Forum will be required to vote on any request for a block transfer on a regular basis and block transfers above 0.5% will continue to require approval from the Secretary of State.

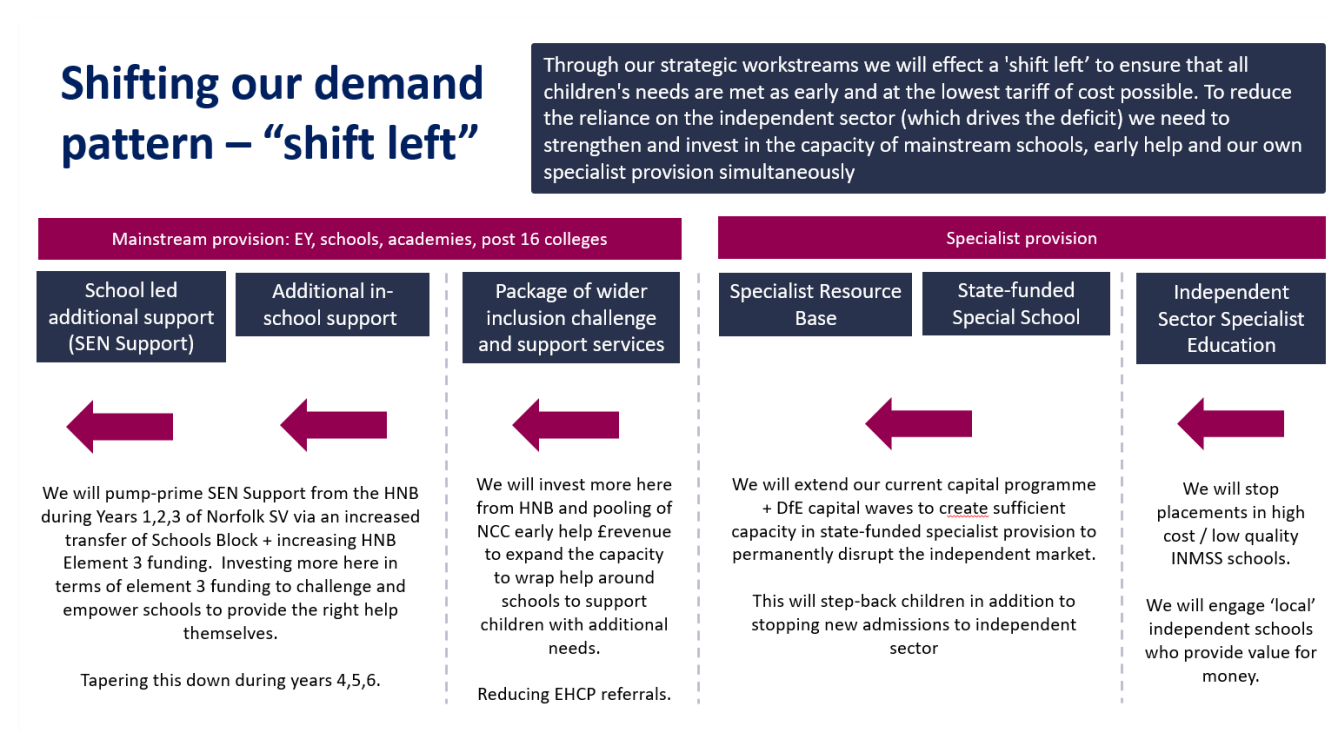
1.6.8 As part of the monitoring required, Officers have established significant, system-wide governance including the involvement of Norfolk's Schools Forum to monitor progress towards the plan, which is vital given the commitment required of the wider system to deliver the plan.

¹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/dedicated-schools-grant-very-high-deficit-intervention>

2. Proposal

2.1 Overall Strategy

- 2.1.1 Local First Inclusion's intention, across the combined effort across these workstreams and through the work of front-line professionals, is to 'shift left' our historic/current over reliance on the independent sector for specialist provision and over reliance on education health and care plans as the means to secure support within mainstream schools. With the revenue and capital investment from the DfE and NCC we are confident that we can achieve these transformational changes for the joint benefit of children, young people and their families and the sustainable investment of early support and specialist provision within the High Needs Block and NCC budgets.



2.2 Workstreams

- 2.2.1 Due to the nature of the negotiations with the DfE, from May 2022 to January 2023, we had to develop the high-level programme of work in parallel to the negotiations and prior to confirmation of the joint investment plan (pending Secretary of State approval secured and published in March 2023).
- 2.2.2 Following the submission of our plan to the DfE in October 2022 we set about the detailed initiation stage of the 80 project, 5 workstream Local First

Inclusion programme. During the spring term 2023 we started the process of communication of this plan to our staff within NCC, school leaders, the parent carer forum (Family Voice Norfolk) and our partners within the Integrated Care Board.

2.2.3 Set out below is a summary of the aims of each of the workstreams and a summary of progress to date and plans for next stage project work:



Note: each workstream is led at Assistant Director level within Children's Services and has dedicated project manager support.

2.2.4 **Workstream 1: Mainstream school inclusion, culture and practice**

- Strengthen the ability of the mainstream sector to work effectively with children with SEND needs, including investment in a range of new schemes, e.g., specialist lead teachers, school to school support, enabling further Special School outreach support, system-wide and targeted Continuous Professional Development, introduce therapies in schools accreditation, strengthen SENCO network, increase SEND advisory team, incentivise inclusion with better funding e.g., through revised mainstream top-up funding bandings to recognise increased level of funding required to support inclusion for those with the most complex needs.
- Continue and develop inclusion helpline, target termly engagement to focus on risk and performance, expand annual conversation with all Trusts, agree Inclusion Charter with every school, increase accountability for children's progress
- Improve systems and processes - review EHCP front door to assessment including promoting that all action has been taken at SEN support level prior to application, improve guidance and expectations for annual reviews, ensure systematic approach to identifying and supporting risk,
- Engage widely and very directly with school leaders, one to one with HTs/ Principals/ CEOs, with key groups e.g., HT Associations, Regional School's Director, Governors, Trust Boards, Teaching Schools, Education Improvement

Area and other stakeholders, Tribunal Judges, Primary Care, build on strong relationship with the ICS

- Work closely and strategically with the Norfolk Learning Board and Schools Forum to ensure consistent communication, ambition, expectation and accountability

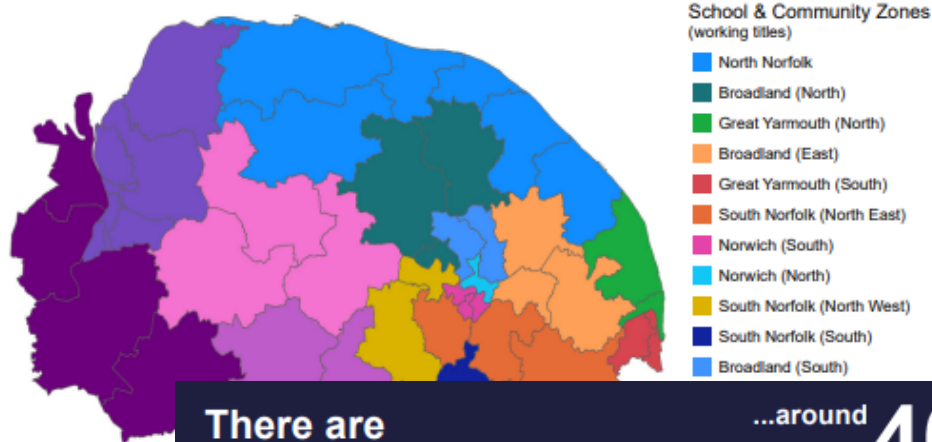
2.2.5 Workstream 2: Early Help and Inclusion

- Establish School & Community teams to provide support and proactive early help to CYP, families and professionals – providing support to groups of schools, predominantly in geographical groups in hub and spoke model. These teams represent a substantial new investment in additional specialist capacity to help mainstream settings include and succeed for children with special educational needs. As well as supporting special educational needs, the model is intended to link to wider early help services, e.g., reduction in parental conflict/ support around trauma, substance abuse, domestic violence, family networking, health support
- Build on our existing locality model, also linking with the national Family Hub model) to create a new infrastructure across the County of multi-agency services, school and community zones with SEND focused services to enable early support, challenge and intervention to schools and critically a relationship with families to build confidence in their local provision.
- Working directly with schools using data and information to form a profile of schools at the heart of their community to understand the determinants of need
- The new model will be underpinned by a new preventative approach to the identification of need. We will bring together data from a range of sources to identify children and families with emerging needs and to target early support. We will meet school leaders in every school on a regular basis to discuss these cohorts and to agree the appropriate steps for relevant children.
- Hold schools to account for working with children, families and multi-agency professionals to meet needs early and effectively

School and Community Zones/Teams are a key foundational element of the overall Local First Inclusion programme. These herald a new way of working and we have an ambition, beyond the Local First Inclusion programme, to develop zone working within an associated Learning Strategy. Further, we are actively considering ways in which other services within Children's Services and our key partners in the health system can consider locality working within these zones in a way that will bring multi-agency benefits to our work with education providers and communities.

Below are extracts from a recent communication to early years settings, schools and colleges setting out this ambition for school and community teams and zones:

Zone map



There are

15
School & Community Zones...

...with an average of

26
schools...

...around

40
Early Years settings and childminders...

...and around
11500
children & young people per zone.

Each zone will have a **new team with an initial focus on children with SEND** and other emerging needs – to support inclusion in mainstream and prevent escalation. These teams will be a significant new element of the SEND / early help landscape.

Over time the offer for each zone will **expand to incorporate more services**. These zones will also be a key geography to engage schools and early years settings and support collaboration.

Overview

A key component of both the Local First Inclusion Programme and the new Learning Strategy is thinking about how the schools, early years settings, colleges, services and communities in different geographical areas of Norfolk can come together in the interests of children.

We are going to establish 15 'zones' across Norfolk to facilitate that joined-up approach and to act as our primary organising geography for strategic action.

For the Local First Inclusion programme:

We will deploy new teams into each zone, providing additional capacity to work with local schools and early years settings to support children with SEN and other emerging needs and help them succeed in mainstream education.

Over time, more teams from the Council and its partners will start to operate in or align with the zone footprint so that the system of early help is more coherently organised around groups of schools and settings.

As part of the Learning Strategy:

We hope zones will develop over time to support the creation of a truly collaborative, self improving system. In each zone we hope to see schools, early years settings and colleges coming together to look at their collective impact for children in their community and how they can learn from, challenge and support one another.

Over time, education leaders in a zone can join with wider services to look at collective needs, establish partnerships to drive improvement and to shape the zone offer.

2.2.6 Workstream 3: School Led Alternative Provision model

- Prevent exclusions and escalation to variable quality / high-cost alternative provision by developing local school-led provision in schools across Norfolk.
- New provision will be designed to support re-integration to mainstream as appropriate.
- Develop consistent thresholds for in-school inclusion support by developing further LA and peer support models
- Embed the principles and expectations of a 'responsibility-led' model so that schools adopt collective responsibility for all children and young people in their locality
- Reconfigure existing spend on alternative provision to enable school and community clusters to plan and arrange provision for pupils at risk of exclusions through delegating budgets which reflect the needs of local areas.
- Change admissions procedures for accessing alternative provision as a preventative strategy, so that schools can access specialist support earlier and successfully reintegrate into mainstream, preventing, whenever possible, the need for an EHCP or specialist placement

2.2.7 Workstream 4: Commission/use Independent differently

- Introduce a revised commissioning / brokerage approach to deliver efficiency savings for all new placements
- Utilise an external negotiation tool to undertake a desktop review of contracts and to negotiate with providers for new, high-cost placements.
- Adopt the Gloriously Ordinary Lives (GOL) approach to the design of care packages – focussed initially on high-cost, existing packages and embedding of this approach across Norfolk for all new placements. This approach champions creative solution that enables independence where possible. [gmhscp-gloriously-ordinary-lives-doc.pdf](#)
- Engage the independent sector in revised contract management, inc. 'groundwork' for SEND national policy paper in relation to tariffs/bandings
- Carefully and proactively manage the re-shaping of the market and in particular the reduction in the reliance on the independent sector – using additional leverage to more robustly challenge on cost and quality whilst maintaining sufficiency

2.2.8 Workstream 5: SEND Sufficiency Capital Programme

- Continue to invest £120m capital to expand special schools and specialist resource bases (SRB)
- Further expansion of the programme with a particular growth in SRB place numbers from 420 to 1132 with a focus on SEMH, ASD and with other expansion of SLCN and Cognition & Learning
- Ensuring growth plans into new special schools deliver as soon as possible
- DfE capital bid for 4th and 5th new special schools enabling the remaining NCC capital investment to be primarily focussed upon SRB and school-led AP expansions

- Deliver capital elements of school-led Alternative Provision model
- Remodelling current 'short stay school' enabling the creation of additional SEMH special school capacity

2.3 Working with the whole system

- 2.3.1 The Local First Inclusion programme sets out, over a six-year period, an ambition to achieve greater local mainstream inclusion for children with special educational needs and disabilities whilst expanding state-funded specialist resource bases and special schools; these core elements of the programme have been informed by the co-production carried out with parents/carers, young people and the professionals who support them as part of our Area SEND Strategy.
- 2.3.2 Due to the nature of the negotiations with the DfE, as part of their 'safety valve' process, NCC were not able to co-produce the detail of the Local First Inclusion programme with parents/carers, young people or school leaders. We have acknowledged this previously and, now that the Secretary of State decision is in the public domain, we will be implementing the programme in a way that ensures engagement with parents/carers and professionals in the way we do across all of our SEND improvement work.
- 2.3.3 We have recently carried out high level briefings to Family Voice Norfolk and to the multi-agency professional group who oversee the Area SEND Strategy. We have provided a commitment to work together on the next stages of Local First Inclusion and will do this through existing mechanisms, for example the 'Making Sense of SEND' events held regularly around the county, and assisted through the dedicated participation resource that we are planning to enable us to enhance our co-production with children and families during implementation and delivery.
- 2.3.4 To date face to face and remote briefings of Norfolk CEO's, headteachers and governors have ensured that approximately 50% of schools have benefited from direct briefings on Local First Inclusion (spring term 2023).
- 2.3.5 In addition to LA senior leadership, these briefings have benefited from the involvement of four school 'change leaders' seconded to co-produce and co-develop/implement both the Local First Inclusion programme and the associated Norfolk Learning Strategy
- 2.3.6 Regular briefings of the Schools Forum have taken place, and are scheduled throughout the programme, alongside briefings of Norfolk Learning Board (March 2023), Children and Young People Strategic Alliance (May 2023) and Integrated Care Partnership (June 2023)

- 2.3.7 All Norfolk early years settings, schools and colleges have received a communication from Sara Tough, Executive Director Children's Services, (May 2023) setting out an ambition for a new Learning Strategy for Norfolk alongside the Local First Inclusion programme. Below is an extract that provides the Local First Inclusion high level summary and a link to a video aimed at all staff within schools to ensure that, in particular, the programme of work within workstreams 1, 2 and 3 develop with engagement of those professionals who will be key in achieving the required transformation:

Local First Inclusion

Local First Inclusion is a six-year (2023-29) Norfolk County Council Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities (SEND) improvement programme focused on improving educational support for children and young people and their families and providing earlier help. It builds on the county council's £120 million five-year SEND transformation programme which ran from 2018 to 2022.

The video below explains our approach to delivering Local First Inclusion, which you can watch by clicking the image:



Click to watch the explainer video

Workstream 1: Mainstream school inclusion, culture and practice

Workstream 2: School and community teams

Workstream 3: Modelling/funding/commissioning for secondary school Alternative Provision (AP)

Workstream 4: Using independent special schools differently

Workstream 5: SEND sufficiency and capital

Chapters:

- Local First Inclusion Programme
- LFI Overview
- What does Local First Inclusion mean for you?
- Workstream Descriptions
- How to have your say



bit.ly/NCCELFI

Working with the team

If you have any questions about the programme, specific workstreams or projects, if you'd like to join in, or if you just want to provide your thoughts and feedback, you can send us an email at LFI@norfolk.gov.uk to start the conversation.

2.4 Financial Plan

- 2.4.1 The multi-year financial plan is available in appendix A, including the anticipated DfE and NCC contributions, as well as the anticipated Schools Block to High Needs Block transfer.
- 2.4.2 The LFI plan is a system wide transformation, including development of the overall workforce, and the governance in place to oversee this work includes system leadership through Norfolk's Schools Forum and Norfolk's Learning Board, representing early years settings, mainstream schools (both maintained and academies), special schools (both maintained and academies) and alternative provision. NCC cannot deliver alone as recognised through these governance arrangements.
- 2.4.3 Financial monitoring reports will continue to report to Cabinet on the DSG in-year and cumulative positions, as well as delivery of the overall capital programme for the Council.
- 2.4.4 Given the scale and complexity of the plan, identification and mitigation of the risks are a key part of successfully managing the programme. The key risks and identified mitigations are included in section 9 below.

2.5 2023-24 Budget Implications

- 2.5.1 The 2023-24 High Needs Block was set as a deficit budget based on this multi-year plan that had been developed as part of the 'safety valve' process. Further details are provided in the 'Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) Funding' paper to Cabinet on 30 January 2023.
- 2.5.2 The Council's revenue budget included £5.5m contribution per annum towards repayment of the DSG cumulative deficit. Whilst this contribution is contrary to the accounting treatment reference, the Council contributing towards the repayment of the cumulative deficit was a requirement of the 'safety valve' agreement², as approved by the Secretary of State. This deficit DSG reserve

² The key requirements that need to be met by all LAs in the safety valve programme are:

- How Norfolk will control the DSG deficit and reach an in-year balance (as a minimum), and how quickly. It is requested that this be set out in the DfE DSG management plan template. The DSG management plan should also indicate any planned block transfer requests, which will be handled through the Safety Valve programme where required.
- How Norfolk will contribute to the reduction of the historic deficit through use of DSG surpluses, in addition to reaching an in-year balance.
- How Norfolk will ensure that the plan is deliverable, how it will be managed as it is implemented and how this plan will continue to ensure the appropriate support for children and young people with SEND. This includes ongoing monitoring of progress towards the agreement by the LA.
- A clear explanation of the financial support Norfolk needs from the DfE to eliminate the historic deficit over the period of the agreement. This could include, if necessary, a request for some funding to help implement the proposal, as well as funding to eliminate the deficit directly, although we would not expect this to constitute a significant element of the total financial support requested.

position is referenced in the County Council's reserve balances presented within the Norfolk County Council Revenue Budget 2022-23 report agreed at the 21 February 2023 Full Council meeting and is based upon the multi-year plan without any additional DfE contribution. The position does not need to be considered when assessing the sufficiency of the Council's general reserves balances and the accounting treatment has been extended until the end of 2025/26.

2.5.3 The engagement with the DfE by Officers has been reported regularly as part of the monthly Finance Monitoring report to Cabinet meetings, and a high-level summary of the agreed contribution from the DfE with a link to the agreement published by the DfE was provided in the 3 April 2023 Cabinet report.

2.5.4 Confirmation of the total additional funding from the DfE, and the profile of the DfE additional contributions, was not known by NCC until March, just prior to publication of the 'safety valve' agreement:

	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28	2028-29
DfE agreed contribution	£28m	£6m	£6m	£6m	£6m	£6m	£12m

2.5.5 Central Government consulted during 2019-20 on a change to the terms and conditions of the DSG, to provide clarity regarding the responsibility of local authorities for any deficit within the DSG.

2.5.6 The outcome of this consultation and the changes introduced, i.e. that the DSG is a separate ring-fenced grant and that local authorities are not expected to contribute local resources towards it.

2.5.7 The accounting treatment for DSG cumulative deficits diverges from normal accounting practice and allows councils to carry a negative balance on these reserves. This treatment is being dictated by Government but will need to be kept under review as it potentially remains a significant issue for Norfolk County Council and will result in a material deficit balance in the council's Statement of Accounts until the DSG recovery plan has been delivered.

2.5.8 The accounting treatment was due to end at the end of the 2022-23 financial year, but an announcement in December 2022 by the Government that the accounting treatment arrangements have been extended until the end of the 2025/26 financial year. Indications from Government are that this accounting treatment will not be extended indefinitely, which would then result in the Council becoming liable for the cumulative deficit and any ongoing annual deficits.

2.5.9 It should be noted that the Council is effectively 'bank-rolling' the deficit and so there is the impact upon local Council resources of the loss of interest. The impact of this agreement secures additional funding from the DfE to reduce

the cumulative deficit and, thus, reduces the impact upon the Council's resources as the loss of interest will reduce.

2.5.10 As a result of the agreement with the DfE, the Council has committed to contribute £5.5m pa towards mitigating the deficit as part of its 2023-24 Revenue Budget and MTFS (required for the next 6 years). The DfE requires councils to contribute to repayment of the cumulative deficit as part of a 'safety valve' agreement and the agreement provides the Secretary of State's agreement to NCC contributing to the DSG deficit, as per the regulations detailed above.

2.5.11 This proposal does not, directly, impact upon the SEND and AP capital transformation programme previously agreed in 2018, but phase 2 of the programme has been aligned to the multi-year revenue recovery plan

2.6 SEND and AP Capital Investment

2.6.1 In 2018 the Council agreed to a £120m capital investment programme for SEND and Alternative Provision. This was agreed due to the compelling business case that we needed to develop more state-funded specialist provision – special schools and specialist resource bases – to meet current and future need for children and young people with SEND as well as address the historic over-reliance independent sector provision.

2.6.2 The original business case³ agreed was to

- Deliver up to 4 new special schools to accommodate 400 children in state-funded provision;
- Expansion of current special school estate: 4 additional class-bases
- Build suitable classroom / small group rooms across the county in order to expand specialist resource base places for an additional 170 children (c. 11 bases)
- Explore the possibility of further school-based nurture provision and residential provision to meet social, emotional, mental health and specialist / complex needs

2.6.3 The pandemic had a significant impact upon the delivery timescales of additional specialist provision as well as shifting demand patterns due to the medium- and longer-term impacts of the lockdowns and restrictions resulting in increasing demand above and beyond that anticipated when the programme was first developed. One of the greatest challenges to building a new school (or sometimes extending existing schools) is securing suitable land with appropriate infrastructure in the right location, which has been recognised by the DfE.

³ Transforming the system for Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) in Norfolk (Item 8, 29 October 2018 Policy and Resources Committee)

- 2.6.4 Despite these challenges, the first phase of this programme has now been completed, with a new model of Social Emotional Mental Health (SEMH) specialist resource base (SRB) developed within mainstream schools across the county, ongoing development of ASD SRBs and the completion of the new special schools in Great Yarmouth (100 places for SEMH), Fakenham (100 places for ASD) and Easton (170 places for Complex Needs). In total, this phase has delivered over 650 new places in special schools and specialist resource bases, including the opening of three new special schools, which far exceeds the original expectations detailed in the business case approved by Policy and Resources Committee. The final places created through this investment will come online over the coming years as new special schools and bases become fully operational as part of their agreed growth plans.
- 2.6.5 The total capital investment for this first phase has exceeded £40m (excluding the DfE Free School investment), consisting of c. £27m of DfE funding and the remainder funded by NCC.
- 2.6.6 The second phase of the capital investment programme has now been refreshed to align with the updated sufficiency requirements identified through the Local First Inclusion plan.
- 2.6.7 This phase anticipates utilisation of the remainder of the Council's capital investment along with available funding from the DfE to create an additional two special schools, relocate and expand an existing special school and create specialist resource base and school-led alternative provision places. In total, the current plans anticipate in excess of 1,200 further places being created through this second phase.
- 2.6.8 It is anticipated that the whole programme will be delivered within DfE high needs capital allocations, the DfE Free School programme investment and the £120m borrowing previously committed by the Council. If there is a small funding gap, then NCC will need to consider under-writing this with further borrowing, but this is anticipated to be primarily mitigated by further High Needs capital allocations from the DfE in future funding announcements. Clearly, the recent inflation rises have led to some significant increases in forecasts for construction projects as a whole for NCC and other organisations alike. This continues to be kept under close review, but the latest refresh of the programme makes reasonable allowance.
- 2.6.9 A summary of the existing capital plan is provided in Appendix B.
- 2.6.10 The full schools' capital programme for both SEND and mainstream was reported to the People and Communities Select Committee in July and contained details of individual projects.

- 2.6.11 In August the DfE announced that Norfolk had been successful in securing investment to build two more special schools. One of the new schools will be for 170 complex needs places in the Great Yarmouth area and one of the new schools will be for 100 ASD places in the Downham Market area. In September we will be hosting an information event for interested Multi-Academy Trust's as part of the 'competition' for DfE to determine the successful sponsor to operate each school. Information regarding these announcements can be found within Norfolk's SEND Local Offer website here [New special schools in Norfolk - Norfolk County Council](#)
- 2.6.12 Once the total investment is complete, Norfolk will have over 1,100 SRB places and over 2,300 state-funded special school places.

3. Impact of the Proposal

- 3.1 The core intention of the programme is that more children with special education needs are supported to be in local mainstream provision with good outcomes and increasingly without the need for an education, health and care plan.
- 3.2 Alongside this, where specialist provision is required, it will be provided closer to home with less travelling, primarily via specialist resource base, schools led AP provision or state-funded special schools that deliver good outcomes. The quality of specialist provision will also be higher through continuing the expansion of high-quality state-funded specialist settings and a reduced reliance on independent providers, which are of more variable quality
- 3.3 In addition, the Local First Inclusion plan will enable the DSG to be brought back into an in-year balanced position by 2027/28 and for a cumulative deficit to be repaid by 2028/29. In doing so we will ensure the sustainability of the transformed system.
- 3.4 The Council's £120m capital programme committed to investing in SEND and Alternative Provision state-funded provision remains fully active and is aligned to the multi-year revenue plan to bring the HNB back into balance and to repay the cumulative deficit. This includes activity to further expand special school places and specialist resource base provision that is anticipated to deliver over 1200 additional places in phase 2, including the opening of two new special schools funded by the DfE through the Free Special School programme and the relocation of the Fred Nicholson school to a new site enabling the expansion of provision.
- 3.5 Regular reporting to both Scrutiny and Select Committees will enable Council Members to have an understanding of the programme of work, and to enable feedback and recommendations as the work progresses.

- 3.6 Effective management and appropriate mitigation of the risks will be crucial to the success of this programme due to the scale and complexities of system-wide transformation. A dedicated strategic and programme management team has been established, with a track record in delivering previous improvement through the Written Statement of Action and Area SEND Strategy work, to drive the work forward throughout the six-year programme.

4. Evidence and Reasons for Decision

- 4.1 The Local First Inclusion programme is aligned to the DfE SEND & AP Improvement Programme, to the Ofsted/CQC SEND Inspection Framework and has been signed off by the Secretary of State as Norfolk's response to the DfE 'safety valve' programme.
- 4.2 Local First Inclusion complements the priorities within Norfolk Children and Young People's Strategic Alliance FLOURISH Plan and complements Norfolk's Area SEND Strategy, underpinned by the SEND Joint Strategic Needs Assessment; co-produced with parent/carers groups, education, health and social care professionals and reflecting the views of parents and young people through the Area SEND Survey.
- 4.3 Local First Inclusion provides the opportunity to secure joint DfE and NCC investment aimed at ensuring we can collectively improve assessment, support, services and provision for children and young people with SEND whilst also achieving a balanced High Needs Block budget over the medium / long term.
- 4.4 It is important that outcomes for children and young people are improved and that the plan leads to a long-term sustainable model of local mainstream inclusion and specialist provision for those with complex needs.
- 4.5 The Local First Inclusion plan will enable achievement of an in-year balanced budget and for the cumulative deficit to be addressed. Like many other local authorities, Norfolk currently has a cumulative DSG deficit. Therefore, any overspend on the DSG is required to be repaid through future DSG income, unless the Secretary of State authorises an exception to this, as per the current accounting treatment.
- 4.6 Whilst a deficit remains, Norfolk County Council's General Fund (council tax funding) continues to bear the hidden cost of lost interest whilst the County Council 'bank rolls' the deficit.

5. Alternative Options

- 5.1 'Doing nothing' is not an option given the growing in-year deficits seen for the High Needs Block and, thus, the significant and growing cumulative deficit that Norfolk is carrying.
- 5.2 Throughout the negotiations the DfE reminded the Council that liability for the full cumulative deficit was, within the regulations, an NCC not DfE risk once the current account treatment referred to in section 1.6.3 expired.

6. Financial Implications

- 6.1 Sections 2, 3 and 4 above contain the key financial implications of the Local First Inclusion Plan (specifically sub-sections 2.4 to 2.6, 3.3 to 3.4, 4.3, and 4.5 to 4.6).

7. Resource Implications

- 7.1 **Staff:** The Local First Inclusion plan includes the establishment of School and Community Teams and additional specialist roles within Children's Services to enable the operational implementation of the plan. These additional investments are on an 'invest to save' basis – in that the additional capacity will support the goal of children succeeding in mainstream provision and not requiring more costly specialist placements.
- 7.2 **Property:** It should be noted that as we continue to develop specialist resource bases and special schools, within the state-funded sector, these will be logged on both NCC and Academy asset books.
- 7.3 **IT:** None

8. Other Implications

- 8.1 **Legal Implications:** None
- 8.2 **Human Rights Implications:** None
- 8.3 **Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) (this must be included):**
There are no direct equality or accessibility implications for this report. However, as part of the Council's 'Safety Valve' submission to the DfE and the related 'disapplication request' for a block transfer from the Schools Block to the High Needs Block, we were required to provide information within an EqIA context. For that purpose, we have stated to the DfE that: 'A central theme to addressing local needs and, in turn the HNB recovery plan, is the development of state funded special school provision. This will ensure that

complex needs, ASD and SEMH needs are met directly. In addition, we are expanding specialist resource base provision hosted by mainstream schools. Taken together these additional 500 places will increase choice and reduce travel time for children and young people with SEND.'

8.4 Data Protection Impact Assessments (DPIA): Not applicable

8.5 Health and Safety implications (where appropriate): Not applicable

8.6 Sustainability implications (where appropriate): Not applicable

8.7 Any Other Implications: Not applicable

9. Risk Implications / Assessment

9.1 Overall, the key risks for the Local First Inclusion plan that will need to be carefully monitored and managed are:

Key Risk	Key Mitigations
There is a risk that progress is not achieved in line with the plan, particularly in relation to the agreed finance recovery plan with the DfE	<p>We have established a significant programme team, including senior management and additional specialist capacity for each workstream area, with a full programme and project structure in place to ensure rigorous management.</p> <p>Additionally, we will be carrying out tri-annual reviews as part of the governance arrangements in place with the LFI Executive Board, Norfolk's Learning Board and Norfolk's Schools Forum that will feed into the tri-annual reports to the DfE.</p>
There is a risk that the delivery of additional state-funded provision is delayed or is at a reduced scale	<p>Detailed critical path analysis for all projects in place and additional resources investment has been agreed.</p> <p>Children's Services has a track-record of delivering schools and school-related capital projects on time and on budget.</p> <p>Children's Services schools and SEND capital programme is closely monitored, reviewed and steered by the Capital Priorities Group, which includes representation from all political parties and external stakeholders.</p>
There is a risk that the system does not see the wider cultural change required to support more	Workstream 1 is engaging a range of school leaders across the County to secure buy-in and sector-leadership for the system-wide transformation required.

children to remain supported within mainstream schools	We have seconded a number of school leaders into the programme to support the engagement with the wider system, and the positive engagement to date of the sector provides reassurance that our plan is aligned to the priorities of school leaders.
There is a risk that costs of provision exceed multi-year forecasts, particularly given the instability of inflation currently	<p>Average costs of independent placements (a key cost driver) will be kept under close review throughout the programme and is a Key Performance Indicator agreed with the DfE. This will allow us early sight of any deviation from anticipated trajectory to enable corrective action to be taken.</p> <p>Additionally, the other key demand-led cost driver is top-up funding for mainstream schools. Additional spend is not necessarily a negative in relation to delivering change if it mitigates other, more costly, interventions, but it will need to be closely monitored throughout the programme, particularly given the recent banding changes.</p>
There is a risk that there is an insufficiency of resources to ensure that the right children are in the right provision with the right support	<p>The sufficiency strategy has been thoroughly reviewed as part of the creation of the overall programme, including rigorous data analysis of the needs profile of the cohort and constructive challenge from DfE advisors.</p> <p>The implementation programme will be managed closely to ensure new provision comes on stream at the required pace.</p> <p>The needs profile and sufficiency strategy will be regularly reviewed throughout the programme to allow for mitigating actions to be taken to respond to changes in trends.</p>
There is a risk that the significant changes to national SEND policy impacts in adverse and unexpected ways upon elements of the plan	<p>Workstream 1 will enable the local implementation of revised national policy to be aligned with Local First Inclusion and our overall aims of supporting local inclusion wherever appropriate.</p> <p>Additionally, we will work closely with our DfE adviser with the aim of influencing the DfE implementation of national policy changes to support our focus upon inclusion and independence locally to a child's home.</p>
The underlying trend for EHCP referrals continues to outstrip previous projections and the ability	<p>Workstreams 1 and 2 are being implemented at pace.</p> <p>We are designing a system that will enable all support to be provided without recourse to an</p>

of the system to work in a more preventative way to meet need early.	EHCP except where a special school place is required. The focus on a change in culture and practice across the education, health and care system to ensure that the right support is provided at the right time and in the right place largely in children's local communities and mainstream schools should develop greater confidence in mainstream schools that they can meet needs and in parents that their children's needs can be met without specialist school provision. We have developed an ongoing, substantial communications programme to support a shift away from an increasing proportion of children having an EHCP.
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- 9.2 Officers will continue to keep the DSG Budget and multi-year plan under close review throughout the financial year, reporting regularly to Cabinet through the monthly Finance Monitoring reports and termly, at least, to Norfolk Schools Forum. This reporting will be in addition to the regular reporting that is required to the DfE as part of the 'safety valve' agreement.
- 9.3 As detailed earlier in the report, the Government has prescribed an accounting treatment for the DSG deficit. However, it should be noted that this position is not guaranteed and will remain a subject of scrutiny from External Auditors or a change in approach from the Government. If the Council is not able to reduce the DSG cumulative deficit through a combination of the transformation programme, capital investment, high needs allocations and the Safety Valve programme from the DfE, then there remains a risk to the overall financial viability of the whole Council.

10. Recommendations

The Select Committee is asked to:

- a. Note and discuss the programme of work detailed within this report, known as Local First Inclusion, including the overall strategy, providing feedback and recommendations where appropriate
- b. Note and discuss the key risks and mitigations of this programme given the system-wide and transformative nature of it, providing feedback and recommendations where appropriate
- c. Agree the proposed programme of annual reports to Scrutiny committee and bi-annual reports to the People and Communities Select Committee

11. Background Papers

- 11.1 Local First Inclusion Update (Item 9, 10 May 2023 Cabinet)

<https://norfolkcc.cmis.uk.com/norfolkcc/CalendarofMeetings/tabid/128/ctl/ViewMeetingPublic/mid/496/Meeting/2048/Committee/169/Default.aspx>

- 11.2 Finance Monitoring Report (Item 14, 3 April 2023 Cabinet)

<https://norfolkcc.cmis.uk.com/norfolkcc/CalendarofMeetings/tabid/128/ctl/ViewMeetingPublic/mid/496/Meeting/1907/Committee/169/Default.aspx>

- 11.3 Council budget paper (Item 5, 21 February 2023 County Council)

<https://norfolkcc.cmis.uk.com/norfolkcc/CalendarofMeetings/tabid/128/ctl/ViewMeetingPublic/mid/496/Meeting/1949/Committee/2/Default.aspx>

- 11.4 Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) Funding (Item 11, 30 January 2023 Cabinet)

<https://norfolkcc.cmis.uk.com/norfolkcc/CalendarofMeetings/tabid/128/ctl/ViewMeetingPublic/mid/496/Meeting/1905/Committee/169/Default.aspx>

- 11.5 Transforming the system for Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) in Norfolk (Item 8, 29 October 2018 Policy and Resources Committee)

<http://norfolkcc.cmis.uk.com/norfolkcc/Meetings/tabid/128/ctl/ViewMeetingPublic/mid/496/Meeting/1421/Committee/21/Default.aspx>

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People and Communities Select Committee

Item No: 9

Report Title: Children's Social Care Review and Norfolk Response – Phase of Change

Date of Meeting: 15 September 2023

Responsible Cabinet Member: Cllr Penny Carpenter (Cabinet Member for Children's Services)

Responsible Director: Sara Tough - Executive Director of Children's Services

Executive Summary

This paper and the accompanying presentation provide an update on the details of the recently published Stable Homes, Built on Love strategy, outlining reforms for children's social care.

This also includes how the proposals in the strategy overlap with our current programme of change and how we are starting to prepare ourselves for the implementation of the reforms. As it stands the reforms should help to manage future demand on Children's Social Care.

Currently, we are awaiting further information from government to be published in the Autumn in relation to "Family Help" pathfinders, which will give Norfolk the opportunity to bid for funding to further test out the proposed new ways of working from the strategy.

Recommendations

The Select Committee is asked to:

1. Endorse the principle of increased multi-disciplinary working between key agencies working with children and families in Norfolk.
2. Endorse our response to the proposed reforms.
3. Endorse our aim to become a pathfinder authority, if the opportunity is open to Norfolk, as defined in the Stable Families, Built on Love Strategy
4. Endorse our approach to explore other pathfinder opportunities, for example the regional pathfinder for Fostering Recruitment and Retention

1. Background and Purpose

- 1.1 In recent years, organisations working with children and families, have seen demand for services increase, for example large increases in the costs of care for looked after children, request for family support and mental health support and other cohorts with very high-level needs. This is compounded by the increasing challenge to recruit and retain practitioners working directly with children and families. This includes roles such as social workers, foster carers, educational psychologists, residential care workers and teaching assistants who are all in short supply. Ultimately, a shortage of the right staff will lead to lower quality interventions and overall increases in costs.
- 1.2 In response, over the past five years there has been significant transformation activity which has partially mitigated these challenges, but there are still significant funding pressures year-on-year across the sector, and the current local and national picture does not suggest that this is likely to naturally abate.
- 1.3 In February 2023 the *Stable Homes, Built on Love implementation strategy and consultation* was published by the Government in response to the Independent Review of Children's Social Care, National Review into the murders of Arthur Labinjo-Hughes and Star Hobson and the Competition and Markets Authority study into Children's Social Care placements and commenced consultation in a range of areas. The proposed social care reforms have started to acknowledge the impact of the additional demand that is being seen across the country and will form the blueprint for children's social care in the future.
- 1.4 Even though this reform is focused on the future of children's social care, it is recognised that these services are delivered by working in close partnership with health, police, education and other organisations working with children and families in Norfolk. The reform, therefore, must also be seen within the context of wider government reforms, including the Supporting Families Programme, Family Hubs and Start for Life Programme, the NHS 10-year plan, the Special Educational Needs and Disabilities and Alternative Provision Review and the Schools White Paper. It also aligns with reforms to improve health services including the introduction of NHS Integrated Care Boards (ICBs) as the new NHS commissioning body in Integrated Care Systems.
- 1.5 Norfolk County Council Children's Services has engaged significantly with the proposed reforms and many aspects of the proposals align with and would help enable our vision that every child in Norfolk should flourish.

- 1.6 The purpose of this report is to ensure that the Committee is fully briefed on the national developments of the Childrens Social Care Reforms enabling the Committee to actively endorse, promote, support and challenge future local plans that aim to improve outcomes for children and young people aligned to national reviews, future legislative changes and inspection.

2. Proposal

- 2.1 The intention of the Stable Homes, Built on Love strategy is to rebalance social care away from costly crisis intervention to more meaningful and effective early support. The six strategic pillars of the reform include:
1. Family Help provides the right support and the right time so that children can thrive with their families.
 2. A decisive multi-agency child protection system
 3. Unlocking the potential of family networks
 4. Putting love, relationships and a stable home at the heart of being a child in care
 5. A valued, supported and highly skilled social worker for every child who needs one.
 6. A system that continuously learns and improves and makes better use of evidence and data.
- 2.2 The strategy has proposed a phased approach to reform with phase one taking place during the Spending Review period until c. March 2025. A “pathfinder” approach is being used for the most complex reforms in local areas, before they rolled out at a national scale with an investment of £200m during this two-year period.
- 2.3 As part of this approach, the Families First for Children Pathfinders are backed by £45m to test key elements of Family Help, child protection and kinship reforms in up to 12 local authority areas. The pathfinder areas will:
- Look at how to create a local family help system, a multi-agency partnership in a local area that provides support to children and families, integrating existing support for families eligible for/in receipt of targeted early help and child in need services.
 - Establish a family help service, a multi-disciplinary team within a local authority that both provides support to children and families and has oversight of the work across the wider, multi-agency landscape of family help.

- Ensure family help is integrated within the wider system of support, including family hubs (where established), universal and voluntary and community sector services, as well as children's social care, so families receive joined-up, accessible support.
- Develop the family help lead practitioner role.
- Establish a single, flexible family help assessment – removing the duplication of current targeted early help and section 17 assessments.
- Test a clearer national definition of eligibility for family help.
- Ensure family help works for everybody by meeting the needs of specific cohorts, including children with disabilities, young carers and different ethnic groups.

2.4 In July 2023, the Department for Education (DfE) announced the first three pathfinder areas are Dorset, Lincolnshire, and Wolverhampton. DfE have outlined that the Pathfinder programme will be launched this autumn, and, around the same time, other local areas will be able to apply to join the second wave, expected to launch in spring 2024. Norfolk County Council Children's Services is interested in applying to join the second wave to become a pathfinder authority, to test new ways of working proposed by the reforms.

2.5 In addition to the Families First for Children Pathfinders, there will be additional opportunities for Local Authorities to apply to explore different pathfinder projects in partnership with regional partners. For example, these will include:

- Regional Care Cooperatives (RCC) Pathfinder to test a regional model for planning, commissioning and delivering children's social care placements. The government's long term vision for RCCs is that they will:
 - Plan, commission and deliver children's care places in fostering, children's homes and secure homes.
 - Improve forecasting of demand leading to better informed plans; enabling areas to ensure there are sufficient placements and support available to meet the needs of children who are in care.
 - Gain economies of scale, in particular around placements for children and young people with multiple complex needs and in negotiations with providers, to ensure that every pound spent makes the biggest impact possible for children.
 - Have greater collaboration with health and justice commissioners to improve services for children in care.
 - Reform foster parent recruitment and retention and, where necessary, create new forms of care to meet local need so that

more children in care can stay in family environments and closer to home.

- In conjunction with the RCC there is the separate programme focused on fostering recruitment and retention. The government aims for this separate programme include:
 - To improve the experience of children in care by ensuring there are more foster carers for children who need them.
 - To increase the number of foster carers who are successfully recruited by their local authority.
 - To reduce the number of foster carers who de-register
 - To increase placement stability for children in care
 - To deliver cost savings
 - To support implementation of RCCs
- It is intended that the aims of the fostering recruitment and retention programme will be achieved by creating a regional recruitment support hub to redesign prospective foster carers journey from enquiry to application, regional communication campaigns and to implement locally the national recognised Mockingbird Family model to enhance the offer for existing carers.

3. Impact of the Proposal

- 3.1 The pillars in the strategy align with our existing ways of working and plans, and some examples of this are outlined further below.
- 3.2 Our children's social care model already features a range of different practice disciplines working collaboratively together and is well placed to be re-shaped into a version of the 'Family Help' model envisaged by the review.
- 3.3 In June 2023, we launched Norfolk County Council's Family Help Pilot, which is being tested in two of our existing localities: the West and South over the next 6-9 months. This will allow us to test some of the proposed new ways of working and help prepare us to apply to become a pathfinder authority as part of the second wave of the DfE programme.
- 3.4 The pilot includes trialling the impact of larger multi-disciplinary teams, bringing together our family facing teams (Family Assessment and Safeguarding Service (FAST)), Family Support and some specialist roles from our Intensive and Specialist Support Service (ISSS). Through this approach we are greatly enhancing our "team around the practitioner" model, supporting our practitioners to work collaboratively and removing the delays and bureaucracy linked to moving children, young people and their families around our services.

- 3.5 We believe this model give families the support they need at the right time, allowing practitioners to maintain the relationships they have worked hard to build, even when additional support needed or risks for children increase.
- 3.6 Having access to a truly Multi-Disciplinary Team means that we can intervene at the right time, when families are ready, with the expectation that this will help to prevent escalation of need or risk. This new approach will enable us to ensure that we do all we can to support families and networks to find safety for children and meet their needs effectively and without delay.
- 3.7 Furthermore, our partnerships in Norfolk were recognised by Ofsted recently (ILACS 2022) as being exceptionally strong meaning we are well placed to deliver the multi-agency vision in the review – with active programmes in place with both the police and health partners in particular about developing multi-disciplinary teams and service models.
- 3.8 One of the themes in the review of unlocking the potential in families also aligns directly with our current delivery model. Family Networking has been at the heart of our practice approach for social care practitioners with a dedicated Family Networking coaching team promoting this way of working across our services and embedded as one of our 5 core mandatory practice principles.
- 3.9 We have led the way in relation to the re-shaping of the nature of care for children looked after with a hugely successful implementation of our New Roads Model (as part of the DfE the Strengthening Families and Protecting Children programme), which is delivering an innovative multi-disciplinary approach which is succeeding with young people with most complex needs.
- 3.10 We are currently refreshing our placement sufficiency strategy supporting us to transform the care market and create the capacity we need to provide the right support for children in our care with a focus on providing family-based care wherever possible. This includes an expansion of in-house capacity through a whole-Council and whole County focus on carer recruitment and retention, expansion and re-shaping of in-house residential provision and working the market to build on the strengths of our commissioned partners to improve quality of provision leading to better outcomes.
- 3.11 We are using information in innovative ways to shape the placement market, for example we are leading nationally with a small group of other LAs, on the Valuing Care approach. This is a strengths led model for codifying children's needs to help tailor fostering and residential services that meet that need, improve accountability and Value for Money.

- 3.12 In conclusion the intention of the Stable Homes, Built on Love strategy is to rebalance social care away from costly crisis intervention to more meaningful and effective early support. The vision and strategic aims in the strategy align closely with our existing ways of working and plans and provide us further opportunities to test new ways of working in line with the proposed reforms.

4. Evidence and Reasons for Decision

4.1 N/A

5. Alternative Options

5.1 At this stage, none identified.

6. Financial Implications

6.1 The strategy comes with a national investment of £200m during the period of the current Spending Review until c. March 2025. A “pathfinder” approach is being adopted for the most complex reforms in local areas before they are rolled out at a national scale. As part of the £200m investment, there will be opportunities to bid or apply for part of this funding, such as the Family Help pathfinder programme. At this stage there are limited details explaining what the process will look like, but more detail is expected in Autumn 2023.

7. Resource Implications

7.1 **Staff:** It is anticipated that there will be an impact in ways of working for staff from increased level of multi-disciplinary working. At this stage none identified.

7.2 **Property:** It is anticipated that there may be an impact on the use of building through new ways of working. At this stage none identified.

7.3 **IT:** It is anticipated that there will be an impact on social care recording systems as processes and ways of working are changed. At this stage none identified.

8. Other Implications

8.1 **Legal Implications:** At this stage a proposal for change isn't be presented, so no implications currently identified.

8.2 Human Rights Implications: At this stage a proposal for change isn't be presented, so no implications currently identified.

8.3 Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) (this must be included): At this stage a proposal for change isn't be presented, so no implications currently identified.

8.4 Data Protection Impact Assessments (DPIA): At this stage a proposal for change isn't be presented, so no implications currently identified.

8.5 Any Other Implications: N/A

9. Risk Implications / Assessment

9.1 At the current stage of the reform process, there are currently no specific requirements for change to be delivered, but the DfE has indicated that Local Areas, should start preparing for change. As part of any future transition, key implications that would need to be considered include:

- Availability of funding beyond the current Spending Review Period. The Independent Review of Social Care, which the government has responded to via the Stable Homes, Built on Love strategy, suggested the sector required £2.6 billion, over five years to transform. To date £200m has been made available for 2 years.
- Certain proposed changes will require legislative change and subsequent amendments to relevant inspection frameworks.
- The scale of system change required could be large and would require providers of social care recording systems to adapt their offer on a national level.
- Through any large-scale change of service model, there are likely to be demand management and performance issues during any transition that would require mitigation.
- There may be challenges for shared organisational capacity if social care reform across Adults and Children's runs in parallel.

10. Recommendations

The Select Committee is asked to:

1. Endorse the principle of increased multi-disciplinary working between key agencies working with children and families in Norfolk.
2. Endorse our response to the proposed reforms.

3. Endorse our aim to become a pathfinder authority, if the opportunity is open to Norfolk, as defined in the Stable Families, Built on Love Strategy
4. Endorse our approach to explore other pathfinder opportunities, for example the regional pathfinder for Fostering Recruitment and Retention

11. Background Papers

11.1 Link to the [Stable Homes, Built on Love Strategy](#) – Children’s Social Care Reform 2023

Officer Contact

If you have any questions about matters contained within this paper, please get in touch with:

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People and Communities Forward Work Programme, 2023-24

Date	Report	Issues for consideration	Cabinet Member	Exec Director
17 November 2023	Norfolk Armed Forces Community Covenant – Annual		Cllr Margaret Dewsbury	Grahame Bygrave
	Financial and Strategic Planning 2024-25		Cllr Andrew Jamieson	Harvey Bullen
	Schools Local Growth and Investment Plan		Cllr Penny Carpenter	Sara Tough
	Recreational Drugs and Alcohol Task and Finish Group		Cllr Bill Borrett	Stuart Lines
	Home to School Transport		Cllr Penny Carpenter	Sara Tough
	Adult Social Care Digital Strategy		Cllr Alison Thomas	Debbie Bartlett
19 January 2024	Vaping in Norfolk		Cllr Bill Borrett	Stuart Lines
15 March 2024				

Items to be scheduled:

- Task and finish group to consider how a code of conduct can be agreed to govern discussion of sensitive issues – **Month TBC**
- Carers Strategy – **Month TBC**
- processes in place around new foster carers and re-registration of returning foster carers – **Month TBC**