

Norfolk County Council

Date: **Tuesday 26 September 2023**

Time: **10 am**

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

Supplementary Agenda

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Report of the Norfolk Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting held 14 September 2023

1. Accident and Emergency (A&E) services in Norfolk and Waveney

- 1.1 Mark Burgis, Executive Director of Patients and Communities, N&WICB, provided the committee with a brief introduction to the report, highlighting that the A&E department is one element of emergency care.
- 1.2 The committee received an annexed report from Dr Liz Chandler, Scrutiny and Research Officer, that noted information to aid the examination of Accident and Emergency (A&E) services at Norfolk's three acute NHS hospitals, namely: Norfolk and Norwich University Hospital (NNUH), James Paget University Hospital (JPUH) and Queen Elizabeth Hospital, King's Lynn (QEH).
- 1.3 The Chair concluded the discussions and noted the progress that was occurring at the three acute hospitals and the learning from good practice. He echoed members feelings of support for A&E staff and the service that they provide. The Chair, and other members, thanked the ICB for the consistency in reporting which made it easier to compare trends across the acute hospitals from the data.

Summary of Actions:

The ICB to double check whether figures for patients attending the SDEC are included in figures for A&E.

2. Norfolk and Suffolk NHS Foundation Trust (NSFT) Mortality Recording and Reporting review

- 2.1 The committee received a statement from NSFT shared by Stuart Richardson, Chief Executive Officer at NSFT. He offered the trust's deep sympathies and thoughts to everybody affected by the publication of the Grant Thornton report, particularly the people to whom it brought back memories and issues that they thought hadn't been resolved. He also personally apologised for this and for any issues related to how the trust had recorded mortality data in the past. He explained that the report that was the focus of Newsnight and BBC East reports was requested by NSFT as the trust accepted that it needed help on the way it gathered its data, particularly on people in the community. All recommendations have been accepted and many actions to address issues were being put in place. Mr Richardson explained that as is common practice, the trust was asked to comment on the report when the auditors delivered their first draft and additional evidence was provided by the trust in response to questions the auditors put to them. He confirmed that this is a standard process for all internal audits that the trust undertakes. NSFT felt that they were open and honest throughout the whole process and the improvement plan would allow for improvements to the quality of the service to continue. They shared that it was important that staff shared any concerns, and that staff could speak up and raise concerns through the independent guardian organisation and Freedom to Speak Up service. NSFT wanted to hear those concerns in order to act upon them. The trust

was working with partners across the system to improve wider transformation of mental health services but acknowledged more work needed to be done to ensure consistent quality of mental health services.

- 2.2 Cath Byford, Deputy Chief Executive Officer and Chief People Officer at NSFT, acknowledged that what they had shared at a previous committee was incorrect but that at the time, she believed that the independent report that was being commissioned would be able to provide a single version of truth in terms of the data and she also believed that there was confidence in the mortality data. Ms Byford committed to continuing an open, transparent, and trusting relationship with NHOSC and hoped there would be continued confidence going forward between herself, the trust and the committee.
- 2.3 Caroline Aldridge and Anne Humphrys, authors of the Forever Gone: Losing Count of Patient Deaths report, introduced the report. They highlighted that NSFT had been unable to establish a single version of the truth and shared their feelings about this and the fact that there was no streamlined system for data collection. Additionally, they noted their concerns that sections of the draft Grant Thornton report had been removed from the final version. Concerns were raised about NSFT's ability to address the root causes of the issue effectively and sustainably; these concerns were amplified by the fact that this was not the first report on deaths and mortality reporting at NSFT. Previous recommendations had not been implemented or sustained and there was a general lack of confidence in the follow-through of actions that were being promised. The limited involvement that bereaved families have had in the co-production of an action plan has reduced confidence further. Concerns were raised regarding data collection and the appearance that corporate reputation was being prioritised over patient safety and improving poor practices.
- 2.4 Stuart Richardson confirmed that the action plan presented in the report to NHOSC was the action plan that came from the Grant Thornton report. The trust did not feel it was appropriate to start adding to that action plan at this point until a co-production discussion had taken place with both ICBs and the report authors. This discussion was due to happen next week. Mr Richardson also clarified that while conversations had been had with Healthwatch Norfolk and Healthwatch Suffolk about their involvement with this co-production, no decisions had been made.
- 2.5 Tricia D'Orsi, Director of Nursing at the ICB, shared that the ICB was committed to working with the NSFT and others to ensure that the co-produced action plan properly addresses the concerns in a systematic way.
- 2.6 The committee receive an annexed report from Dr Liz Chandler, Scrutiny and Research Officer, which noted information to aid the examination of the report from Norfolk and Suffolk NHS Foundation Trust (NSFT) regarding the findings and recommendations of the Grant Thornton Mortality Recording and Reporting review, as well as NSFT's actions in response to those recommendations.
- 2.7 The chair thanked all attendees for coming to the meeting and for their honesty. They noted that this was an opportunity to make a difference but understood that not all members had been reassured. There needed to be confidence that changes to the ways of working, and to the working culture, would make the difference needed. It was appreciated that this would be a process that would take time and required collaboration.

Summary of Actions:

- NSFT to provide information on the number of consultant vacancies and the number of consultant locums there are working for NSFT in proportion to locum to the anticipated full consultant complement.
- NSFT's Chief Medical Officer to provide a written report on whether the data as recorded can identify any adverse correlation with any treatment or medication pathway.
- NHOSC to consider writing to Grant Thornton to both express its concerns and seek information about the different versions of their report.

2.8 The committee took a vote on a joint HOSC meeting between Norfolk and Suffolk HOSCs to discuss the Mortality Recording and Reporting review. Following a show of hands, it was **agreed** that there **would not** be a joint HOSC meeting between Norfolk and Suffolk.

2.9 Cllr Boyle proposed, and was seconded by Cllr Devulapalli, the following recommendations:

1. NHOSC supports calls for a statutory public inquiry into in-patient and community mortality at NSFT.
2. Request that ICBs urgently (within one month) review the Mortality Review Action Plan with bereaved families and NSFT and co-produce revised actions.
3. NHOSC shares the concerns set out by the Parliamentary Health Service Ombudsman and rejects the assertion that changes to the Mortality Review were limited to 'factual accuracy'.
4. All co-production with bereaved families should be commissioned by and directly overseen by ICB due to the lack of HOSC, public and bereaved family confidence in NSFTs suitability or competence to undertake this work safely.
5. Write to the Secretary of State for Health to outline these actions and HOSCs dissatisfaction and ongoing safety concern.

Cllr Dark requested that there be discussion before a vote was taken and the chair agreed to this.

Cllr Aquarone proposed that they move to a vote, this was seconded by Cllr Corlett.

The committee took a vote on each recommendation individually without discussion. All recommendations were **carried**.

2.10 Cllr Dark proposed the following additional recommendations:

6. The recommendations agreed should not delay the work of the co-production plan.
7. NSFT will return to HOSC with an update.

This was seconded by Cllr Corlett on the basis that votes would be taken on each recommendation separately,

Each recommendation was voted on separately. The committee **agreed** the recommendations.

3. Forward Work Programme

The Committee received a report from Peter Randall, Democratic Support and Scrutiny Manager, which set out the current forward work programme and briefing details. The Committee **agreed** the details for both briefings and future meetings.

Peter Randall shared with the committee that work on the Electronic Paper Recording will be part of the Digital Transformation item that was due to come to the committee in January 2024. They also informed members that in January 2024, there would be a forward work programme planning workshop, and there was also an offer of training.

A member suggested that a substantive item on speech and language therapy be added to the forward work programme.

**Cllr Fran Whymark, Chair,
Norfolk Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee.**

Report of the Governance and Audit Committee Meeting held on 25 July 2023 and 7 September 2023

A. Meeting held on 25 July 2023

1. Opening Remarks

- 1.1 The Chairman opened the meeting and welcomed Cllr Karen Vincent who had returned to the committee after having spent the last year as the Council's Chairman. Harvey Bullen was congratulated on the appointment to the role of Section 151 Officer. Debbie Bartlett and Geoff Connell were also welcomed to the committee meeting.

2. Items of Urgent Business

- 2.1 The Chairman informed members that the delayed audit report for the statement of accounts for 2021-22 would be available in September 2023. This was following officer Present: Cllr Ian Mackie - Chairman Cllr Terry Jermy Cllr Karen Vincent Cllr Robert Savage - Vice-Chairman Cllr Tony White Cllr Mark Kiddle Morris Tracy Colman (Independent Person) Christine MacDonald (Independent Person) agreement with external auditors to assist with publishing the latest draft accounts. The completion of the previous audit would take place in late July and early August this year. An additional Audit and Governance Committee meeting would be scheduled for 7 September 2023 at 2pm.

3. Risk Management Quarterly report ended 30th June 2023 and Annual Report 2022- 23

- 3.1 The Committee received a report by the Director of Strategic Finance which set out the key messages for risk management from the last financial year and looked at the current financial year for the Risk Management Function

3.2 RESOLVED to AGREE:

- a. key messages as per paragraphs 2.1 and 2.2 of this report
- b. key changes to the corporate risk register (Appendix A);
- c. corporate risk heat map (Appendix B);
- d. corporate risks as at July 2023 (Appendix C);
- e. key messages from the Annual Risk Management 2022/23 Report (Appendix D);
- f. information in this report was sufficient.

4. Norfolk Pension Fund Governance Arrangements 2022-23

- 4.1 The Committee received the report by the Director of Strategic Finance and the Director of the Norfolk Pension Fund outlining the ongoing governance

arrangements of the Norfolk Pension Fund. Alex Younger, Head of Funding & Investment, Norfolk Pension Fund, introduced the report to the committee, noting that there were no material changes to the Governance arrangements. The report included the Governance Strategic Statement, the Governance Compliance Statement, and the governance arrangement for the ACCESS Investment Pool.

4.2 RESOLVED to:

Note and agree the Norfolk Pension Fund Governance Arrangements 2022-23, which are fully compliant with legislative requirements, regulatory guidance and recognised best practice.

5. Norfolk Audit Services Annual Report for 2022/23 and Quarterly Report for period ending 30th June 2023

5.1 The Committee received the report by the Director of Strategic Finance that noted the internal audit work that had been occurring. Adrian Thompson, Assistant Director of Finance (Audit), presented the report which provided an update to the Committee on the progress with the delivery of the internal audit work and advised on the overall opinion on the effectiveness of risk management and internal control. Members heard that the system of internal control, including the arrangements for the management of risk during 2022/23 continued to be acceptable. The teams and services involved in the audit process were thanked for their contributions to the review.

5.2 RESOLVED to agree that:

- The opinion on the overall adequacy and effectiveness of the County Council's framework of risk management, governance and control for 2022/23 and for the quarter ending 30 June 2023 was 'Acceptable'.
- The audit service provided by NAS continued to conform with the International Standards for the Professional Practice of Internal Auditing (Public Sector Internal Auditing Standards (PSIAS)) as verified via an external Quality Assurance Assessment during late 2022 and complies with the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 (as amended).
- The Draft Annual Governance Statement 2022-23 for Norfolk County Council refers to the report.
- The Committee continued to review information on the effectiveness of the management processes and corporate control functions (legal, financial, information, health and safety and human resources services performed) as provided by internal audits, self-assessment, customer feedback and any existing external performance reviews

6. Governance, Control and Risk Management of Treasury Management 2022-23

6.1 The Committee received the report by the Director of Strategic Finance which provided information on the adequacy and effectiveness of the Treasury

Management arrangements. Joanne Fernandez- Graham, Corporate Accounting Manager, presented the report in which they noted that even with the increase in interest rates, the Treasury Management Fund had been well managed. Key performance indicator and prudential indicators were maintained, as were the borrowing and investments of the council.

6.2 **RESOLVED** to:

Note and agreed the report, which provided assurance to the Audit and Governance Committee as to the adequacy and effectiveness of the governance, control, and risk management arrangements for Treasury Management.

7. **Norfolk County Council's Insurance Cover**

7.1 The Committee received the report by the Director of Strategic Finance which set out the insurance cover that was in place for Norfolk County Council and subsidiary companies. Steve Rayner, Head of Insurance, presented the report to the committee and advised that following negotiations for this year's premium, NCC were able to secure an overall increase in casualty cover of only 9%. In addition, they were able to secure an increase of 13% on the Material Damage policy, this was below the market average increases. In the last 12 months the Material Damage insurer has carried out full property surveys at 4 of our highest value properties, none were regarded as high risks requiring immediate response. The committee also heard that claim costs are increasing, particularly for motor related claims.

7.2 **RESOLVED** to:

Note and agree that proper insurance provision exists where appropriate, as confirmed by external and internal reviews and accept the report.

8. **Yearly Update of the Audit and Governance Committee 2022-23**

8.1 The Committee received the report by the Director of Strategic Finance that summarises the work of the Audit and Governance Committee from the 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2023. Adrian Thompson, Assistant Director of Finance (Audit), introduced the report and confirmed that during the year the Audit and Governance Committee's function has been consistent with its terms of reference, had shown best practice, and demonstrated the impact of its work.

8.2 **RESOLVED** to **note** and **agree**:

- that the arrangements, for audit and for governance, are satisfactory and noted that the Committee has terms of reference which are consistent with guidance and best practice;
- the action to further strengthen the work of the committee by considering how the HoIA and the Council operate in accordance with the principles of the CIPFA Statement on the Role of the Head of Internal Audit.

9. **Monitoring Officer's Annual Report 2022-23**

9.1 The Committee received the report by the Director of Legal Services and Monitoring Officer which summarised the internal governance work carried out by the Monitoring Officer and Deputy Monitoring Officer in 22/23 and provided assurance that the organisation's control environment, in the areas which are the responsibility of the Monitoring Officer, was adequate and effective. Kat Hulatt, Director of Legal Services and Monitoring Officer introduced the report and advised there were no standards incidents in the year 2022-23 and that they had confidence in the governance system. The report encompassed what colleagues across finance, audit and local authority consider, and act as a triangulation of the three departments.

9.2 **RESOLVED to agree:**

- the contents of the report and the key messages in the above Executive Summary and Appendix A section 2.1;
- that they continue to review information on the effectiveness of the management processes and corporate control functions (legal, financial, health and safety and human resources services performed) as provided by internal audits, self-assessment, customer feedback and any existing external performance reviews.

10. Annual Anti-Fraud, Bribery and Corruption Report 2022-23

10.1 The Committee received the report by the Director of Legal Services and Monitoring Officer, which provided an update in respect of the pro-active and reactive anti-fraud, bribery and corruption activity undertaken for the year ended 31st March 2023. Adrian Thompson, Assistant Director of Finance (Audit), introduced the report and highlighted the effectiveness of the system. It was noted that when matters are raised with the police the process can take longer due to backlogs in the system. Work continues to be undertaken to prevent fraud, bribery and corruption activity occurring in the first instance.

10.2 **RESOLVED to agree:**

- the key messages featured in the Annual Report at Appendix A, that the work and assurance are satisfactory, effective, and meet their requirements; and advise if further information was required

11. Annual Information Governance Report 2022-2023

11.1 The Committee received the report by the Director of Strategy and Transformation which provided an annual assurance statement and confirmed that the Senior Information Officer, Data Protection Officer and Caldicott Guardian roles had ensured that there were adequate systems and processes in place around Information Governance. It also noted the activity that has taken place to ensure a robust Information Governance culture

11.2 **RESOLVED to agree:**

- the annual statement on Information Governance and agree appropriate actions had been taken and there are clear deliverables for further embedding;

- that the SIRO, DPO and Caldicott Guardian roles, described in the Council's Information Governance Framework, had been adequately discharged.

12. Committee Work Programme

- 12.1 The Committee received the report by the Director of Strategic Finance. The Committee considered and **noted** the report and **agreed** to the programme. Members were also reminded that an additional meeting had been scheduled for the 7 September 2023 at 2pm. Members would receive invitations for this shortly.

B. Meeting held on 7 September 2023

1. Norfolk County Council Audit Results Report – Audit Committee Summary for the year ended 31 March 2022

- 1.1 The Committee received the report which introduced the External Auditor's (Ernst & Young) Norfolk County Council Provisional Audit Results Reports – Audit and Governance Committee Summary for the year ended 31 March 2022. The report enabled the Committee to formally consider matters raised by the Council's external auditors.

1.2 RESOLVED to:

- Consider the update to the audit scope for risk and materiality issued by Ernst & Young
- Consider and agree matters raised in the Ernst & Young Norfolk County Council and Audit Results Reports before Ernst & Young issue their audit opinions.
- Note the previously acknowledged Ernst & Young Audit Results Reports for the Norfolk Pension Fund Audit 2021-22 received on 22 November 2022 before Ernst & Young issue their audit opinions.

2. Annual Statement of Accounts and Annual Governance Statement Report 2021-22

- 2.1 The committee received the report which charged to approve the Council's Annual Statement of Accounts and Annual Governance Statement 2021-22 and this report presented those accounts.

2.2 RESOLVED to:

1. agree that, following annual reviews, the systems of internal control and internal audit are considered adequate and effective;
2. consider and approve the Annual Governance Statement for 2021-22;
3. note the non-material audit differences set out in paragraph 6 below, with further detail in paragraph 6.6 of the Appendix 1 to this report.
4. consider and approve the Council's 2021-22 Statement of Accounts on the basis that they may be subject to non-material amendments and clarifications resulting from further audit work prior to certification by the Director of Strategic Finance after consultation with the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of Audit and Governance Committee.

5. delegate to the Chair of the Audit and Governance Committee and the Director of Strategic Finance the authority to certify the audited Annual Accounts and the AGS for publication once Ernst and Young have completed their audit.

3. Audit Letters of Representation Report 2021-22

3.1 The committee received the report which introduced the audit letters of representation of Norfolk County Council and the Norfolk Pension Fund for 2021-22. Letters of representation cover matters material to the financial statements and possible noncompliance with laws and regulations. The Council's external auditors required that the letters are signed before they could complete their audit.

3.2 RESOLVED to:

1. note the unadjusted audit differences set out in paragraphs 6.2 and detailed in paragraph A5 and A6 of the draft Letters of Representation attached to this report.
2. endorse the letters of representation in respect of Norfolk County Council and, on the basis that they may be subject to non-material amendments and clarifications resulting from further audit work prior to signature, delegate the Chairman of the Audit and Governance Committee and Director of Strategic Finance to sign the letter on behalf of the Council.

4. Forward Work Programme

4.1 The committee received the report which outlined the committee's work programme. The committee's work fulfils its Terms of Reference as set out in the Council's Constitution and agreed by the Council. The terms of reference fulfil the relevant regulatory requirements of the Council for Accounts and Audit matters, including risk management, internal control and good governance. Following constitutional changes agreed by Full Council on 19th of July 2022 the Audit and Standards Committee have merged.

4.2 RESOLVED

To agree the work programme for the Committee

Ian Mackie
Chairman, Audit & Governance Committee

Report of the Pensions Committee meeting held on 12 September 2023

Report of the meeting held on 12 September 2023

1 Position of Vice-Chair

- 1.1 The Committee elected Cllr Richmond to the position of Vice Chair.

2 Administration Report

- 2.1 The Committee received a report by the Director of Strategic Finance and the Director of the Norfolk Pension Fund that was the quarterly update for the Pensions Committee on operational and administration matters relating to the Fund. This followed the last full quarterly report to Pensions Committee in June 2023.

2.2 RESOLVED

That the Committee:

1. Noted the contents of the report, including the two Admission Agreements in respect of:

- **Aspens Services (Heart Education Trust)**
- **Aspens Services (Diocese of Ely Multi-Academy Trust)**
- **Spire Cleaning (St. Francis of Assisi Catholic Primary School)**

3 Update from the Pensions Oversight Board

- 3.1 The Committee received a report by the Director of Strategic Finance and the Director of the Norfolk Pension Fund that provided an update on the work of the Board.

3.2 It was RESOLVED

To note the report.

4 Risk Register Report and Compliance with Breaches Policy

- 4.1 The Committee received a report by the Director of Strategic Finance and the Director of the Norfolk Pension Fund that updated the Pensions Committee on the Norfolk Pension Fund's Risk Register and Breaches Policy.

4.2 RESOLVED

That the Committee note the contents of the report.

5 Draft Pension Fund Accounts 2022-23

- 5.1 The Committee received a report by the Director of Strategic Finance and the Director of the Norfolk Pension Fund that presented the draft annual accounts of the Norfolk Pension Fund for the year ended 31 March 2023, for consideration by the Committee.

5.2 RESOLVED

That the Committee noted the draft 2022-23 Accounts of the Norfolk Pension Fund.

6 ACCESS Update Unrestricted Items

- 6.1 The Committee received a report by the Director of Strategic Finance and the Director of the Norfolk Pension Fund that provided an update to the Pensions Committee on the work of the ACCESS Pool in so far as unrestricted items were concerned.

6.2 RESOLVED

That the Committee noted the contents of the report.

7 ACCESS Update – Restricted items

- 7.1 The Committee received a report (containing exempt information) by the Director Strategic Finance and the Director of the Norfolk Pension Fund that updated Members on a confidential basis on investment and governance matters pertaining to the ACCESS Pool (A Collaboration of Central, Eastern and Southern Shires).

7.2 RESOLVED

That the Committee noted the contents of the report.

8. Pensions Oversight Board – Independent Chair

- 8.1 The Committee received a report (containing exempt information) by the Director of Strategic Finance and the Director of the Norfolk Pension Fund updating the committee on the Pensions Board's Independent Chairing arrangements.

8.2 RESOLVED

That the committee noted the report and agreed to proceed with the recommendations.

8 Employer Operational Issues

- 8.1 The Committee received a report (containing exempt information) by the Director of Strategy and the Director of the Norfolk Pension Fund about the arrangements

that were in place to monitor progress against the agreed recovery plan for employer operational issues considered at previous meetings including the production of Annual Benefit Statements for the period April 2022 – March 2023.

8.2 RESOLVED

That the Committee note the contents of the report.

LGPS: Next Steps on Investments (Pooling Consultation)

9

9.1 The Committee received a report (containing exempt information) by the Director of Strategy and the Director of the Norfolk Pension Fund about the LGPS Next Steps on Investment (Pooling consultation). The consultation was launched on 11th July 2023 and the deadline for responses is 2nd October 2023. The consultation document was shared with the committee shortly after its publication.

RESOLVED

9.2

That the Committee noted the contents of the report.

10 Investment Performance Update by Hymans Robertson

10.1 The Committee received a detailed presentation on investment performance (containing exempt information) by Hymans Robertson.

10.2 It was RESOLVED

That the Committee noted the detailed presentation and the work undertaken by Hymans Robertson.

11 Enhanced Yield Portfolio Review (part 3)

11.1 The Committee received a report (containing exempt information) by the Director of Strategic Finance and the Director of the Norfolk Pension Fund and a presentation by Hymans that presented additional implementation recommendations and identified where further work was required since this matter was last considered in June 2023.

11.2 RESOLVED

That the Committee agree to the recommendations set out in the report.

12 Investment Update

12.1 The Committee received a report (containing exempt information) by the Director of Strategic Finance and the Director of the Norfolk Pension Fund that dealt with the investment strategy and assets of the Fund. It included details about the onboarding of assets to the ACCESS Pool, an update on class actions, private market commitments, currency hedging, details of the climate risk analysis of the public equity portfolio and investment performance to 31 March 2023.

12.2 RESOLVED

That the Committee note the content of the report.

**Cllr Judy Oliver
Chair**

Report of the People and Communities Select Committee meeting held on 14 July and 15 September 2023

A: Meeting held on 14 July 2023

1. Norfolk Adult Social Care Quality Framework

- 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.
- 1.2 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

2. Adult Social Care Reform update

- 2.1 The Select Committee received the report providing an update on the work underway in readiness for the implementation of social care reform.
- 2.2 The Select Committee:
 - a) Considered the readiness opportunities for the introduction of Supported Self Assessment
 - b) Reviewed the work under this programme

3. Refresh of the Norfolk and Waveney Adult Social Care Workforce Strategy

- 3.1 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.
- 3.2 The Select Committee reviewed and discussed the paper and revised priorities.

4. Schools' capital programmes

- 4.1 The Select Committee received the report setting out the schools' capital programmes for mainstream and specialist places across Norfolk.
- 4.2 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

5. Financial and Strategic Planning 2024-25

- 5.1 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.
- 5.2 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.

6. Forward plan

- 6.1 The Select Committee discussed and agreed the forward work programme

B: Meeting held on 15 September 2023

1. Integrated Winter Plan (Health and Wellbeing) for 2023/24

- 1.1 The Select Committee received the report providing information on 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.

1.2 The Select Committee

- received the report on the draft Integrated Winter Plan for 2023/24 and offered guidance and comment on the council's winter planning
- suggested that more detail be taken to the Integrated Care Partnership on the Integrated Winter Plan.

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

2.1 The Select Committee received the report outlining information on the Local First Inclusion programme and sets out the information provided to Scrutiny Committee in May this year.

2.2 The Select Committee:

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

3 Children's Social Care Review and Norfolk Response – Phase of Change

3.1 The Select Committee received the report giving an update on the details of the recently published Stable Homes, Built on Love strategy, outlining reforms for children's social care.

3.2 The Select Committee:

1. Endorsed the principle of increased multi-disciplinary working between key agencies working with children and families in Norfolk.
2. Endorsed our response to the proposed reforms.
3. Endorsed 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. Endorsed our approach to explore other pathfinder opportunities, for example the regional pathfinder for Fostering Recruitment and Retention

4 Forward plan

4.1 The Select Committee discussed and agreed the forward work programme

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

Annual Investment and Treasury Management Strategy - Report from the Scrutiny Committee to Council

1 Background

- 1.1 At the meeting held on the 20 September 2023, members of the Scrutiny Committee received and discussed a proposed amendment to the Annual Investment and Treasury Management Strategy 2023-24. This document sits among a number of policies that make up the overall NCC policy framework.
- 1.2 The Scrutiny Committee has a clear role in providing challenge to any refresh or amendment to items that make up the policy framework. This is set out in section 11b of the NCC constitution, alongside guidelines around communication with members and the process leading to Full Council approval. The item must be considered by the Scrutiny Committee in good time, and the Committee are asked to provide a report to the Leader of the Council outlining a summary of discussions and any recommendations put forward by the Scrutiny Committee. This report will include details of any minority views expressed as part of the debate at the Scrutiny Committee. Having considered any report by the Scrutiny Committee, the Leader or Executive will agree proposals for submission to the Council and report to Council on how any recommendations from the Scrutiny Committee have been taken into account.
- 1.3 As above, this report will summarise the minutes from the discussion at the Scrutiny Committee, highlighting key points raised by Scrutiny members and outlining the recommendations agreed by the Committee.

2 Summary of discussions

- 2.1 The below is an excerpt from the minutes of the meeting held on the 20 September 2023 detailing the issues raised with relation to the amendment to the Annual Investment and Treasury Management Strategy 2023-24.
- 2.2 Scrutiny Committee received the annexed report (9) setting out details of a proposal to amend the Treasury Management and Investment Strategy for 2023-24 to increase the treasury management investment limit for the Norse Group.

The Cabinet Member for Finance introduced the report to Scrutiny Committee:

- This amendment was part of the policy framework which Cabinet was asked to approve at its meeting on 4 September 2023. The amendment was an increase in Norse Group's treasury management limit from £15m to £25m. This amendment would be taken to Full Council for agreement following discussion at Scrutiny Committee.
- The increase was due to refinancing of a £10m loan with the Council via a 1-year facility.
- The overall Norse Group debt was £25.9m compared to their turnover of

£359m in the last financial year and assets of £192.9m.

- The capital loan limits of Norse Group would be reviewed as part of a wider review of Norse Group's operations.
- The Director of Strategic Finance added that paragraph 4.4 of the report showed that this was an overdraft facility for Norse Group which they did not use very often. The review of Norse Group was being carried out as part of good governance and to help The Director of Strategic Finance familiarise himself with the Group in his new role.

2.3 The following points were discussed by the committee:

- A Scrutiny Committee Member asked why this disparity at Norse had only just been realised since Norse's treasury management limit of £15m had been agreed at the Budget Council meeting in February 2023, and queried if the change was being made due to difficulties in cashflow at the Group. The Cabinet Member for Finance acknowledged that this should have been changed in February 2023, however stated that the change was not being made due to difficulties in cashflow at Norse Group. This was a one-year loan and would be refinanced after this time; the £25m limit would be reviewed in February 2024 to see if it should be reduced back down to £15m.
- A Scrutiny Committee Member wanted to know how this compared to other local authority trading companies. The Cabinet Member for Finance confirmed that Norse Group was the largest LATCo (Local Authority Trading Company) in the country, however compared to commercial organisations this was a low facility. The Director of Strategic Finance confirmed that the increase was in line with what Norse had been advised and was not out of line with other organisations but would be kept under review.
- The Vice-Chair felt that the increase did not pose much risk to the Council given the size and length of the loan being given.
- A Committee Member queried what accounting mechanisms were in place to ensure the previous £10m Norse energy loan into a treasury management fixed deposit. The Director of Strategic Finance replied that it was up to Norse how they chose to re-finance this loan and he would have further conversations with them about how they planned to repay this as part of the discussions with them about their wider Governance.
- The Director of Strategic Finance confirmed that the only change to the appended policy and its appendices was the increase from £15m to £25m. The Chair noted that this was taking place as part of a wider review of Norse Group and asked about how this would fit into the work around Wholly Owned Companies being brought to Scrutiny Committee at their next meeting or if there were any risks which arose. The Cabinet Member for Finance replied that it was important to look at Norse and its ongoing work as part of the ongoing strategic view which should run alongside the work of Scrutiny Committee. This would help inform the information being brought to Scrutiny Committee.

3 Actions and recommendations

3.1 No formal revisions to the Scrutiny Committee forward work programme were

agreed as a result of discussions.

- 3.2. Scrutiny Committee **RESOLVED** to note the amendment to the Annual Investment and Treasury Management Strategy 2023-24 (as appended) to increase the treasury management investment limit for Norse Group to £25.000m in order to maintain the existing level of cash flow facility available to the company, and that it will now be considered by full council as part of the policy framework'.