

## **Cabinet**

### **Minutes of the Virtual Teams Meeting held at 10am on Monday 6 July 2020 at 10am**

**Present:**

Cllr Andrew Proctor	Chairman. Leader & Cabinet Member for Strategy & Governance.
Cllr Bill Borrett	Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, Public Health & Prevention.
Cllr Margaret Dewsbury	Cabinet Member for Communities & Partnerships.
Cllr John Fisher	Cabinet Member for Children's Services.
Cllr Tom FitzPatrick	Cabinet Member for Innovation, Transformation & Performance.
Cllr Andy Grant	Cabinet Member for Environment & Waste.
Cllr Andrew Jamieson	Cabinet Member for Finance
Cllr Greg Peck	Cabinet Member for Commercial Services & Asset Management.
Cllr Graham Plant	Vice-Chairman and Cabinet Member for Growing the Economy.
Cllr Martin Wilby	Cabinet Member for Highways, Infrastructure & Transport.

**Executive Directors Present:**

Tom McCabe	Executive Director of Community & Environmental Services and Head of Paid Service.
James Bullion	Executive Director of Adult Social Services
Helen Edwards	Chief Legal Officer and Monitoring Officer
Simon George	Executive Director of Finance & Commercial Services
Fiona McDiarmid	Executive Director of Strategy & Governance
Sara Tough	Executive Director of Children's Services

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the Cabinet meeting and advised viewers that pursuant to The Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority Police and Crime Panel Meetings) (England and Wales) Regulations 2020, the meeting was being held under new Regulations which had been brought in to deal with the restrictions under Covid 19. Decisions made in the meeting would have the same standing and validity as if they had been made in a meeting in County Hall.

Cabinet Members and Executive Directors formally introduced themselves.

The Chairman advised that agenda item 17 (Norfolk's Local Outbreak Control Plan) had been withdrawn from the agenda.

#### **1 Apologies for Absence**

There were no apologies for absence.

## **2 Minutes**

The minutes from the Cabinet meeting held on Monday 8 June 2020 were agreed as an accurate record and would be signed by the Chairman as soon as possible.

## **3 Declaration of Interests**

There were no Declarations of Interest made.

## **4 Matters referred to Cabinet by the Scrutiny Committee, Select Committees or by full Council.**

There were no matters referred to Cabinet.

## **5 Items of Urgent Business**

There were no items of urgent business.

## **6 Public Question Time**

The list of public questions and responses is attached to these minutes at Appendix A.

## **7 Local Member Questions/Issues**

7.1 The list of Local Member questions and the responses is attached at Appendix B.

7.2 Cllr Alexandra Kemp stated that West Norfolk had the highest Covid death rates in Norfolk; South and West Lynn & town centre had the highest death rates in the District. As a supplementary question, Cllr Kemp asked if Norfolk County Council would call an immediate review to tackle West Norfolk's economic and social determinants of health inequality, get the South Lynn Surgery built, and call off the Bulldozers from South Lynn Corridor of Health and Exercise, Hardings Way.

The Chairman responded that part of the question had already been responded to, adding that the County Council's Business Plan "Together for Norfolk", had three areas that built on infrastructure – in King's Lynn, Thetford and Great Yarmouth. Therefore, he didn't agree the Council was not doing anything for King's Lynn. He added that all the issues relating to economic regeneration would be taken into consideration in agenda item 8 (Restarting the Norfolk Economy).

7.3 Cllr Emma Corlett said that the answer she had been given sets out what the Cabinet Member was not responsible for – in recent weeks saying he was not responsible for making sure children were fed; home learning; attainment and SEND issues, blaming National Government. As a supplementary question, Cllr Corlett asked if the Cabinet Member for Children's Services could please let her know what he was responsible for.

In reply, the Cabinet Member for Children's Services said he was responsible for the education of children, working with families and schools across Norfolk to ensure children received a good education as well as being responsible for the social services and family's unit. The Cabinet Member continued that Ofsted was

responsible for the quality of children's education. He also added that he would like to help feed the children of Norfolk, but unfortunately there was no budget to do so, and feeding the children of Norfolk was not one of the responsibilities under the remit of Children's Services.

- 7.4 As a written supplementary question, Cllr Mike Smith-Clare said that the cabinet member for Children's seemed to have been apologising a lot to families for failures in their service. Apologies and compensation didn't give back the wasted time for families under pressure and young people needing support to fulfil their potential. He asked how many more apologies did the cabinet member think would be necessary before the service he was responsible for finally lived up to the needs of Norfolk

The Cabinet Member for Children's Services responded that he would apologise as much as necessary, although there was now a good team in place within Children's Services and he was confident that the need and number of apologies would decrease. He added that he would continue to apologise until the service was at 100%, which was his aim and target and that he would continue to be upfront to ensure schools and parents knew that.

- 7.5 As a written supplementary question, Cllr Julie Brociek-Coulton stated that the pandemic had shown the crucial part computers played in learning for young people. She asked what steps the cabinet member was taking to ensure all children from disadvantaged backgrounds were able to get proper access to devices and connectivity?

The Cabinet Member for Children's Services advised that work had been undertaken with schools and the Department for Education to raise the issue. He added that he was aware of the importance technology, computers and laptops played in learning, particularly for those children from disadvantaged backgrounds, which was why children with a council worker were the first children to receive equipment. He continued that the Council's virtual school also worked with children to ensure they had vital technology and laptops. He also added that he was confident that children could learn and would have the necessary equipment to allow them to learn.

- 7.6 As a written supplementary question, Cllr Brenda Jones asked how the Cabinet Member would make an objective measure of how much the gaps in attainment had grown and how he would measure whether the position was improving or getting worse.

The Cabinet Member for Children's Services responded that attainment targets were critical and were based on an average that needed to be aimed for. He added that the department was constantly considering how the average could be assessed and be improved and that the attainment targets in Norfolk were roughly in line with national targets, although the department was continually looking to improve.

- 7.7 As a written supplementary question Cllr Mike Sands stated that in the 2017 budget Council meeting, the Conservative administration had rejected a Labour amendment that would have started capital investment to tackle long journeys for SEND families much sooner and that by now we would be seeing the benefits. He

asked if the Cabinet Member regretted the decision to oppose that Labour amendment.

The Cabinet Member for Children's Services stated that he was happy with the Conservative budget that was set at that time.

- 7.8 As a written supplementary question Cllr David Rowntree asked, if childhood hunger was not a matter for the Cabinet Member, if he could advise what issues were more important to him than a hungry child in Norfolk.

The Cabinet Member for Children's Services responded that he would welcome the budget to feed every child in Norfolk and ensure they went to school, but it was actually the responsibility of parents to feed children. He continued that some schools monitored the situation and helped where they found it necessary, which he supported, reiterating that it was the responsibility of parents and families to feed children.

- 7.9 As a written supplementary question, Cllr Colleen Walker stated that future lockdowns were likely to be selective, so areas or schools locked down would also be disadvantaged compared to others in Norfolk. She asked if the Cabinet Member thought there would be no impact that could exacerbate the existing damage, or did he think that it was a significant matter for the County Council, or not his responsibility.

The Cabinet Member for Children's Services responded that across the country and in Norfolk a great deal had been learned over the last three months about how to react better to a pandemic. He added that if there was a need for a local lockdown then he believed the council would be much better prepared to hopefully eliminate the issues faced in the national lockdown, and be able to reduce damage to children. He continued that if there was a further lockdown there were issues that would need to be taken on board, but the council would be better prepared.

- 7.10 As a written supplementary question Cllr Chrissie Rumsby stated that the courts were currently experiencing considerable backlogs as many cases were likely to be considerably delayed before coming before them for determination. She asked if the Council had the capacity to properly support children and families during those extended periods.

The Cabinet Member for Children's Services reassured Cllr Rumsby that he had made an appointment, together with the Executive Director of Children's Services, to meet with the Minister for Children and Families to relay the Council's concerns about the court system and the backlog of cases.

- 7.11 As a written supplementary question, Cllr Danny Douglas stated that it was clear the mental health impact would not become fully apparent for some time and may be both as a direct result or consequences of the lockdown on young people and their families. He added that this impact would not be limited to Norfolk alone and would add additional pressure to an already overstretched mental health professional capacity in the county. He asked what steps the Cabinet Member was taking to address this.

The Cabinet Member for Children's Services responded that work was being undertaken with colleagues in health to address the mental health, as this was not

only an issue in Norfolk, but across the whole of the UK as the country moved out of covid-19. He added that work was being carried out to identify any issues and impacts and these would be addressed.

- 7.12 As a written supplementary question, Cllr Chris Jones asked what other issues did the Cabinet Member intend to survey schools about, and would he be extending his surveys to include parents and teacher organisations to ensure all significant views were taken into account in recovery planning.

The Cabinet Member for Children's Services said that this was an issue raised during the Scrutiny Committee meeting on 29 June 2020. He continued that as schools returned after covid-19, there would be statistics and areas that schools needed to be surveyed on, to better prepare for any future pandemics and also to help schools address some of the issues that had arisen during covid-19. The Cabinet Member said it was not possible to state what information the department would be asking schools to supply at the present time.

- 7.13 As a written supplementary question, Cllr Kim Clipsham asked if the Cabinet Member would take personal responsibility in ensuring those entitled to free school meal vouchers during school holidays actually received them.

In reply, the Cabinet Member for Children's Services reassured Cllr Clipsham that he was confident, after the extensive discussions he had had with the team responsible, that the County Council would be able to address any requests that were received late, or came in during the school holidays, to ensure children entitled to vouchers would receive them.

## **8 Restarting the Norfolk Economy.**

- 8.1 Cabinet received the report by the Executive Director of Community & Environmental Services setting out the direction of travel for economic recovery planning, outlining proposals for a two-phase New Anglia LEP Economic Recovery Plan for Norfolk and Suffolk ("Restart": 6-12 Months; "Rebuild": 12 months and beyond), underpinned by a Norfolk Delivery Plan, led by Norfolk County Council.

- 8.2 The Cabinet Member for Growing the Economy introduced the report and moved the recommendations, during which the following points were noted:

- The Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) was developing a two-phase approach to recovery planning – "Restart", a tactical plan covering the next 6-12 months; "Rebuild", a longer term strategic plan, starting to be developed in the autumn 2020. Both documents were work in progress and would be updated as data emerged,
- Norfolk had one of the lowest infection and death rates around the country.
- Staff had been redeployed during the pandemic into other areas, and these staff were thanked for changing their priorities.
- To support the implementation of the Norfolk Delivery Plan, a Norfolk Strategic Fund would be created, building on the reprioritisation of part of the 2019-20 Business Rates Pool. Projects which could be supported using the Fund included strategic schemes aimed at helping Norfolk, clean growth projects, skills and employment projects.
- The fund would be overseen by Norfolk Leaders and administered by the County Council's Economic Programmes Team.

- As set out in the Norfolk Delivery Plan, significant strategic infrastructure was crucial to recovery.
- In June, the County Council responded to an invitation from Government to set out proposals to accelerate capital projects to be delivered over the next 18 months. A bid was assembled of over £41m, with £32m being received, being the 10<sup>th</sup> largest in the country. The outcome of the bid should be known in the summer and work on the projects would commence as soon as funding was known.
- Large scale projects, crucial to deliver jobs and grow key sectors of renewable energy, food and drink and digital would continue, including the offshore wind and maintenance sector based in Great Yarmouth, a food innovation hub and a digital tech centre.
- To assist businesses reopen and people move around the county safely, early measures to deploy the £2m allocation of the Government's Emergency Active Travel Fund, eg the bike scheme in Norwich city centre, pop-up cycle lanes and the widening of footpaths to allow physical distancing were set out on pages 101-103 of the agenda.
- There was a mix of projects to support businesses in the delivery plan.
- Appendix A of the report, sets out the project detail of the Norfolk Delivery Plan, the details of which would evolve in line with local circumstances, evidence and data, particularly for actions beyond the initial six months of the Plan.

- 8.3 The Cabinet Member for Communities & Partnerships supported the proposals outlined and highlighted that the government had recently announced a £1.57bn rescue package for Arts and Culture. She added that members of the Norfolk Arts Forum had played an important role in providing evidence and lobbying government to attain this support, which should also help our local economy. She continued that the Norfolk Arts Forum had done a brilliant job which would support and benefit local venues and arts centres.
- 8.4 The Chairman highlighted that the Government had announced the Arts and Culture rescue funding on 5 July and exact details of the funding were still awaited, although, hopefully, it would play a large part in restarting the economy.
- 8.5 The Cabinet Member for Innovation, Transformation & Performance said that the report showed the way forward and that he was particularly pleased about the bid for full-fibre broadband as digital had kept Norfolk moving during the pandemic and was also the way forward for the future as it would help businesses take online bookings which would help the tourism industry and also make businesses known to a wider audience. He added that the excellent report showed Norfolk was at the forefront of technology and was moving forward.
- 8.6 The Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, Public Health & Prevention stated that he didn't underestimate the task faced, particularly as the furlough scheme would end in the autumn which could lead to an increase in unemployment. He added he was pleased to see the focus on people in the report, as he felt this would be an area of intense scrutiny and interest to the residents in Norfolk and that having a structured plan in place, with a strategy to focus on employment as part of the restart and rebuild was the right thing for the County Council. He added that he was pleased the Council was committing funding, even in this cash-strapped time when there was demand in other areas and fully supported the recommendations in the report.

- 8.7 The Chairman highlighted that the £6.7m from the Norfolk Strategic Fund would sit well with the LEP's own resilience and recovery fund of £3.5m, which gave a total of just over £10m to restart the economy, although a lot of the LEP money had already been spent.

He added that, in addition Norfolk & Suffolk had been awarded £32.1m out of a total of £900m across the country to deliver projects that would count towards restarting the economy and projects to be delivered in the next 18 months, the exact list of which would be worked out over the next few weeks.

The Chairman also highlighted the work in the plan which focused on the Youth Pledge; on mental health and wellbeing; the health and social care sector; and the launch of a peer to peer network to support Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) adapt their business plans, adopt new technology, buy leadership and management support which in turn would help productivity.

- 8.8 Cabinet **RESOLVED** to:

1. **Approve** the Norfolk and Suffolk Economic Recovery Restart Plan and the associated Norfolk Delivery Plan.
2. **Agree**, in principle, the allocation of £1M to the Norfolk Strategic Fund.

- 8.9 **Evidence and reasons for Decision**

Both the New Anglia LEP Restart Plan and underpinning Norfolk Delivery Plan are evidence-led and any proposals for funding from the Norfolk Strategic Fund will need to have a sound business case and concrete outcomes in order to receive funding. The combination of these two targeted plans, together with funding to deliver, provide the rationale for intervention.

- 8.10 **Alternative Options**

As indicated under 3.1, without an effective strategy for recovery, at both a Norfolk/Suffolk and a Norfolk level, driven by data and evidence, we will struggle to have an impact on the resilience of the county.

The New Anglia LEP Restart Plan has been produced in consultation with partners and is recognised as work in progress, as the evidence unfolds – particularly as the Government's furlough scheme unwinds from August to October and as businesses emerge from lockdown in phases.

Without a Norfolk Delivery Plan we will miss the opportunity to kickstart the recovery and support business and individuals at risk. Cabinet could choose not to prioritise monies to the Norfolk Strategic Fund. However the amount requested is due to come from the Council's allocation from Government for Covid-19 impact mitigation and would boost the impact of Business Rates Pool and district council monies, targeted on the recovery.

## **9 Residual Waste Contract Award**

- 9.1 Cabinet received the report by the Executive Director of Community & Environmental Services explaining the outcome of a procurement for services to treat approximately 180,000 tonnes a year of Norfolk's residual municipal waste

starting in April 2021 for a six-year period, with the possibility to extend for up to a further two years. This procurement does not include arrangements with Suffolk County Council for the treatment of initially around 20,000 tonnes of waste a year from 2021 which have already been agreed.

The report recommended contract award based on the outcome of a procurement process so that the services to treat and dispose of waste could start when existing contracts expired in 2021.

- 9.2 The Executive Director of Community & Environmental Services commended the team for designing a procurement process that had delivered a very competitive bid with both financial and environmental benefits for Norfolk.
- 9.3 The Cabinet Member for Environment & Waste introduced the report and moved the recommendations, during which the following points were noted:
- Cabinet had agreed, in January 2020, to go to tender for a six-year contract for residual waste services.
  - The Cabinet Member recommended the contract award with Veolia to treat 180,000 tonnes per year, commencing in April 2021, with a possibility of extending the contract by an additional two years.
  - The proposal from Veolia was based on using a large waste facility in Bedfordshire which would open in 2021, using a similar facility in Kent until the plant in Bedfordshire was open.
  - The contract would mean zero waste from Norfolk residents going directly to landfill and all Norfolk's left-over waste would be used to generate energy for the UK.
  - Recycling would be increased with more metal and aggregates being recycled, and approximately 47,000 tonnes of carbon emissions would be avoided every year of the contract, as opposed to landfill.
  - A £2m saving per annum would be delivered, which would be excellent news for the budget.
  - The current arrangements with Suffolk County Council would continue from 2021 for disposal of initially 20,000 tonnes.
  - The contract was excellent news, and the Cabinet Member commended the staff for the tender process.
  - Council's view needed to be considered before the award as the contract was worth over £100m.
  - Overall this was excellent news for Norfolk and the environment.
- 9.4 The Cabinet Member for Children's Services supported the contract, stating that from his past experience as Chairman of the Norfolk Waste Partnership, such a contract had been awaited for a long time that would deal with all of Norfolk's waste and deliver zero waste to landfill which was an excellent achievement. He continued that having been a Councillor at Broadland District Council for a number of years, which had worked with Veolia, he had found them, from a Broadland District Council viewpoint, an excellent company to deal with..
- 9.5 The Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, Public Health & Prevention echoed the comments made, saying that this was an area where there had been increasing cost pressures over the past years. He continued that everyone involved in procuring the contract that delivered an annual saving of £2m needed to be congratulated, especially as more waste would be recycled from the recovery of



metals from waste and less waste would go to landfill, describing it as a quite startling result and he heartily endorsed the recommendations in the report.

- 9.6 The Cabinet Member for Highways, Infrastructure & Transport echoed the comments already made adding that this was a really good deal for Norfolk which would be much better for the environment and recycling figures as well providing savings to Norfolk County Council. He added his congratulations to the team for procuring the contract and said he looked forward to it commencing in the not too distant future.
- 9.7 The Cabinet Member for Innovation, Transformation & Performance agreed that this was an excellent report, highlighting that it would be good if it just meant that Norfolk would have zero waste to landfill, but it would also mean more recycling, saved carbon emissions, as well as saving over £2m on current costs. He echoed the congratulations to everyone involved in the procurement.
- 9.8 The Chairman also added his praise to the team involved in procuring the contract and the outcome.
- 9.9 Cabinet **RESOLVED**:
1. **To approve** the provisional award of a contract to Veolia for residual waste treatment and disposal services from 2021 to 2027, subject to the contract not being awarded until the view of Full Council has been established.
  2. **To delegate** to the Cabinet Member for Environment and Waste in consultation with the Executive Director of Community and Environmental Services the authority to determine suitable arrangements to ensure a wider coverage of local delivery points for use by District Councils to supplement or replace existing arrangements.
  3. In accordance with the County Council's second Waste Policy, **to carry out** the annual review of arrangements for the *'incineration of waste or fuel derived from waste'* outside Norfolk by reviewing the information set out in para 8.5.5 of the report.

#### 9.10 **Evidence and Reasons for Decision**

The recommendation was arrived at after following a procurement process that adhered to the evaluation principles approved by Cabinet, which incorporated a refinement suggested by Infrastructure and Development Select Committee.

The reason for the decision is to allow the County Council to continue to fulfil its role as a Waste Disposal Authority when existing arrangements to treat and dispose of waste the County Council is responsible for end in 2021.

#### 9.11 **Alternative Options**

Existing contracts cannot be extended beyond March 2021 and the agreement with Suffolk is initially only for approximately 20,000 tonnes a year.

Failure to award as recommended would mean the County Council has to rely on short term measures for an extended period to fulfil its statutory obligations for

dealing with left over rubbish or use emergency powers. Both of these would expose the County Council to greater costs.

## **10 Distribution of the Department for Transport ‘Pothole Fund’ for Local Roads 2020-21**

10.1 Cabinet received the report by the Executive Director of Community & Environmental Services. The Government had allocated additional funding of £22.231m from its Pothole Fund, to be spent during 2020/21. The report sets out a proposal for distributing the funding to a range of highway maintenance categories, to enable a programme of works to be developed and delivered.

10.2 In introducing the report and moving the recommendations, the Cabinet Member for Highways, Infrastructure & Transport highlighted the following:

- The significant additional funding had been made available by the Government for highways maintenance in Norfolk.
- The value of the investment was just over £22m which was a significant investment to maintain roads, footways and cycle ways.
- The funding was intended to fix potholes, but would also enable a wider range of other maintenance works to be completed, including resurfacing work on footways and roads to prevent potholes appearing, as well as other initiatives such as sign replacement and bridge maintenance works.
- The details of the allocations were shown in Appendix A of the report.

The Cabinet Member added that the County Council had an excellent record on delivery of this fund in previous years and he looked forward to seeing the projects delivered within this financial year.

10.3 The Cabinet Member for Finance endorsed the report and congratulated the Cabinet Member and his team on securing the funding, adding he was particularly pleased to see the work being done on cycle ways which would work alongside the Active Transport initiatives already in place, allowing a range of “shovel ready” programmes in the walking and cycling sector.

10.4 The Cabinet Member for Growing the Economy referred to the maintenance work on Haven Bridge in Great Yarmouth, which would be carried out as a result of this funding, with work starting after Christmas 2020. He added that the bridge had been built in 1935, and as the electrics could not be replaced without having the lifts of the bridge up, it had never been done and congratulated the team on securing the funding.

10.5 The Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, Public Health & Prevention stated that this was another good news story, adding that £1.16m had already been budgeted, giving a net increase in spend of over £20m to be spent in 2020/21. He also commended the Highways Team in producing a schedule which identified where the money was going to be spent, ensuring the County Council was in an excellent position to spend the Government’s funding improving Norfolk’s roads. The Cabinet Member continued that potholes in rural areas was a very important issue, given the 6000 miles of rural roads in Norfolk, maintenance was an immense task and that he congratulated the team on achieving the funding.

10.6 Cabinet **RESOLVED** to:

**Approve** the distribution of the County Council's funding allocation of the Pothole Fund as set out in this report

#### 10.7 **Evidence and Reasons for Decision**

The funding allocated to the County Council under the Pothole fund is Capital funding intended for the maintenance of highway infrastructure to extend the life of these assets. It is not ring-fenced.

The proposed distribution of the funding is based upon our Highway Asset Management Policy and Strategy, and the need to deliver the works in the remaining 10 months of the year. As a result, the funding will enable activities across the range of Norfolk's highway assets.

#### 10.8 **Alternative Options**

The funding could be used elsewhere as it is not ring-fenced, however it is clear that the intended purpose of the allocation is highway infrastructure. Allocating the funding to other activities could impact on any future funding allocations for highway infrastructure

The funding could be distributed differently; however, it is considered that the proposed distribution is in line with Policy and Strategy and will enable delivery, with a short-time scale.

### 11 **Finance Monitoring Report 2020-21 P2: May 2020**

11.1 Cabinet received the report by the Executive Director of Finance & Commercial Services which gave a summary of the forecast financial position for the 2020-21 Revenue and Capital Budgets, General Balances, and the Council's Reserves at 31 March 2021, together with related financial information.

11.2 The Cabinet Member for Finance introduced the report and moved the recommendations, during which the following points were noted:

- Many of the headline figures in the report had now been superseded by the announcement last Thursday of an additional £500m funding for Local Authorities.
- Until the recent Government announcement, the overspend was estimated at £15.799m, largely incurred by the pressures of the pandemic which was covered in agenda item 12.
- The details of the award were not yet known but it would significantly reduce the projected in-year overspend.
- As well as an un-ringfenced sum, further funds would be made available to Local Authorities to compensate them for the majority of the income lost because of the pandemic, although the details may not be known until September 2020.
- If there were any collection fund deficits, they would not need to be funded in-year but could be paid over three years which was a welcome announcement.
- The County Council was obliged, by law, to balance our budget annually and the additional funding would have made this task easier in the current year although we would still be looking at significant overspends in the coming

months. Many councils had been issuing dire warnings of significant overspends but in Norfolk, while we fully understand the severity of the situation, even before this latest funding announcement, our general reserves were £19.7m and earmarked reserves and provisions were over £83m, so although the County Council was not issuing a dire warning, the Cabinet Member reminded everyone that the medium term outlook remained serious.

- Monitoring of service department's budget expenditure was at a relatively high level and great detail would be included in future reports.
- Once the details of the recent government funding announcement regarding loss of income stream, and the implications had been shared with the relevant service departments, details would be included in future reports.
- It was anticipated that repayment of monies owed to the County Council by the NHS would shortly be received. This money was owed to us for supporting the discharge from hospitals to increase bed capacity during April and May 2020. The latest claim for June had been compiled and would be agreed with the Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) week commencing 13 July 2020. This showed how Norfolk County Council was working well during the pandemic to support and engage constructively with Partners, such as the CCG, the Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) and the Police.
- The detail behind the overspend was set out in the Revenue Annex 1 of the report, although this would be subject to significant changes following the Government's announcement of additional funding.
- Within the Capital programme, there was some reprofiling of the timing of expenditure, mainly for the SEND schools programme and also the additional funding for highways following receipt of the Pothole Fund mentioned in the previous report.
- Cabinet was recommended to approve an additional £1m to fund investment in library books through the capital, rather than the revenue, account.

- 11.3 The Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, Public Health & Prevention highlighted that the majority of the bad news in the report was down to Adult Social Care. The department had faced a heroic task and the overspend was entirely attributable to issues in managing the outbreak of covid-19. Costs had fallen to Adult Social Care department in trying to clear beds in hospitals to ensure beds were available for covid-19 patients. The Cabinet Member thanked the team for everything they had done in stepping up to the plate and felt it reiterated the County Council's intent to protect vulnerable people and spent money necessary to protect people in Norfolk, which has meant the County Council faced a difficult financial situation, which would be managed going forward.
- 11.4 The Cabinet Member for Children's Services drew Cabinet's attention to the fact that Children's Services were now working towards a balanced budget and he thanked the department for their efforts in achieving this.
- 11.5 The Chairman reiterated the points made, adding that the Government was now understanding the difficulties faced, adding that a considerable amount of lobbying of government had taken place. He added that the additional £500m across the country was welcome, together with the money for protecting income losses, although the details of the funding were still awaited.

- 11.6 The Cabinet Member for Growing the Economy stated that the current situation was being dealt with, although if there was a second peak it would put things in a different light meaning further lobbying of government would be needed.
- 11.7 The Chairman also highlighted that the Secretary of State had indicated more funding was to come, although the issue was when it was going to be received and how much we would receive.
- 11.8 The Cabinet Member for Communities & Partnerships welcomed the capital money allocated for library stocks, stating that the service had lent out a lot of books before lockdown. As some libraries would be opening soon, with one-way systems in place, it would take a while for books to be returned, therefore stocks needed to be updated.
- 11.9 The Chairman highlighted the good news that Libraries were due to start reopening soon.
- 11.10 Cabinet **RESOLVED** to:
1. **Recommend** to County Council an addition of £1m to the capital programme to fund investment in library stocks, as set out in capital appendix 2, paragraph 4.1 of the report.
  2. **Note** the period 2 forecast general fund revenue overspend of **£15.799m** noting also that Executive Directors will take measures to reduce or eliminate potential over-spends;
  3. **Note** the period 2 forecast shortfall in savings of **£18.105m**, noting also that Executive Directors will take measures to mitigate savings shortfalls through alternative savings or underspends;
  4. **Note** the forecast General Balances at 31 March 2021 of £19.706m, before taking into account any over/under spends;
  5. **Note** the expenditure and funding of the revised current and future 2020-23 capital programmes.

11.11 **Evidence and Reasons for Decision:**

Two appendices are attached to this report giving details of the forecast revenue and capital financial outturn positions:

**Appendix 1** summarises the revenue outturn position, including:

- Forecast over and under spends
- Changes to the approved budget
- Reserves
- Savings
- Treasury management
- Payment performance and debt recovery

**Appendix 2** summarises the capital outturn position, and includes:

- Current and future capital programmes
- Capital programme funding

- Income from property sales and other capital receipts.

## 11.12 **Alternative Options**

In order to deliver a balanced budget, no viable alternative options have been identified to the recommendations in this report. In terms of financing the proposed capital expenditure, no grant or revenue funding has been identified to fund the expenditure.

## 12 **COVID-19 financial implications for Norfolk County Council**

12.1 Cabinet received the regular report by the Executive Director of Finance & Commercial Services providing it with an overview of the current assessment of the emerging financial impact of COVID-19 for the County Council, which will have a profound impact on the organisation's ability to achieve planned budget savings and income for 2020-21. The report also provided an overview of other financial issues associated with the COVID-19 response.

12.2 The Cabinet Member for Finance introduced the report and moved the recommendations, during which the following points were noted:

- Cabinet was familiar with the amount of funds received so far from central Government, which until the recent announcement was £43.674m. This was received in two tranches to enable the County Council to deliver its response to covid-19 across all services, mainly within Adult Social Care.
- In addition the Council had received £12.386m ring-fenced specifically for care homes to ensure they were able to implement measures to reduce transmission of covid-19. 75% was paid directly to care homes, whilst the remaining 25% was to be used by the County Council to support infection control measures in care homes or elsewhere. There were two equal instalments, the council allocated the first instalment within days of receipt, and the second instalment was expected to be paid in late July.
- Elsewhere the County Council had been awarded £3.781m to establish our Local Outbreak Control Plan which was agreed and published last week.
- The funds were welcome, however until the latest announcement, a shortfall remained of £18.089m against allocated funding specifically to combat the pandemic.
- Total pressures were currently reported at £61.772m. This was £1.965m more than reported to Cabinet in June 2020.
- An additional £1m provided to establish the Norfolk Strategic Fund which Cllr Plant introduced to us earlier today.
- An additional £2m allocated as a result of the County Council's decision to extend postponement of the second phase of the Minimum Income Guarantee Charging Policy until we had some concrete mitigating plans from government.
- There were two write-backs, both within Adult Social Services - £2m in forecast lost income and £2.223m in the forecast of savings at risk.
- The forecast cost for the amount of food boxes for distribution had been reduced by £1.8m.
- The announcement on 2 July of an additional £500m funding for local authorities, together with support for the lost income from libraries, museums and social services as a result of the pandemic, was extremely

welcome and would be very helpful in the medium term. However, it remained unclear what period this funding was intended to cover.

- Additional spend was likely on: PPE and other items; Additional costs in relation to social distancing and other measures as services are restored; Additional costs due to a surge in demand as services are restored; Income – costs associated with a second peak.
- Lobbying of Government for additional funding over a longer period should continue.
- The costs incurred by the County Council on behalf of the NHS had started to be recovered.
- Subject to the agreement of Cabinet, from August 2020, future reports on the financial impact of covid-19 would be consolidated into the Finance Monitoring Report.

12.3 The Cabinet Member for Growing the Economy highlighted that the report was an insight into the Council's position with regard to covid-19 adding that the Local Outbreak Control Plan would hopefully ensure any future outbreaks were locally controlled. He added he was confident the economy could be brought back on track.

12.4 The Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, Public Health & Prevention registered his support for recommendation 2 (Agree that the future reporting of covid-19 financial impacts be consolidated into regular Financial Monitoring from August Cabinet onwards) as this was the new normal and separate reporting could lead to confusion over savings.

He added that the Local Outbreak Control Plan was a very impressive document, which had been produced quickly. The behind it was having a document that was simple and deliverable and although a complex document he was impressed with it. He continued that the key issue going forward was people taking responsibility or their own actions, eg maintaining social distancing and washing your hands. Although a simple message, if people washed their hands and don't touch their face and maintained social distancing, future peaks would be minimised and the impact on society would be less, meaning the economy could be opened up more quickly.

12.5 The Chairman reiterated the key messages in the Local Outbreak Control Plan of:

- Protect Yourself,
- Protect Others
- Protect Norfolk.

With regard to the lobbying aspect, the Chairman highlighted that three Norfolk MPs had recently met with the Chief Secretary to the Treasury with our briefing of the situation and one of those MPs had appeared in front of one of the Select Committees asking questions and putting the Norfolk position to them as well, so work is still going on to continually restate the Norfolk position.

12.6 Cabinet considered the report and **RESOLVED** to:

1. **Note** the latest forecast use of the COVID-19 grant to meet expenditure pressures, income reductions, and lost delivery of savings (Table 2), noting that this will continue to be revised as further details become available; and
2. **Agree** that the future reporting of COVID-19 financial impacts be consolidated into regular Financial Monitoring from August Cabinet onwards.

## 12.7 **Evidence and Reasons for Decision**

The County Council faces an unprecedented financial and public health crisis which is having significant implications both during 2020-21 and for future budget setting. It is essential to continue to engage with Government, MPs and other stakeholders to campaign for adequate and sustainable funding for Norfolk to continue to deliver vital services to residents, businesses and visitors.

## 12.8 **Alternative Options**

This report sets out the forecast use of the COVID-19 funding received to date, but this should be seen as indicative only because the Council will need to respond with some flexibility to emerging cost pressures and the rapidly developing situation. No specific alternative options have been identified.

## 13 **Social Value in Procurement**

- 13.1 Cabinet received the report by the Executive Director of Finance & Commercial Services setting out Norfolk County Council's proposed approach to Social Value in Procurement. The council's adoption of an updated, consistent approach would enable the delivery of tangible and measurable economic and social benefits to be consistently and effectively considered within commissioning and procurement processes.
- 13.2 The Cabinet Member for Finance, in introducing the report and moving the recommendations, that the paper set out a consistent approach to social value in procurement. The approach would go beyond the requirements of the Social Value Act by including contracts for works, and would encompass additional policy considerations including preventing modern slavery, promoting good mental health and maintaining good cyber-security. Equally, it was important not to impose complex requirements that might deter smaller businesses from bidding.
- 13.3 The Cabinet Member for Innovation, Transformation and Performance considered it was a good report and he welcomed the fact that small firms had been considered as quite often the cost of bidding could put small firms off tendering and looking at the wider social value would help the local economy and also help people get out of the current situation, so he thought it was a good paper that he was more than happy to support.
- 13.4 The Cabinet Member for Growing the Economy highlighted both the skills development and support for disadvantaged groups as positive aspects of the proposed approach.
- 13.5 Cabinet **RESOLVED** to:



**Endorse** the proposed approach to Social Value in Procurement set out in the report.

#### **14 Health, Safety and Well-being Annual Report 2019-20**

- 14.1 Cabinet received the report by the Executive Director of Strategy & Governance providing data and analysis on the Health, Safety and Well-being (HSW) performance of Norfolk County Council (NCC) as an employer and the activity undertaken by the HSW Service to support the management of risks for 2019/20.
- 14.2 The Executive Director of Strategy & Governance highlighted that the Health, Safety and Wellbeing Team were very heavily involved in the response to covid-19 and had been from day 1 and continued to be so through the test and trace programme and thanked colleagues for their efforts.
- 14.3 The Chairman and Cabinet Member for Strategy & Governance introduced the report and moved the recommendations, during which the following points were noted:
- The Health & Safety Team were commended on the way they had worked in response to the pandemic.
  - The report provides an update on the performance measures and includes information that the NCC Health and Safety Management System was being progressed in the right way.
  - The three outcome goals were - NCC had a positive health, safety and wellbeing culture; the standards of HSW management ensured employees were at work, well and productive; HSW had a successful strategic approach to trading and cost recovery.
  - There had been an increase in traded income generated, from £340k to £373k, which was a good result.
  - The performance data showed a mixed picture overall, although there were a number of positive indicators, eg incident management had improved; 111 managers undertook mental health first aid training; an improvement in the completion of mandatory training and training compliance had significantly improved.
  - Wellbeing services continued to provide excellent support to employees.
  - Violence remained the single biggest cause of incidents.
  - The overall assessment for the County Council remained at Amber, with 2 out of 3 overall outcome measures rated amber, although it did not reflect the significant improvements in a number of performance indicators.
  - The service provided by the Health and Wellbeing Service included a traded service which had been providing cost effective service options through delivery of similar products to other local authorities, public sector organisations and non-local authority schools.
  - A good percentage of costs were now covered by income generation.
  - Progress against the themes of the strategic plan showed a positive health and safety and wellbeing culture; the standard of health and safety at work management and also the successful strategic approach to trading and cost recovery.
  - Data about reported incidents suggested that, while the overall number had reduced, the severity was increasing. The target set of incidents

being reviewed and signed off within 90 days of the incident occurring was only being met by one Directorate (Community & Environmental Services), although the situation overall was improving and more work was needed in this area.

- All services had a health and safety risk profile in place and overall, services had made good progress by working towards completing action plans within the risk profile.
- Employment involvement – joint activity with the unions had improved, although departmental led consultative meetings remained inconsistent in frequency which was an area that needed improvement.
- The work and role of the Wellbeing Facilitators for employees acting as a focal point for the wellbeing of teams was commended.
- Regarding risk management, the risk ratings had worsened in the highest risk category, although this was being mitigated in the way the risk was dealt with and although some risks were being increased, it suggested matters were being rectified promptly when they were identified.
- The covid-19 pandemic had changed, although it had not reduced, the calls to the Norfolk Support Line which were being held by telephone or secure video call.
- The overall picture for the County Council on the health and safety at work management was amber, although the overall picture was improving with a number of performance measures achieving, or moving closer to targets. The amber rating reflected the current position.

14.4 The Cabinet Member for Innovation, Transformation & Performance endorsed the was a good report as it focused on the work needed to improve although there were lots of areas achieving good results. The progress against the Strategic Plan stated that NCC was a positive health, safety and wellbeing culture, with managers ensuring employees work well and were productive. He added that work was not the same as it was six-months ago with people working at home, but people hadn't been handed a laptop and left to get on with it, there had been an opportunity for employees to get additional equipment and to ensure their workplace, whether it was in their dining room, or spare bedroom, was fitted out so they had the equipment they needed, which was a real part of the wellbeing function and showed that the Council was actually delivering on promises.

14.5 The Cabinet Member for Children's Services identified and confirmed that, from a Children's Services point of view a great deal of training had been carried out with staff to recognise a violent incident and how to report it as opposed to just accepting it as part of the job. So although the numbers had increased, it was because of the quality and quantity of the training that the department had been conducting.

14.6 Cabinet considered the reported performance of Norfolk County Council and **RESOLVED** to:

- **Agree** that actions continue to focus on the response to the COVID-19 pandemic
- **Agree** that any further actions and improvements are reviewed at the mid-year report

## **15 Corporately Significant Vital Signs**

- 15.1 Cabinet received the report by the Executive Director of Strategy & Governance presenting the current performance information for Corporately Significant Vital Signs. The purpose of the report was to provide Cabinet with an update on the current performance and to highlight the key challenges and to provide supporting information to the summary slides.
- 15.2 The Cabinet Member for Innovation, Transformation & Performance introduced the report and moved the recommendations, during which the following points were noted:
- This was an opportunity to validate actions which had been taken to address off-track performance.
  - The report provided key points on each of the 7 vital signs, with a summary dashboard.
  - The number of green and amber indicators versus the red indicators were similar to the previous report, with 48% of the indicators currently red, although the overall direction was positive.
  - The vital signs were agreed prior to covid-19 and it was acknowledged that in some cases it might not provide a full view of the performance in the context of covid-19, although work was under way to review these to ensure they continued to align to strategic goals.
  - Covid-19 had impacted greatly on both the context and service delivery of NCC. Work was ongoing to align corporate vital signs to the impact and substantial work had already been done to plan that response as detailed in the longer-term recovery process for NCC which was agreed at Cabinet on 11 May 2020.
  - The corporate vital signs were aligned with the corporate principles which were underpinned in the Strategy.
  - Norfolk County council was moving to a new set of designs for corporately significant vital signs next year and Cabinet Members were asked to consider what they wanted the new vital signs to cover.
  - The key elements of performance had been measured to see how the council was maximising resources and undertaking service delivery as it was very important to constant monitoring was being carried out to maintain a view of the latest position on service forecasts and current pressures, particularly on Adult Social Services and Children's Services.
  - The Vital Signs report showed how the organisation was coping, how it was responding and when things were going wrong, what was being done to address them.
- 15.3 The Cabinet Member for Highways, Infrastructure & Transport took the opportunity to thank the Highways Teams across the county for all the work they had carried out throughout the pandemic. They had kept the roads and infrastructure in really good order, enabling all the emergency services to get to where they needed to. The roads were starting to get busier now with more people getting out and about over the last 2-3 weeks and the Highways Teams continued to work with all the District Councils, to ensure people could travel round the county safely, which would also help to get our economy up and running again. The Cabinet Member reiterated his thanks to the Highways team for their efforts.

- 15.4 The Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, Public Health & Prevention referred to the Delayed Transfers of Care from the NHS to Adult Social Care and said that, as a result of the outbreak, the government had suspended the reporting requirement so there were no figures for March and April 2020 and it was not currently clear whether or not that report would recommence, therefore the figures in the report were historical and didn't reflect the most recent information.

There was an enormous amount of work carried on delayed discharges because that was work that could be done to help reduce the capacity in hospitals to clear the way for an expected spike in the number of people receiving treatment for covid-19. The target was still red, but this was through no fault of the teams concerned.

Regarding the reablement issue, again because of covid-19, the management of that team were redeployed elsewhere in helping to set up, for example Cawston Lodge which was established to help people recover outside of hospital. That has had an effect on the effectiveness of the service.

The Cabinet Member added that he was generally content with the progress the department was making on its vital signs and echoed the comments of Cllr Wilby that they don't reflect the amount of effort and work that had been going on in the departments as we managed this once in a lifetime event while striving to maintain delivery of the other vital services we offer.

- 15.5 The Cabinet Member for Communities & Partnerships commented on the availability levels of firefighters stating that performance was improving all the time. In January performance was at over 87% of a target of 90%. During lockdown there were high levels of availability, with 20 firefighters driving ambulances in June 2020 and 25 in June 2020. The Cabinet Member highlighted that a few firefighters would be retiring during the course of the next 12 months, and the department was currently advertising for people interested in becoming a firefighter to attend a taster session.

- 15.6 The Cabinet Member for Children's Services highlighted that from a children's services viewpoint all targets were static or improving slightly. A rapid action team had now been deployed to cover EHCPs and the target was now showing a 2% rise which was hopefully the start of an upward trend.

Regarding apprenticeships, the Cabinet Member said this was an areas he was keen to promote in future.

- 15.7 The Cabinet Member for Finance highlighted the capital programme tracker as many of our capital programmes related to schools where we had limited control in terms of the timing when schools wanted the work done so it was very difficult to achieve 100%, however he added he was more interested in ensuring the budget was maintained rather than looking at the timing of works.

- 15.8 Cabinet reviewed the report and **RESOLVED** to:

1. **Note** the current performance data and planned actions as set out in Appendices 1 and 2.

2. Identify any additional areas of performance/information that Cabinet would like to receive a regular update on, in advance of a full re-fresh of vital signs, to enable an effective view of performance in the COVID-19 context.

## **16 Risk Management**

16.1 Cabinet received the report by the Executive Director of Finance & Commercial Services setting out the latest corporate risks for the Cabinet, split into those corporate risks managed prior to COVID-19 at Appendix C, which continue to be reviewed, alongside new strategic corporate risks specific to COVID-19 at Appendix D. Both risk registers are accompanied by their respective risk heat maps in Appendix B showing visually where risks sit on the 5x5 risk matrix. Key changes to those corporate risks managed prior to COVID-19 are shown in Appendix A of the report.

16.2 The Chairman introduced the report and moved the recommendations, during which the following points were noted:

- The key messages that corporate risk management continued to be sound and effective.
- Key issues set out in paragraph 2.1 of the report.
- The closure of risk RM016 (Failure to adequately prepare for and respond to a major disruption to Norfolk County Council services) and replacing that risk with Strategic Risk SR016 on the strategic corporate risk register recognising the risk of concurrent major disruptions and NCC's capacity to manage any second major disruption.

The Chairman asked each Cabinet Member to provide a brief summary of each risk under their remit, during which the following points were noted:

16.2.1 **Risk RM001 (Not realising infrastructure funding requirements to achieve the infrastructure ambition of the Business Plan).**

The Cabinet Member for Highways, Infrastructure & Transport highlighted that this risk related to the failure to receive funding for infrastructure in Norfolk. The risk was rated amber. Funding had been received for the 3<sup>rd</sup> river crossing at Great Yarmouth and the contractors had now been appointed with work due to start at the end of 2020/beginning of 2021.

Some funding had been received for the Norwich Western Link, with construction due to commence in 2023.

Funding had also been received towards the Long Stratton by-pass and, once planning permission had been granted, work should commence in 2022.

£22m had been received from the Pothole Fund.

16.2.2 **Risk RM002 (The potential risk of failure to manage significant reductions in local and national income streams).**

The Cabinet Member for Finance highlighted that this risk was at the forefront of minds at the current time. There were no surprises because of effective budget management in both revenue and capital. The medium term financial strategy was well-known and regularly monitored and in-year budgets were tracked and work undertaken with departments to manage those, an example

being the significant overspend on covid-19, with some money coming back which was allocated to departments relative to the amount of overspend they had. Plans were adjusted quickly in response to the most up to date data available.

**16.2.3 RM003 (Potential for failure to comply with information compliance and information security requirements).**

The Chairman and Cabinet Member for Strategy & Governance highlighted that this was an improving picture, leading towards green on this risk in March 2021 which was reflective of the considerable amount of work on the tasks set out on page 254 to mitigate the risk, particularly the six-monthly reviews built into the way the risk was managed. The report also referred to the SOCITM report which would provide additional reassurance around compliance and information security for the future.

**16.2.4 RM004 (The potential risk of failure to deliver effective and robust contract management for commissioned services).**

The Cabinet Member for Finance stated that the management of commissioned services was an area which received a large amount of focus and new strategies. Work to discuss expiring contracts took place with Community & Environmental Services team every quarter, and this would commence in looking at upcoming expiring contracts with other departmental heads soon. There has been a phased planned approach which would be commenced in December 2020 so a standard specification for service transition in order to manage contracts could be developed. The handover checklist had now been developed and was now in use.

**16.2.5 RM006 (The potential risk of failure to deliver our services within the resources available for the period 2018/19 to the end of 2020/21).**

The Chairman and Cabinet Member for Strategy & Governance considered this was an improving picture regarding resources which was why the score was projected to be green in March 2021, based around 4 things.

1. The over-arching business plan "Together for Norfolk"
2. Delivery
3. Engagement and being outward looking
4. Using resources to best effect.

**16.2.6 RM007 (Risk of inadequate data quality resulting from poor data governance, leading to poor decisions being made affecting outcomes for Norfolk citizens).**

The Chairman and Cabinet Member for Strategy & Governance highlighted that the risk was improving, although it remained at amber. Getting the right data was vital, as recently shown with the covid-19 pandemic, but anything to do with data and its governance was a complex situation so the risk showed a fair reflection of the work done, but also the work that needed to be done in the future.

**16.2.7 Risk RM010 (The risk of the loss of key ICT systems including: internet connection; telephone; communications with cloud-provided services; or the Windows and Solaris hosting platforms).**

The Cabinet Member for Innovation, Transformation & Performance highlighted that the covid-19 pandemic had shown the reliance the County Council has on

these systems and the work being done. The tasks to mitigate the risk were outlined.

One of the risks was cyber-attack and it had been acknowledged that some councils around the country had been targeted. The County Council was confident a resilient system was in place, although it was not being complacent as we know incidents and the likelihood of attack had increased in that area.

Homeworking had brought us the realisation that it was not just the core central systems but all the outlying parts and the quality of connections to join meetings was something we will be addressing in the future, to take account of more homeworking in the future.

- 16.2.8 **Risk RM013 (The potential risk of failure of the governance protocols for entities controlled by the Council, either their internal governance or the Council's governance as owner. The failure of entities controlled by the Council to follow relevant guidance or share the Council's ambitions).**  
The Cabinet Member for Commercial Services and Asset Management stated this risk related to governance and control of entities and was green. The risk had been green for some time, although work was being carried out to strengthen the governance of all organisations, particularly by strengthening the representation of Executive Directors on the Board. Improved shareholder representation was also being considered, as all entities had shareholder representation on the Board, either in terms of the Executive Director of Finance & Commercial Services, a Councillor or an officer. Whilst the target was doing well, governance would continue to be strengthened going forward.
- 16.2.9 **Risk RM022 (Potential changes in laws, regulations, government policy or funding arising from the UK leaving the European Union, which may impact on Council objectives, financial resilience and affected staff (Brexit)).**  
The Cabinet Member for Growing the Economy highlighted the four important implications to the Council, raising that nplaw had drafted a Deed of Guarantee seeking written assurance from MHCLG that they would meet our liabilities in order to close the Programme, which the Cabinet Member said he hoped to receive. The risk was shown as amber and were well known. The Cabinet Member highlighted that the risk would remain amber until such time as it was known whether there was a deal, or not. He added that more information for businesses and individuals, including Norfolk County Councils EU No deal exit strategy was available at <https://www.norfolk.gov.uk/what-we-do-and-how-we-work/preparing-for-brexit>
- 16.2.10 **Risk RM023 (Failure to respond to changes to demography, funding and government policy, with particular regard to Adult Services.)**  
The Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, Public Health & Prevention highlighted that there were two differing definitions for the risk, but he considered a strategy was in place to cover either definition. A national campaign to encourage a final funding solution was being undertaken for adult social care which was a national issue and one which Norfolk County Council was at the forefront of bringing to the attention of the Minister.

Regarding the strategy to manage that, the County Council had an acknowledged Promoting Independence Strategy in place, which was an

excellent and very focused strategy on achieving better outcomes for the people of Norfolk by listening to the things that they would like, eg more independence, the specific issues of which were included in the report.

**16.2.11 Risk RM024 (Failure to construct and deliver the Great Yarmouth 3<sup>rd</sup> River Crossing within agreed budget (£121m) and to agreed timescales (construction to be completed early 2023)).**

The Cabinet Member for Highways, Infrastructure & Transport highlighted that a contractor had been appointed to construct the 3<sup>rd</sup> river crossing and work would commence the end of 2020, with completion in 2023. This was one of Norfolk County Councils Highways Priorities on Infrastructure and would be of massive benefit not only to Great Yarmouth but also to the rest of the county.

**16.2.12 Risk RM026 (Legal challenge to procurement exercise).**

The Cabinet Member for Finance advised that all procurement processes had been reviewed and new sign off procedures established. He added that he was confident the process was now solid.

**16.2.13 Risk RM027 (Risk of failure of new Human Resources and Finance system implementation).**

The Cabinet Member for Innovation, Transformation & Performance highlighted that the new system was needed as the old systems were nearing the end of their life. Cabinet had approved the business case in May 2019 and the contract had now been awarded. There had been rigorous third party assurance of plans and timescales and even with staff being redeployed to other areas due to covid-19, rigorous monitoring of the system was taking place. Corporate Select Committee was regularly reviewing the implementation so there was rigorous challenge and planning to impact any delays to the implementation and strong governance had been put in place for managing project. The Cabinet Member said he was confident the project schedule would be adhered to despite the difficulties incurred in getting the project up and running in the initial stages.

**16.2.14 Risk RM028 (Risk of any failure to monitor and manage health and safety standards of third party providers of services).**

The Chairman and Cabinet Member for Strategy & Governance said that, as seen when Cabinet considered the Health, Safety and Wellbeing report, the improving picture showed the progress made from a score of 20, leading to a score of 10 by March 2021, whilst recognising that more work needed to be carried out in this area.

**16.2.15 Risk RM029 (NCC may not have the employees (or a sufficient number of employees) with official skills that will be required for the organisation to operate effectively in the next 205 years and longer term).**

The Chairman and Cabinet Member for Strategy & Governance said that this was a changing world which would see public and private sector organisations, including Norfolk County Council, considering that they had the right people to carry out the work for the future, which was absolutely essential.

The Chairman highlighted the three tasks to mitigate the risk, which were being monitored and managed –

- The identification of new critical skills
- New pathways for staff to learn



- Consider whether there were other ways services could be delivered, particularly in relation to the current financial position.

The Chairman added that more work must also be carried out regarding apprenticeships to ensure future workforce had the required skills and also highlighted that if all the details set out in the risk description were completed, the risk would move to green.

**16.2.16 Risk RM030 (Non-realisation of Children's Services Transformation change and expected benefits).**

The Cabinet Member for Children's Services identified that, at the start of the covid-19 pandemic, some of the transformation staff were redeployed to other areas, although the department was now in a position where staff were returning to their substantive roles within transformation team. The Cabinet Member had spoken with the Transformation Officer last week who was confident the transformation programme would soon start to get back on track. The capital programme on SEND was on target and progressing well; the engagement with corporate departments including Finance and HR was moving forward so from a transformation viewpoint, which we know all of Children's Services depend on, both efficiency and budget wise, the department was confident it was back on track with the programme.

**16.2.17 Risk RM031 (NCC Funded Children's Services Overspend).**

The Cabinet Member for Children's Services stated that the risk was moving in the right direction with the new fostering team showing trends that it was identifying improvements. Although looked after children numbers had been steady, it had been difficult to ascertain if they had been static or moving to our advantage, although work was in place the department was confident numbers would reduce. Unfortunately high value placements which impacted on the budget was an area that could not be predicted in advance.

**16.2.18 Risk RM032a (Effect of covid-19 on NCC business continuity (staff, service users and service delivery)).**

The Chairman and Cabinet Member for Strategy & Governance stated the current risk score of 20 was a fair reflection of the situation although the County Council had done exceedingly well in how it maintained service delivery as much as possible and also opened up services as soon as possible when it was safe to do so, for both staff and users. He added that a lot had been learned over the last few months, particularly about how to respond if there was a second wave, although there was still more work to do in this area.

The Chairman also highlighted the "Protect Yourself, Protect Others, Protect Norfolk" campaign, which had been successful and was now recognised by the community.

The Chairman also drew attention to the new Strategic Risk Register for covid-19 which covered the risks as they were currently seen, specifically relating to the pandemic.

**16.2.19 Risk RM032b (Effect of covid-19 on supply chain).**

The Cabinet Member for Finance highlighted that this risk related to the procurement aspect of service delivery. Large amounts of PPE had been purchased by Norfolk County Council and buffer stocks were being

purposefully maintained; guidance was given to staff on how to use PPE. Any areas of risks identified quickly as a result of good team working.

16.3 Cabinet considered the report and **RESOLVED** to:

1. **Agree** the key messages (2.1) and key changes (Appendices A and B) to corporate risks since the last risk management report in April 2020.
2. **Agree** the corporate risks as at July 2020, including a newly presented strategic corporate COVID-19 risk register at Appendix D.

16.4 **Evidence & Reasons for Decision.**

N/A

16.5 **Alternative Options**

There are no alternatives identified.

**17 Norfolk's Local Outbreak Control Plan**

This report was withdrawn from the Cabinet agenda.

**18 Reports of the Cabinet Member and Officer Delegated Decisions already made:**

Cabinet **RESOLVED** to **note** the Delegated Decision reports made since the last Cabinet meeting.

**Decisions by the Cabinet Member for Highways, Infrastructure & Transport.**

- [Chedgrave TRO](#)
- [Hopton on Sea TRO](#)
- [All Electric Bus Town – Expression of Interest](#)
- [Rural Mobility Fund](#)
- [Transforming Cities Fund – Resubmission](#)
- [Covid-19 Bus Services Support Grant](#)
- [Concessionary Travel, Removal of Temporary Amendment](#)
- [Trowse, Whitlingham Lane TRO](#)
- [Highways Response to Covid-19 – Phase 1](#)
- [St Williams Way, Thorpe St Andrew - TRO](#)

**Decisions by the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, Public Health & Prevention:**

- [Norfolk Care Homes Support Plan](#)
- [Covid-19 Impact on MIG and PIP charging increases 2020-21](#)

**Decision by the Cabinet Member for Commercial Services & Asset Management:**

- [Acquisition of Property on Browick Road, Wymondham](#)

The meeting ended at 12.20pm.

### **Chairman**



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**Cabinet**  
**6 July 2020**  
**Public & Local Member Questions**

**Agenda**  
**item 6**

6.1

**Public Question Time**  
**Question from Judith Lubbock**

Covid has delivered unexpected environmental benefits as a result of less traffic, such as lower carbon emissions and more walking and cycling. Norwich therefore could emerge from this crisis as a more inclusive and sustainable city if road space were re-allocated and traffic speed slowed leading to improved facilities for those who have embraced walking and cycling.

Would Cllr Wilby consider 2 suggestions from Eaton residents to that end - that parked cars be removed from Ipswich Road outside City College to allow a safe cycle lane into the city and more 20mph limits on busy city roads such as the entire length of Unthank Road?

**Response:**

Thank you for putting forward these two suggestions from Eaton residents, which will be fully considered as part of the delivery of the next phase of emergency active travel funding from government (phase 2).

The guidance for this funding is expected later this summer. An 'Active Travel' approach will form the basis of the bid, and there will be opportunities to put additional measures in place to encourage cycling and walking across the county.

6.2

**Question from Caroline Ackroyd.**

Given the following factors please would you consider adopting a consistent 30 mph speed limit out of Norwich on the A11 to improve safety?

- After Eaton Hill pedestrian crossing, the 50mph speed sign ahead causes an increase in speed meaning that drivers are often travelling over 30mph as they access Eaton slip road.
- Cringleford slip road joins the A11 - drivers invariably must move into the outside lane to accommodate incoming cars.
- 100 yds later a new housing development means that children will need to use the pedestrian crossing to access school on the opposite side of the A11.
- At Roundhouse the speed limit is 40mph until Thickthorn

**Response:**

When setting speed limits, the Council applies its Speed Management Strategy which is closely related to the current national guidance from the Department for Transport. A key element to both documents is that speed limits must be self-explaining and help to reinforce to drivers the appropriate speed at which to travel. To artificially set a speed limit too low can actually cause more safety problems as the difference in speed between the fastest and average speed of drivers increases. It can also lead to a lack of respect for speed limits in general. Frontage development with facilities such as shops, a school etc. and pedestrian activity are important factors in setting speed limits as they change the highway environment very clearly and reinforce to drivers of the need to reduce speed.

The 30mph speed limit on Newmarket Road conforms to this guidance as it

commences around 40m prior to the pedestrian crossing in an area where shared use footways are present at the start of the built-up area. South of this point the A11 is a modern dual carriageway with no frontage development and drivers would not understand the need to travel at less than 30mph. When applying the Speed Management Strategy, being a fringe urban location, a 50mph speed limit is appropriate in the main. A lower 40mph speed limit has been provided on the northbound approach to Norwich due to the added complication of the bus lane and to manage traffic speed down as it reaches the built-up area of Newmarket Road. You also mention the 40mph speed limit between Thickthorn and Roundhouse Way roundabouts. This has been provided to prevent harsh acceleration and braking over the relatively short length of dual carriageway between the 2 roundabouts.

Whilst I understand your concerns, I am unable to support your request for a lower 30mph speed limit on A11. I hope the information above explains the reasons for this.

### 6.3

#### **Question from Lucy Hall**

The Secretary of State for Transport is making Emergency Active Travel funding available for local authorities with two objectives: to encourage cycling and walking, and to enable social distancing. However Norfolk's Phase 1 application (included in this meeting's agenda) only addresses the latter, and does not contain any proposals to encourage active travel.

Could the cabinet member for Highways, Infrastructure and Transport explain why so few of the measures listed in the Statutory Guidance have been included and state whether measures to support cycling and walking will be included in Phase 2 - if so, is he willing to follow the excellent examples set by some other authorities?

#### **Response:**

With the announcement of funding from government, it was important to consider, at very short notice, the lengthy list of suggested interventions that were provided from District, Borough and City Councils, Councillors, stakeholders, community and interest groups, as well as the general public.

Phase 1 concentrated on the rapid deployment of interventions across Norfolk, focusing on the use of the following:

- Advisory one-way pedestrian guidance;
- Temporary widened footways into carriageway using barriers / ground markings / cones;
- Temporary widened footways by suspension of on-street parking;
- Closure of short lengths of road to facilitate pedestrian movements;
- Signage to alert COVID-19 safe distancing measures;
- One way traffic circulation to facilitate wider footways;
- Closing market places to vehicular movement

There was a focus on putting measures in place to support people to socially distance and enable them to safely access non-essential retail, supporting the restarting of the economy. However, I do not agree that encouraging walking and cycling has not been included. Improving the conditions for walking and cycling, for example by reducing access to vehicular traffic in some areas, was an important

consideration and is reflected in the measures put in place

There will be further opportunities to put measures in place to encourage cycling and walking across the county and this will form the basis of the 'Active Travel' approach adopted for the Phase 2 bid process, the details of which have not yet been confirmed by government.

It should also be noted that we have submitted a funding application to Government (Transforming Cities), which outlines a substantial investment in active travel modes across Greater Norwich. This application adopted a "whole-route" approach along corridors into Norwich aimed at prioritising cycle, pedestrian and bus access into the city centre. This is in addition to the £6.1m investment being made on sustainable transport schemes in Norwich as part of our successful funding bid.

**Agenda item 7 Local Member Issues/Questions**

**7.1 Question 1 from Cllr Tim Adams.**

Will you give a guarantee that the cabinet will propose no reductions to the Minimum Income Guarantee in either the 2020/21 budget or the Council's medium term financial plan?

**Response:**

Norfolk County Council took the decision to mitigate our 2020 changes to the Minimum Income Guarantee (MIG) for four months at the beginning of the Covid-19 outbreak, recognising the impact that the lockdown might have on people and the services they receive. The cost of this decision was covered by some of the Government's Covid19 funding that the Council received.

The Government has indicated that it will look at the issue of funding reform as part of national changes and we are calling on Ministers to bring that forward, as soon as possible.

Provided this is done within a reasonable timescale, we will continue this mitigation for the foreseeable future, subject to the financial demands on the council.

**7.2 Question 2 from Cllr Tim Adams**

Are you prepared to reverse previous injustice by making a commitment to reversing any elements of previous cuts to the Minimum Income Guarantee?

**Response:**

The decision taken to implement the MIG reduction is within guidelines set out by Government, which Norfolk County Council had exceeded for as long as we were able to afford it. Until Government publish the Adult Social Care Green Paper we will continue to follow national guidelines, subject to the mitigation measures we have now implemented.

**7.3 Question from Cllr Tim East**

We hear numerous requests to change the Council's grass cutting policies, which are felt to be too late in the first instance and too early in the second to encourage wildflower growth and biodiversity. Bearing in mind that developing rewilding was one of the early action projects in the environmental policy agreed in November when can we expect some action from you on this?

**Response:**

The focus of our highway verge cutting regimes continues to be a balance between keeping roads safe and supporting nature. We cut roadside verges only twice per year in rural locations, and up to 5 times per year in urban environments. On our rural roads, cutting is often limited to a 1 metre width from the edge of the road for safety and visibility, thus avoiding grasses and wildflowers that exist further back. We would only cut further at corners and verges where visibility may be an issue.

In many urbanised areas responsibility for cutting verges has been delegated to the district, borough or parish council. This gives local councils the opportunity to cut more often if they choose. Our highways team have already issued cultivation licences to some local councils to plant wildflowers in the verges they maintain. This option is open and available to all district, borough or parish councils. As always, any decision will need to assess the risks and ensure we keep the highway as safe as possible.

With regards to timescales, the first rural cut usually takes place in the middle of May, with the second cut taking place in mid-July. These are a balance of both safety for the travelling public as leaving too late would compromise visibility, and also of cost effectiveness as cutting too early would result in cutting more than twice in a season. Our contractor has been asked to take a pragmatic approach and to cut around wildflowers that do not impose an immediate safety risk.

In addition to the examples above, the Pollinator Action Plan and Roadside Nature Reserve scheme are further examples of how we balance our duty to keep the highway safe whilst minimising the impact on the environment.

7.4

**Question 1 from Cllr Dan Roper**

What plans does the council have, including the financial and contractual issues, to ensure that school transport is available to all children who qualify when schools return in September?

**Response:**

We have worked hard with our transport providers to ensure that capacity remains available for home to school transport in Norfolk. The plans for September are dependent on the imminent guidance issued by the Department for Education and the Department of Transport. Until there is clarity of guidance, both in relation to social distancing and arrangements for pupils in different year groups it is not possible to make detailed plans for our transport operation. We expect to have sufficient capacity for the pre COVID-19 scenario and have shared our views regarding the lack of available new capacity in the market with the DfE.

7.5

**Question 2 from Cllr Dan Roper**

Can the cabinet member give assurances to parents who have previously been able to purchase spare places on school transport that this will still be available in September?

**Response:**

Parents are able to purchase seats, if available, on school transport where they have made decisions not to send their child to the local school, or where they do not meet the criteria for free transport in the light of distance to school. There is no entitlement to these seats.

At this moment in time it is not possible to provide any reassurance regarding discretionary places. These are only ever available where capacity allows for them and our intention is to maintain this policy in the new academic year.



7.6

**Question from Cllr Alexandra Kemp**

West Norfolk Economic and Health Infrastructure

Government announced an intention to tackle the “great unresolved challenges of the last three decades” and that no area should be left behind. In West Norfolk, this means three commitments.

- The complete rebuild of our local hospital, now 10 years past its use-by date.
- Immediate delivery of the A10 Bypass in West Winch, that Govt agreed to in 1990, vital for economic recovery and inward investment to the South Lynn Enterprise Zone.
- The new Surgery in South Lynn, agreed in 2006, essential to address health inequalities Post-Covid.

What is the Leader’s strategy for realising all three obligations?

**Response:**

We are fully committed to see the delivery of the A10 bypass (the West Winch Housing Access Road) as part of the South East King’s Lynn Growth Area. This scheme is essential to enable the 4000 planned new homes and provide an effective bypass around West Winch for traffic that does not need to access the village benefitting residents and road users alike. The need for the new road is supported by Transport East in their 5-year plan for improvements to the Major Road Network with its associated Government funding stream. The County Council is working in partnership with the Borough Council to develop this scheme and its business case to ensure a successful bid can be made to the Major Road Network fund at the earliest opportunity.

We have a clear strategy and set of principles set out in our Business Plan Together for Norfolk and work closely with our local MPs and partner organisations to hold government to account for monies promised to the county.

7.7

**Question from Cllr Mike Smith-Clare**

I received numerous concerns from local parents and schools regarding the school food vouchers scheme - these included delays in receipt and them not being able to be used in allotted supermarkets. Whilst I know officers have tried their best to get the Department for Education to resolve the problems, can the Cabinet Member for Children’s Services explain what he personally did and who he contacted to try to help hungry children get the food they needed?

**Response:**

We acknowledge that in the early weeks of the national scheme there were some delays and difficulties experienced by schools and families. As Cabinet Member I asked to be kept abreast of these issues, and ensured that officers and the Executive Director for Children’s Service fed back these concerns to the Department for Education. I personally became involved with a complaint from a family that came to me via an MP. I worked with them, the school and officers to help resolve this.

It is my understanding that our cluster advisers that we put in place at the start of the lockdown, have worked with all schools, and also taken queries from parents. There have not been any recent issues raised in terms of current difficulties.

In the feedback to the Department for Education we pressed for schools to be funded for schemes that they had already put in place and were working, whilst the national scheme was set up. As a result of this pressure the national guidance was changed to allow schools to be refunded for their own schemes, and to continue with those schemes if they chose not to take up the national scheme. In Norfolk around three quarters of schools took up the national scheme and a quarter continued with their own. At the last count 19,814 children and young people were in receipt of support for meals or vouchers. For some families where children are not on a school roll officers have hand delivered vouchers.

7.8

**Question from Cllr Emma Corlett**

The Cabinet Member for Children's Services provided a statement to Radio Norfolk that the authority has no mandate to oversee home learning in Norfolk. However s13-14 of the 1996 Education Act place a duty on education authorities to promote high standards of education and fair access to education. The Council also has a duty to make arrangements for the provision of alternative arrangements for children who are unable to attend school. Why is the Cabinet Member denying duties to my and other residents set out in statute?

**Response:**

The duty to provide a broad and balanced curriculum and monitor the impact of that curriculum lies with schools and their governance. Until June 1st schools were technically closed and not required to provide an education, although most have. They were open for the children of critical workers and vulnerable children for childcare. There has been some encouragement and support, that they would be delivering an education. The government has made no attempt to define the way in which this should happen.

On June 1st schools were allowed to re-open for learning for certain specified year groups who could return to school for face to face learning. Still no other expectation, although encouragement and support, was made in terms of wider learning.

Schools have experienced significant staffing challenges which the Local Authority has been monitoring on a daily basis. The focus has been to support schools to be open for the specified children for childcare and more recently for identified year groups for learning. Some schools have had staff who have been shielded, or supporting children who are shielded, and have had staff absent through illness. This has compromised their ability to do extra by providing comprehensive support to every child at home during this crisis. However the vast majority have engaged with children in a range of ways, in order to help them learn at home. Whilst schools have been closed it is the responsibility of parents, if they choose to, to help children learn. Where possible schools have supported this.

National resources were developed, so that parents could help with learning, and very early on we provided lists of supporting resources that schools could send out for parents to use. We know that many parents have worked hard to carry out

some learning with their children at home. We know that many have appreciated the support from schools who have prioritised the most vulnerable children, having made regular calls and delivered hard copy learning activities to those who may not be able to access the online learning.

We are interested to get a broader picture of the creative ways schools have been engaging with those children who have not been in school, whether that is around their wellbeing, or for learning. We will not be monitoring the quality or impact of this, unless our regulatory duties change, but will share best practice. Governing bodies and Academy Trusts retain this duty. Ofsted as the regulatory body that evaluate school effectiveness have also decided not to monitor remote learning at this time or into the autumn term when they recommence their visits.

Under the current COVID arrangements children are still on a school roll and remain the responsibility of schools and their governance.

Schedule 16 of the Coronavirus Act 2020, (1) (a) lifts the duty on local authorities to secure full time education where schools are closed due to Coronavirus.

**7.9 Question from Cllr Julie Brociek-Coulton**

How will the Cabinet Member for Children's Services monitor the authority's distribution of 1800 laptops for home learning use and ensure they are appropriately used and managed?

**Response:**

The laptops for children with a social worker have been distributed already via Norfolk schools. The laptops will become the property of the schools and initially are loaned to identified children. Parents or carers will have oversight of their use.

Schools already provide some children with laptops, for example Pupil Premium plus funding has been used to fund laptops for children in care and ultimately they will be added to their resources to be used with children who meet this criteria. We will not be monitoring their use. This will ultimately fall to schools and governing bodies, and social workers will be interested in asking questions about how children are able to use them to access learning.

**7.10 Question from Cllr Brenda Jones**

What steps will the Cabinet Member for Children's Services take to press government and schools to address the educational attainment gap for children from disadvantaged backgrounds that existed in my division and across the county before the emergency and has been made worse by it?

**Response:**

It is not possible to accurately assess the impact of this time out of the classroom on education attainment. For some children we know that there will be a loss of skill and confidence. Our Learning and Inclusion directorate has provided support materials for schools that will aid the development of a curriculum that focuses on recovery to help children to access learning.

Nationally the government announced last week a £1billion investment in catch up.

This will include £650m of 'catch up premium funding' for pupils who need it and £350m for 'tutoring for disadvantaged pupils'. In every school the curriculum will be adjusted to support children and young people to catch up.

It will be important to recognise that children achieve well not simply through academic study, and creative approaches to build confidence and strong mental health is equally important. Our support services will have a role to play in supporting schools to develop a wide ranging curriculum which supports good learning to reduce the attainment gap.

**7.11 Question from Cllr Mike Sands.**

The critical OFSTED/SEND report highlighted a lack of communication with families. What steps has the Cabinet Member for Children's Services taken to communicate personally with those families in my division and elsewhere during lockdown?

**Response:**

We recognise that the inspectors heard from parents that there is more we must do in relation to communication with parents. This was especially in relation to those children and young people who do not have an Education Health and Care Plan. We understand that they were often unaware of the major transformation programme that is under way, and that in the future it is our intention to enable children to access specialist support and provision more locally, for example through one of our expanded or new Specialist Resource Bases.

I have visited Norfolk schools before COVID-19 to understand the work of special schools and mainstream schools with SEND pupils. These visits have paused during lockdown, but when it is right to do so I plan to re-commence these visits. The officers who lead work in relation to children with SEND, and the Executive Director for Children's Services have been working with the parent / carer forums on looking at how we can improve communication. Just this week all four of the key parent / carer SEND forums met with senior officers to look at the range of ways we can improve this, and I have requested to meet with these groups over the next few weeks. Parents have a mechanism for feeding back their concerns, via these forum and officers are listening and working on how to engage more effectively.

I have further responded to emails received from parents who contacted me as a result of the publication of the report

If Cllr Sands would like to suggest an opportunity for me to listen to parents in his division I would be happy to do so.

**7.12 Question from Cllr Dave Rowntree**

Children from disadvantaged backgrounds in my division and elsewhere often go to school hungry. As Cabinet Member for Children's Services with responsibility for the wellbeing of the children of Norfolk what steps is he taking to ensure children are not trying to learn on an empty stomach?

**Response:**

We understand that for some children, starting the day without a good breakfast

can affect their ability to learn. Some schools continue to provide breakfast clubs to support those children who may not have been fed before coming to school.

The wellbeing responsibility for children sits with parents and carers. The duties for Children's Services with regard to safeguarding are very explicit. There is a clear system in place, in Norfolk, for referring concerns in relation to children.

It is not the place of schools, or Children's Services to feed all children, nor to monitor whether children arrive at school hungry, and therefore unable to learn effectively. However we know that some schools do provide wrap around care for children, which includes breakfast clubs.

Local community and voluntary sector groups such as Foodbanks and mutual aid groups continue to provide supplies of food and essential items for families in their local communities that need them as well as the Early Childhood and Family Service that is currently supporting with essential baby supplies for children aged 0-5.

Early Help / Community Hubs can also provide local contacts to organisations that offer support and initiatives for our most vulnerable families i.e. Baby Bank Norfolk and have been providing support to families with known extremely vulnerable people at home and those who are shielding to ensure they have access to food, medicines and essential items during the COVID19 pandemic.

The current community hub arrangements regarding delivery of food and essential prescriptions is currently set to continue to the end of July when a further review with all districts will take place. This is linked to the current government funding that was provided for food as part of the COVID-19 response.

The Norfolk Assistance Scheme within Norfolk County Council have supported some families in financial hardship including those awaiting universal credit claims where financial assistance and food parcels have been provided (particularly for those not eligible as were not on the shielded list).

**7.13 Question from Cllr Colleen Walker**

What plans is the Cabinet Member for Children's Services preparing to ensure that in the event of a future lockdown there are adequate preparations to ensure minimum effect on young learners in my division and across the county whose education has already been disrupted?

**Response:**

Future lockdowns are likely to be very local. Our cluster structure will stay in place and this provides a constant picture of capacity in all our schools. Schools may have to close for short periods of time, in the event of a local breakout, but this will not be for any length of time so is unlikely to add significantly to the loss in learning. The experience of the past few months will ensure that we are in a better position and there will be less impact on young learners.

**7.14 Question from Cllr Chrissie Rumsby**

With the expected surge in referrals as children return to school, what steps has the Cabinet Member for Children's Services taken to ensure there is the capacity to

deal with children at risk in my division and in all parts of the county?

**Response:**

- Period of lower referrals to children's social care has meant caseloads for social workers has been reduced to more manageable levels and improvements in performance. In turn, this is building capacity to effectively manage a rise in activity levels.
- Modelling and scenario planning for a potential surge, locally and regionally, is allowing additional capacity to be considered should it be required via the People and Capacity Group. This has identified social work qualified staff in particular from other non-case holding parts of Children's Services, who can be brought in to support as and when required.
- Move some additional resource into our early help response to support emerging need at the most proportionate level and avoid all concerns being escalated unnecessarily into our social work teams.
- Joint recovery and resumption planning across the partnership to ensure all agencies are putting capacity around children and families to meet need/address risk and in alignment with children's social care and other children's services staff.

**7.15 Question from Cllr Danny Douglas**

What studies has the Cabinet Member for Children's Services commissioned to better understand the long term impact of the lockdown on young learners with particular reference to mental health, educational attainment and life chances of the children in the Mancroft division and elsewhere in Norfolk?

**Response:**

Since the national lockdown the system around children has responded day by day and week by week to the unfolding crisis. Staff in Children's services, health and in schools and colleges have worked across weekends, and public holidays to support the county's children through lockdown. Whilst concerned as every day passes it has not been the time to deflect staff from their role in leading and co-ordinating this response. I am fully aware of all of the contingency and mitigation activity and planning that has been and is going on across Norfolk's Children's Services which recognises the impact of this period of time on children. We cannot know at a local level, yet, the impact on children's mental health, or on education attainment and the consequent impact on children's futures. Research nationally is emerging, and officers are taking full account of this in their planning. This research requires resource and expertise to begin to evaluate this complex picture. However because we cannot quantify it locally, does not mean we are not focused on supporting education providers and families in addressing it. Children's services staff are working with health colleagues, the voluntary sector and education providers to understand and look at how we can wrap support around children and young people. We will support the £1 billion national catch up programme and help schools wherever we need to deliver a curriculum that supports children and young people in achieving well. Working with schools, colleges, the Local Enterprise Partnership and the voluntary and work sector we are already working on ensuring that young people wherever possible do not miss opportunities to transition from school into meaningful education, work or apprenticeships.

**7.16 Question from Cllr Chris Jones.**

The Children's Services Department only started surveying schools on participation in home learning in my division and elsewhere in Norfolk this week. Given it was the only means for most young learners to get any education for the past three months, why was this not started earlier so results could inform a recovery plan?

**Response:**

The duty to monitor the curriculum provision made by schools remains with schools and their governance. No new regulatory duties have been given to local authorities.

Schools have been open for childcare until June 1st, and then for childcare and some face to face learning for identified year groups. There has been no prescription from the government about how schools deliver remote learning. There is encouragement for schools to do so, and some resources have been made available nationally and locally.

The survey of schools last week, by the local authority is because we are interested in the range of approaches schools have taken. It is not a monitoring activity. We are asking only so that we can share some of the practice that schools have found most effective more widely.

Until schools see children face to face they will not be able to assess the impact or otherwise of any remote learning that has taken place with children and only then can they make a bespoke plan for each child to provide relevant curriculum support. At this present time there is no meaningful information we could collect for over 120,000 children who have predominantly been engaged in some remote learning over the last few weeks.

Ofsted has the duty to monitor schools effectiveness and this includes how governors and leaders manage their curriculum. They too have decided it is not appropriate to monitor remote learning.

**7.17 Question from Cllr Kim Clipsham**

What arrangements are in place to get free school meals vouchers to families in my division and elsewhere who have their eligibility confirmed after the end of this term?

**Response**

There are hardship arrangements in place when schools are not open. The Norfolk Assistance Scheme (NAS) has widened their scope to make small cash grants and/or food parcels available to newly eligible FSM families whilst they are waiting for their schools to be notified and process their voucher applications. This will cover the summer school holiday period. We have notified all schools and asked them to make parents aware. Our customer service centre will be able to direct families appropriately.

**7.18 Question from Cllr David Collis.**

An article in the Lynn News recently described a possible move for the Kings Lynn

Public Library from London Road to a building in New Conduit Street.

A grant was made by the Carnegie Trust for the provision of a library for the people of the town, to be held in a notable building.

What steps would be taken to engage with the Carnegie Trust before any plans are developed, and given the current building's Grade II listed status, what actions would the County Council take to fulfil the requirements of the Trust in maintaining the building if the library was relocated?

**Response:**

Kings Lynn Library was opened in 1905 by Andrew Carnegie himself. He provided £5000 to build the Library. This was on condition that the Library Act was adopted, and the site donated locally. It is believed he took a special interest in the Lynn Library due to the close proximity of the King at Sandringham who also made a donation towards furnishing the Library. The aim of the library was to support literacy, information and learning in the town to enable its citizens to thrive and prosper in a modern state of the art facility.

The County Council is committed to support the Borough Council through the economic crisis and to do our part to support the future of the Kings Lynn Town Centre. The application as part of the Future High Street Fund is for the relocation of the Kings Lynn library and the creation of a multi user hub in partnership with other public and third sector organisations. If successful, the bid would provide a new, modern, accessible and state of the art facility to benefit the residents of the town and increase footfall in the Town Centre

The County Council will fully engage with the Carnegie Trust and there are no plans at the moment around the future use of the current site. However, there will be a number of consultation and public events as we look forward to the next stage in the development of library and other service provision within Kings Lynn

Norfolk Library and Information Service has a continuing relationship with the Carnegie Trust and most recently was funded to deliver 'You can't judge a book by its cover' a project which explored local people's life stories and mental health.

Kings Lynn Library continues to support literacy and learning in the town and on 6th July will re-open following closure due to the Covid 19 emergency. Library staff have been key in supporting the voluntary response during the crisis in Kings Lynn and West Norfolk.