

Cabinet

Minutes of the Meeting held on Wednesday 11 January 2023 in the Council Chamber, County Hall, at 10am

Present:

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

Executive Directors Present:

James Bullion	Executive Director of Adult Social Services
Paul Cracknell	Executive Director of Transformation and Strategy
Simon George	Executive Director of Finance & Commercial Services
Kat Hulatt	Assistant Director of Governance
Tom McCabe	Executive Director of Community and Environmental Services
Sara Tough	Executive Director of Children's Services

The Chairman paid tribute to Cllr Martin Wilby who had stood down from his role on Cabinet and who had done a tremendous job in this high-pressure role. Cllr Graham Plant, the Vice-Chairman of Cabinet, had taken on Cllr Wilby's role as Cabinet Member for Highways, Infrastructure and Transport. The Chairman wished Cllr Wilby well for the future. Cllr Fabian Eagle had been appointed into the role of Cabinet Member for Growing the Economy.

Cabinet Members and Executive Directors introduced themselves.

1 Apologies for Absence

1.1 There were no apologies.

2 Minutes from the meeting held on Monday 5 December 2022.

2.1 Cabinet agreed the minutes of the meeting held on 5 December 2022 as an accurate record.

3 Declaration of Interests

3.1 No interests were declared.

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

4.1 None.

5 Update from the Chairman/Cabinet Members

5.1 The Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, Public Health and Prevention gave an update to Cabinet on staff efforts over the Christmas and new year bank holidays:

- The Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, Public Health and Prevention thanked social care teams for the extraordinary efforts they had put in over Christmas and New Year.
- Norfolk First Support had worked throughout this period including on Christmas day and Boxing Day making 1200 home visits over the two week period and with the Swifts team made 400 visits over this time.
- Teams of social workers and occupational therapists worked throughout the holiday to get people home over the Christmas and new year period.
- The teams handled a large number of discharges, helping 1000 people leave hospital in December and over Christmas and many hours of support had been put in place to help people stay at home.
- Support put in place included setting up lunches for asylum seekers, sending out warm and well packages and food parcels for vulnerable people and helping families to avoid becoming homeless.
- The Duty team worked out of hours supporting children and adults and took over 700 calls during the holidays.
- The Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, Public Health and Prevention thanked these staff on behalf of the Council for their commitment and paid tribute to their very hard work on behalf of residents.

5.2 The Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, Public Health and Prevention gave an update to Cabinet on Government Funding for health and social care:

- Extra funding had been announced as part of the recently held Government meeting for the Health and Social Care system. This funding would be £250m across the country.
- Since Covid-19 the system had been under increased pressure, impacting on residents and staff in Norfolk.
- This extra funding would give the NHS the ability to put in place more step down and intermediate care outside of hospital. To be successful, wrap around care, community nursing, occupational support and community support to help people return home would be essential.

5.3 The Chairman also noted the hard work done by staff over the Christmas and New Year period.

6 Public Question Time

6.1 The list of public questions and the 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 to these minutes at Appendix B.
- 7.2.1 Cllr Alexandra Kemp asked a supplementary question:
- People want the Carnegie building to stay in public ownership and as a library. The consultation did not allow people to say that this is what they wanted to happen; you would not move the Norwich Castle Museum into a shop. The Carnegie building is part of our heritage and I ask the Cabinet Member to consider an extension to the Carnegie building; this is a historic part of King's Lynn. Please also restore the history books which used to be in place here. The building should be saved.
- 7.2.2 The Cabinet Member for Communities and Partnerships replied to Cllr Kemp that the contracts for this project had been exchanged and the money drawn down to continue with the project. Most people consulted with felt that a service should be available in the centre of Kings Lynn, and this would provide the opportunity to provide other services such as adult education. The Carnegie building was not in the centre of the town. The building would however be kept as a community asset and any organisations with ideas of how it could be used could come forward to the Council.

8. Admission Arrangements for the School Year 2024/25

- 8.1.1 Cabinet received the report setting out the admissions co-ordination scheme for all schools and the admissions policy for all Community and Voluntary Controlled schools, for which the Council was the admissions authority and Cabinet was therefore required to determine.
- 8.1.2 The Executive Director for Children's Services highlighted to Cabinet Members that the report set out the Council's statutory responsibility to agree the admission arrangements for the year 2024-25.
- 8.1.3 The Cabinet Member for Children's Services introduced the report to Cabinet: The was an annual report to Cabinet
- This was a statutory, annual report to Cabinet.
 - Paragraph 4.3 of the report indicated that if parents were refused admission to a preferred school they were "entitled to the Independent Admission Appeals Panel. Since 2010, the Panel is required to consider the legality of admission arrangements as part of this process and where these do not comply refer Office of the Schools Adjudicator (OSA)." No such referrals had been made
 - Paragraph 4.4 of the report set out that "Parents can refer to the Office of the School Adjudicator any concerns on the determined admission arrangements" however no referrals had been made since 2014, where it was confirmed that the Council's arrangements were compliant.
 - The Cabinet Member for Children's Services moved the recommendation as set out in the report.
- 8.2 Cabinet **RESOLVED** to determine the Admissions arrangements for the school year 2024/25
- 8.3 **Evidence and Reasons for Decision**

Please see section 4 of the report

8.4 **Alternative Options**

None

9. **Schools' Local Growth and Investment Plan**

- 9.1.1 Cabinet received the report setting out Norfolk County Council's statutory duty to provide sufficient school places and providing an annual snapshot of how these will be secured in the Schools' Local Growth and Investment Plan.
- 9.1.2 The Executive Director for Children's Services highlighted to Cabinet Members that the Council had a statutory duty to provide sufficient school places and this was an annual report to Cabinet.
- 9.1.3 The Cabinet Member for Children's Services introduced the report to Cabinet:
- This annual report was broken down into district areas as the Council worked with district councils on projections for house building, major areas of growth and smaller extension areas to identify whether to extend existing or build new schools. This work would be impacted by nutrient neutrality and decreasing birth rates seen across the county.
 - Paragraph 6.2 of the report stated that the cost of delivering all places was approximately £308m provided from sources including section 106 funding, Community Infrastructure Levy funding and Department for Education funding. The Council would look to the Department for Education to be responsible in the future for the school building programme.
 - The Cabinet Member for Children's Services moved the recommendation set out in the report.
- 9.2 The Chairman noted that the Greater Norwich Growth Board had approved £2.5m Community Infrastructure Levy income, which was a 25% uplift from previous years.
- 9.3 The Vice-Chairman noted there was housing growth planned in Great Yarmouth however page A37 of the report stated that the birth rate was declining consistently against an overall population increase. The main population growth in this area was being seen in the over 65 age group. From this he noted the importance of using data and knowledge of which schools were at capacity to plan where new schools were needed across the county. The Cabinet Member for Children's Services agreed and reported that there was close working with district councils and developers; for example, in Hellesdon, a new school had been planned with a developer, however, due to fewer homes being built than originally planned and the reducing birth rate in the area this construction was reconsidered.
- 9.4 The Cabinet Member for Innovation, Transformation and Performance noted the decline being seen in birth rates across the county but was reassured by the plans for schools in his division, Fakenham.
- 9.5 The Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, Public Health and Prevention endorsed the report and agreed that the council should take a long-term view of

future provision as it was the council's duty to ensure there was adequate provision. He thanked officers for the detailed report. The minimum size for new primary schools of 420 places, or two form entry, was discussed in the report; The Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, Public Health and Prevention felt that building new schools at this size could result in some pupils from rural areas having to travel long distances and that larger schools were not necessarily better. The Chairman pointed out that issues around the strategy of dealing with individual schools would flow from this plan. The Cabinet Member for Children's Services confirmed that 2 form entry was the size of school which was aimed for for new housing developments.

- 9.6 The Cabinet Member for Finance felt that a follow up piece of work on detailed work for new schools and what closures were being recommended would be necessary. The Executive Director for Children's Services replied that there was a three-year strategy in place looking at the Council's responsibility to organise how schools were provided in terms of sufficiency and where they were located and provided; this strategy would be brought to Cabinet at its 3-year review.

- 9.7 Cabinet **RESOLVED** to adopt the Schools Local Growth and Investment Plan 2023.

9.8 **Evidence and Reasons for Decision**

The proposed Local Schools' Growth and Investment Plan provides the necessary detail to ensure we secure sufficient school places and prioritise capital appropriately.

9.9 **Alternative Options**

The statutory duty is to provide sufficient places.

It is possible to plan for fewer additional places, where surplus places are available further afield, but within maximum recommended travel distances.

Norfolk County Council would then have a duty to provide Home to School Transport. This would add a considerable inconvenience to children and families and is outside of the Council's policies (e.g. building local communities). It would also add to the existing transport costs, where budget pressures already exist.

10. Homes for Ukraine Programme – update and next steps

- 10.1.1 Cabinet received the report setting out support provided to date for Ukrainian refugees and Hosts, and proposals for a programme of activity to be developed in line with Government guidance using funding from existing Government funding and additional funding recently announced.

- 10.1.2 The Chairman introduced the report to Cabinet:

- Norfolk was proud to be a friendly and open county which had been able to welcome Ukrainian guests. People had opened their homes to invite guests in and, with partners, the Council had offered a range of support including financial help and trusted information to make us a welcoming place to settle.

- There were challenges ahead in Norfolk and the country in terms of housing and Norfolk welcomed the support of the Government so far and for the future.
- This had happened over a short period of time so far and full details were set out in the report.
- The next steps would be known as the Move On programme.
- The council would continue to provide support directly and through partners and district and borough councils for hosts and guests. The new package from central Government includes support for Ukrainian guests to move into their own homes and to housing authorities to purchase properties for refugees.
- Hosts had been eligible to receive a thankyou payment of £350 per month from Government and the County Council had increased this to £400 per month to recognise the increased cost of living. From April 2023, guests who had been in the UK for more than a year would receive a £500 per month thankyou payment.
- The challenge now was to ensure appropriate support was in place for guests as they settled in Norfolk for longer periods of time.
- Funding for the programme would be drawn from the existing Government funding and additional funding recently announced which was provided as a ring-fenced grant.
- A programme of Move On activities would be provided to support guests and hosts:
 - To access appropriate housing and accommodation and long term housing solutions
 - Support independence including accessing employment and developing and accessing English language and other skills programmes
 - Settle in Norfolk, elsewhere in the UK or return to Ukraine
 - Continue to provide community help sessions
 - Maintain social care capacity in Children's Services and Adult Social Care
- To successfully deliver the programme continued joined up working with district councils would be needed; there would be regular engagement at a strategic leadership level across Norfolk through the Public Service Leaders Board and through relevant officer groups.
- The longer-term impacts of not putting this programme in place would result in wider pressures on statutory services.
- The financial aspects of the programme were set out in paragraph 6.1 of the report and the cost of the proposals would fall within the total ring-fenced grant from Government to the County Council. This comprised a government tariff of £10,500 per guest for 2022, £5,900 per new guest from 2023 onwards and additional funding announced for the purchase of housing, and supporting longer term settlement for guests. Additional host payments of £500 for the next 2 years would be funded by central Government and drawn down quarterly in line with spend.
- An equality impact assessment for the programme was in place and actions identified were being implemented. This would be refreshed as part of the work to develop the programme of activities.
- The Chairman moved the recommendations as set out in the report.

10.2 The Vice-Chairman thanked officers involved in this project which had been a

huge operation and successful; he indicated the Government announcement set out in paragraph 1.3 of the report which indicated funding was for acquiring housing stock for people fleeing Ukraine, Afghanistan and to reduce homelessness.

10.3 The Cabinet Member for Environment and Waste welcomed the report. He noted the number of residents who had come forward and welcomed guests and therefore supported the enhanced payment given to them. The Cabinet Member for Environment and Waste thanked these hosts and the officers involved in the programme

10.4 The Cabinet Member for Commercial Services and Asset Management thanked the officers and staff who had worked on this programme and was proud of the work done by the council. He welcomed the report and the plan being put in place to support refugees.

10.5 The Cabinet Member for Finance endorsed the incredible work being done by officers and pointed out that there was sufficient funding available within the grant funding to cover the programme.

10.6 The Cabinet Member for Communities and Partnerships noted on page 52 of the report the number of services supporting this programme and Ukrainian guests. Adult learning and the fire service had received an award due to their work in this area.

10.7 The Chairman noted that the report indicated the huge effort put in across the county to welcome Ukrainian guests. The Chairman proposed an additional, fourth recommendation, "to thank officers at Norfolk County Council for their work done to date and the work that will be done in the future."

10.8 Cabinet **RESOLVED**

1. To acknowledge the fantastic work carried out across Norfolk to welcome nearly 1,300 Guests to Norfolk, in particular to thank Hosts who have opened their homes for Guests, and to recognise the work carried out across the public and voluntary sectors and in communities to successfully welcome Guests to our county.
2. To agree that work to deliver the Homes for Ukraine programme continues and further work to develop a planned package of activity to support Guests and Hosts to settle into healthy and fulfilling lives is carried out, to be called the 'Move On' programme.
3. To delegate authority to the Director for Community, Information and Learning, in consultation with the Leader of the Council, to agree and implement the developed 'Move On' programme, including re-apportionment of ring-fenced funding provided by Government, as needed, to deliver requirements and responsibilities.
4. To thank officers at Norfolk County Council for their work done to date and the work that will be done in the future.

10.9 **Evidence and Reasons for Decision**

The recently published outcomes from the Office of National Statistics (ONS) survey of Ukrainian Guests highlights the key areas these proposals seek to

support and mitigate. As well as anecdotal, local information from Hosts, Guests and staff involved in the scheme. This is combined with revised government guidance which requires local authorities to put in place longer term, sustainable housing options.

Alternative Options

10.10

There is the option to continue operating the scheme as we are at present and encourage Guests to make longer term support independently. Whilst it is possible that this could be acceptable for a small number of Guests, there are many who do not have the resources to enable them to access housing, employment, and skills markets without additional support. The longer-term impacts of not putting a broader programme in place will result in wider pressures on statutory services. As well as this the funding provided by government as part of this scheme is intended to fund the services and support summarised in these proposals. Not revising the Norfolk approach for the next phase of the scheme could also mean that we were unable to draw down all government funding available as part of the funding for housing provision announced on the 14 December 2022.

11. Health, Safety and Well-being Mid-Year Report 2022-23

- 11.1.1 Cabinet received the report providing data and analysis on the Health, Safety and Well-being (HSW) mid-year performance of Norfolk County Council as an employer so that members had the information necessary to satisfy themselves of the effectiveness of the Council's health and safety management system, or where necessary to identify actions for Executive Directors and others to improve the performance against the 3 key outcome goals set out in the report.
- 11.1.2 The Executive Director of Transformation and Strategy stated that this report would help Members have oversight on how to drive a culture of wellbeing and feed into the quality of service provided to residents
- 11.1.3 The Chairman introduced the report to Cabinet:
- This was a mid-year report giving Cabinet the opportunity to review performance so far for 2022-23 and to compare performance to the same point last year, giving an indication of the potential year end position.
 - This would meet the Council's legal obligations and ensure efforts were focussed in the right place to support employees to be well and resilient which were the key foundations to productivity and feeling valued, and the Council's ability to manage changes ahead and deliver strategic aims.
 - The key areas of focus in the report continued to be mental health, musculoskeletal health and core health and safety management.
 - Mental health absence remained below the vital sign target of 1.2% lost time due to sickness absence at 0.93% for all of the Council. Norfolk Council was bucking the national trend of increased levels of anxiety and depression by supporting employee wellbeing, so staff were able to remain at work, well and productive. This was a to priority for the council while mental health absence was the largest cause of ill health absence
 - Services provided by the Health, Safety and Wellbeing team were well used and, in some areas, exceeding demand. For example, over 12% of employees were accessing Norfolk Support Line. The report gave feedback and data on the difference these services were making to

employee wellbeing.

- Leaders and managers played a key role in influencing wellbeing of employees and therefore the council was committed to providing mental health first aid training for managers with 521 having completed it to date. This was only a small increase since 2022 and it was therefore recommended that Executive Directors prioritise delivering on the commitments in this area. It would become increasingly important to have the skills to build wellbeing into everyday management practice to deliver the challenges ahead.
- Musculoskeletal absence had reduced compared to the same period last year. The musculoskeletal rehabilitation scheme was estimated to have prevented over 1,300 days of absence at an estimated cost of over £100,000 however the scheme was not fully used and there had been a reduction in people being referred while still at work.
- Key health and safety management data supported the recommendation that Executive Directors should focus on the fundamentals of health and safety management.
- The number of more serious incidents had decreased significantly however the overall number of incidents had increased slightly and there was room to improve management of incidents, with 85% being signed off in target.
- There were a number of incidents predating 2021 which had not been reviewed. The Health, Safety and Wellbeing team had supported departments and schools to review incidents and this had not identified any significant gaps in management actions. It was recommended that all incidents predating 2021 were closed
- Completion of the mandatory health and safety training was not reportable due to migration to a new system however it was important to support compliance by ensuring all teams had undertaken the training.
- The Chairman moved the recommendations set out in the report.

- 11.2 The Vice-Chairman noted that the report showed there was work in progress in improving systems, citing the example in the report of the purchase of new, easy clean chairs for libraries which unexpectedly increased the risk of slips. These had now been replaced. £36,000 traded income had been raised this year, in line with last year showing good working practices were in place.
- 11.3 The Cabinet Member for Innovation, Transformation and Performance noted that the report showed the Council was taking staff mental health into account and taking the issue seriously. He thanked officers for their work.
- 11.4 The Chairman proposed an addition to the start of recommendation one to add the following wording: "Thank the health and safety at work team for their work done to date and..."
- 11.5 The Cabinet Member for Children's Services noted that Children's Services had been working with the health and safety team to reduce incidents; manual handling incidents had reduced and were now no longer in the top 5.
- 11.6 The Cabinet Member for Environment and Waste noted that the council had a duty to ensure the wellbeing of staff and therefore endorsed the report.

- 11.7 Cabinet **RESOLVED** to consider the performance report and endorse the proposed actions:
1. Thank the health and safety at work team for their work done to date and to support Executive Directors to deliver on their Health, Safety and Wellbeing leadership commitments and duties including incident investigation and management, enabling employees to attend mandatory training including Mental Health First Champion training for managers and promoting utilisation of Health, Safety and Wellbeing services.
 2. Agree HSW should close all open incidents that predate 2021

11.8 **Evidence and Reasons for Decision**

N/A

11.9 **Alternative Options**

N/A

12. Risk management

- 12.1.1 Cabinet received the report setting out the latest corporate risks for Cabinet to consider and agree following officer review of the Council's corporate level risks.

- 12.1.2 The Chairman introduced the report to Cabinet:
- Cabinet owned the corporate risk register and the report set out the latest risks to consider and agree following a review of the corporate level risks. Appendix A of the report gave a summary of the proposed changes to these risks following the review with the current corporate risk register scores summarised in the corporate risk heat map in appendix B of the report. Details of all risks and narrative was shown in the corporate risk register in Appendix C of the report
 - The Audit and Governance committee was responsible for monitoring the adequacy and effectiveness of the risk management and internal control systems and there were risk management controls in place in the Council as part of the Financial Regulations of the Council's constitution.
 - The key risk messages were:
 - Corporate risk management continue to be sound and effective, working to best practice and supporting the council's key objectives
 - The review of corporate risks had taken place in conjunction with risk owners and reviewer's input.
 - The report should be read in conjunction with performance and finance reports.
 - The key specific corporate risks were:
 - Proposed escalated risks RM037, RM038, RM039 and RM040, detailed on page 38 of the report.
 - RM023 was proposed for closure and replacement by RM038, 039 and 040.
 - The Information and Management Technology team continued to monitor cyber threat levels and roll out technology advantages to help officers and Members to carry out duties from home and council offices as shown in RM003b
 - The Chairman moved the recommendations as set out in the report.

- 12.2 The Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, Public Health and Prevention discussed the three escalated risks for adults, shown on page 83 of the report:
- **RM038 – ASD Recovery from the Covid-19 pandemic:** The residual effects of Covid-19 continued to cause issues for social care, showing the importance of this escalated risk.
 - **RM039 – ASD Financial, staffing & market stability impacts due to implementation of social care reform, and RM040 – ASD assurance implementation:** these risks were around Government policy and it was therefore important that they had been escalated as shown.
- The Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, Public Health and Prevention felt that the staff working in social care were doing a very good job however the additional pressure would impact on the services the Council delivered and therefore felt that the escalation of these risks showed how seriously Cabinet and Executive Directors took these issues.
- 12.3 The Cabinet Member for Innovation, Transformation and Performance noted the importance of reviewing risks and closing them down or opening new ones when appropriate. He discussed the risk of cyber-attacks increasing since the start of the war in Ukraine and that the council was taking action to counteract them.
- 12.4 The Cabinet Member for Communities and Partnerships discussed **RM037 – NFRS industrial action**, detailed on page 83 of the report. Nationally, fire services were being balloted about strike action and plans were in place to plan for this. Parliament were looking to ensure plans were in place for when public services were on strike.
- 12.5 The Cabinet Member for Children's Services discussed Children's Services risks:
- **RM030, Non-realisation of Children's Services Transformation change and expected benefits**": The transformation programme had produced some results and the department were looking at the next phase focussing on prevention and early help to achieve a step change in the model and work around special educational needs.
 - **RM031, "NCC Funded Children's Services Overspend"**: this was being looked at in a number of ways. The Cabinet Member for Children's Services discussed that the number of looked after children in Norfolk had reduced since January 2019 and Norfolk was bucking the national trend. Placements were static however the cost of placements had increased, impacting on the budget.
- 12.6 The Vice-Chairman discussed **RM033, "Norwich Western Link Project"**. Mitigations were in place to address risks identified and the Council was keen to ensure the project would go ahead. This was dependent on funding from Government.
- 12.7 Cabinet **RESOLVED** to consider and agree:
- 1.The key messages detailing key changes to corporate risks following the corporate risk register review (paragraphs 2.1 and 2.2 and Appendix A of the report)
 - 2.The corporate risks as at January 2023 (Appendices B and C of the report)
- 12.8 **Evidence and Reasons for Decision**

Not applicable as no decision is being made.

12.9 **Alternative Options**

There are no alternatives identified.

13. **Corporately Significant Vital Signs**

13.1.1 Cabinet received the report setting providing provide an update on the Council's performance against its Corporately Significant Vital Signs.

13.1.2 The Cabinet Member for Innovation, Transformation and Performance introduced the report to Cabinet:

- This quarterly report to the Cabinet looked at performance to ensure the Council were achieving strategic outcomes as set out in Better Together for Norfolk.
- It was important to balance the need to make budget savings and the need to deliver savings in a sustainable way.
- The Council continued to operate in a period of unprecedented challenges such as post Covid-19 recovery and rises in the cost of living for residents, adding demand pressures onto services
- Savings programmes had highlighted risk areas to be kept under review and shortfalls due to delays in transformation programmes.
- Some services were seeing more stable levels of performance. Visits to museums were improving for example.
- Improvement to the employee offer especially in hard to recruit areas was being looked into.
- The Cabinet Member for Innovation, Transformation and Performance oved the recommendations set out in the report

13.2 The Cabinet Member for Children's Services discussed children's services vital signs:

- **Vital Sign 305: % of children and young people subject to a Permanent Exclusion:** Exclusions were falling in Norfolk and all exclusions were followed up to explore other options and possible arrangements for support and alternative provision
- **Vital Sign 309: "Decreasing the rate of Looked-After Children per 10,000 of the overall 0-17 population":** This sign was deteriorating however local numbers were stable. Unaccompanied asylum seeking children were the main factor impacting on this vital sign. The Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children team were exceptional in this work and the service was cost neutral.
- **Vital Sign 322: "% of Education, Health and Care Plans completed within Timescale":** this vital sign was improving however the target had not yet been reached. Issues with staff vacancies had now been med and it was hoped that improvements would continue in this area.

13.3 The Cabinet Member for Finance discussed **Vital Sign 404: Savings Targets Delivered:** Over 90% of savings had been achieved. Where they hadn't, reprofiling had been carried out. Planning issues around nutrient neutrality had resulted in the delay of the Supported Housing Programme.

- 13.4 Cabinet **RESOLVED** to
1. Review and comment on the end of quarter two performance data.
 2. Review the considerations and next steps.
 3. Agree the planned actions as set out.

13.5 **Evidence and Reasons for Decision**

N/A

13.6 **Alternative Options**

Information Report.

14 Organisational Performance Framework

- 14.1.1 Cabinet received the report providing an overview on the Council's proposed Organisational Performance Framework..

- 14.1.2 The Cabinet Member for Innovation, Transformation and Performance introduced the report to Cabinet:
- The Organisational Performance Framework was based on the 5 performance pillars, Accountability, Assurance, Trustworthiness, Quality and Value.
 - Norfolk County Council continued to operate in period of unprecedented challenges such as the rise in cost of living and increase in cost of goods. Performance was therefore key to ensure the Council as moving towards the strategic outcomes set out in Better Together for Norfolk against the backdrop of pressures.
 - It was vital to continue to provide the best for the residents of Norfolk.
 - Performance management across the council had been varied across departments. The proposal of the report was to ensure this followed a standardised approach across all departments.
 - Page 147 of the report showed the draft performance framework.
 - The Cabinet Member for Innovation, Transformation and Performance moved the recommendation set out in the report and proposed a second recommendation "to bring a further report in 3 months' time on the progress and implementation of the Draft Performance Framework".

- 14.2 The Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, Public Health and Prevention felt that this framework would help bring the Council together and support staff to move between departments if needed. He agreed with the proposal for it to be brought back to Cabinet.

- 14.3 The Vice-Chairman noted that bringing a report in 3 months' time would be useful as there were elements in the draft framework which were subject to further ratifications

- 14.4 Cabinet **RESOLVED**
1. To review the accompanying framework document and approve the implementation.
 2. To bring a further report in 3 months' time on the progress and implementation of the Draft Performance Framework set out at the appendix of the report.

14.5 **Evidence and Reasons for Decision**

Performance management across Norfolk County Council (NCC) is varied in nature and our reporting structure does not lend itself to proactive mitigation or action planning against performance risk.

Our existing technological solution and supporting reporting cycle requires critical updates to enable users to provide the highest level of insights and analysis to their Teams in order to more effectively performance manage across their services.

Levels of accountability for performance management is different across Directorates and needs some minimum standards in place to ensure we are meeting and evidencing our performance against our Strategic Outcomes more effectively.

14.6 **Alternative Options**

We could decide to not proceed with the implementation of this Framework, but this will not address the organisational issues identified in this paper.

15 **Reports of the Cabinet Member and Officer Delegated Decisions made since the last Cabinet meeting**

15.1 Cabinet **RESOLVED** to **note** the Delegated Decisions made since the last Cabinet meeting

The meeting ended at 11:34

Chairman of Cabinet

Cabinet
11 January 2023
Public & Local Member Questions

	Public Question Time
6.1	<p>Question from James Hawketts A recent FOI request found that buses arrive substantially later or earlier than they're scheduled to roughly 20% of the time in Norwich. Believing the Blue Line through University Division particularly at threat, the request author Alfie Robinson contacted the Students' Union to be told the only improvements to service they were after were through the abolition of capitalistic markets. I then spoke at the city council, where the cabinet member struggled to even admit service was poor. Will the county council be the first body to actually acknowledge the detrimental impacts this disservice is having, and detail what, as the primary transport manager, it's doing to address these issues?</p> <p>Response from the Cabinet Member for Highways, Infrastructure and Transport Bus performance is monitored by all bus operators and regular discussions are held with the County Council to identify areas of concern and joint actions that need to be taken to address this. The County Council works closely with bus operators to design and deliver highway improvement schemes that improve the reliability of bus journey times, enabling bus services to be more punctual. We have recently delivered a number of bus priority schemes across Norwich through the Transforming Cities Fund programme and are working on the delivery of additional schemes through the Bus Service Improvement Plan. This is a recent government funding award to Norfolk, which will see £50m of investment over the next three years in bus services and infrastructure.</p> <p>In addition, both nationally and locally there has been difficulties with driver shortages and this in turn has affected services for all bus operators. Operators have focused efforts on addressing the driver shortage and the situation is now improving in and around Norwich.</p> <p>Supplementary question from James Hawketts While I welcome national fare caps, I'm still nonplussed there isn't alarm at the service quality, I can't think of any other sector where a 20% fail rate would be acceptable. Handouts from central government are fine, but does the council have plans to utilise its own dormant powers under the Bus Services Act 2017 to better hold commercial operators to account for missed commitments on performance, perhaps by investigating switching to a franchise system?</p> <p>Response from the Cabinet Member for Highways, Infrastructure and Transport We have the 2022 Bus Service Improvement Plan and Enhanced Partnership (with the bus operators across Norfolk) in place and the Council has no plans to apply to adopt a franchising system. Regulatory powers remain with the Traffic Commissioner.</p>

**Cabinet
11 January 2023
Local Member Questions**

	Local Member Issues/Questions
7.1	<p>Question from Cllr Alexandra Kemp Cabinet proposes spending 5 million pounds on the Conservatives' controversial, unpopular move of Lynn's historic Carnegie Library into an ugly 70's wreck, while cutting half the funding of Norfolk's Mobile Library Service. This Conservative attack on Norfolk's Mobile Library is a cut to knowledge, to skills, to equal access to books, to a vital lifeline for disabled residents throughout our villages. County also reduced the Carnegie's previous volume of history books on public access shelves. Can Cabinet reverse the 200,000 pound cut to the Mobile Library, restore the timeline of history books in the Carnegie, and keep the Carnegie in County hands?</p> <p>Response from the Cabinet Member for Communities and Partnerships As you know, Full Council will meet in February to consider the proposed budget and, as a Member of the County Council, you are able to make your views known as part of this.</p> <p>In relation to the Carnegie building, as you already know from numerous other pieces of correspondence with you, the Carnegie building will be maintained in public ownership and for the benefit of King's Lynn residents.</p>
7.2	<p>Question from Cllr Rob Colwell Norfolk is a vast rural county with woefully inadequate public transport links. Subsidised fares until the end of March 2023 provides only temporary and partial help to residents. What reassurances can be given to the residents of Norfolk that this Council will start to see public transport as a priority and will prevent any bus route losses in April 2023 when government support in this sector is due to end.</p> <p>Response from the Cabinet Member for Highways, Infrastructure and Transport Norfolk County Council has always seen public transport as a priority, and we are very pleased that our bid for Bus Service Improvement Plan funding was successful. Norfolk was only one of around 30 authorities who successfully received an allocation from this fund from government and Norfolk received one of the largest allocations at £50m. We are now working closely with the Bus operators to implement enhanced routes and services as well as reviewing infrastructure and fares to encourage passenger growth and improved bus journey reliability. This should enable bus routes to be more sustainable in the long term.</p> <p>Second question from Cllr Rob Colwell Hospitals across Norfolk are in a state of crisis. Staff are under immense pressure battling rising covid rates, flu and Strep A, amidst warnings that people are dying unnecessarily every day due to overcrowding and lack of resources. What new measures and public health campaigns around mask wearing are Norfolk Public Health proposing following the issuing of the UK Health Security Agency's (UKHSA) latest advice?</p>

	<p>Response from the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, Public Health and Prevention</p> <p>Thank you for your question. As you would expect we are following the current guidance issued by UKSHA and are signposting people and organisations to this. It provides advice on when to consider wearing a face covering or a face mask. It advises that wearing a face covering or face mask can reduce the number of particles containing viruses that are released from the mouth and nose of someone who is infected with COVID-19 and other respiratory infections. Face coverings can also protect the person wearing the face covering from becoming infected by some viruses. It also provides advice on when to wear a face covering</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • when you are coming into close contact with someone at higher risk of becoming seriously unwell from COVID-19 or other respiratory infections • when COVID-19 rates are high and you will be in close contact with other people, such as in crowded and enclosed spaces • when there are a lot of respiratory viruses circulating, such as in winter, and you will be in close contact with other people in crowded and enclosed spaces • If you have symptoms or have a positive COVID-19 test result and you need to leave your home, wearing a well-fitting face covering or a face mask can help reduce the spread of COVID-19 and other respiratory infections. See further advice in the guidance for people with symptoms of a respiratory infection or a positive test result. <p>Those attending education or childcare settings will not normally be expected to wear a face covering. Face coverings for children under the age of 3 are not recommended for safety reasons.”</p> <p>See Living safely with respiratory infections, including COVID-19 - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk) for more information.</p> <p>In terms of public health campaigns our Director of Public Health, Dr Louise Smith did an interview with Radio Norfolk last week, information and advice has been circulated to schools, advice on the council’s website has been updated and we signpost people to the UKHSA website. We are also incorporating the messaging into the existing Warm and Well campaign.</p>
7.3	<p>Question from Cllr Tim Adams</p> <p>Rising costs and inflationary pressures are clearly placing extra pressures on Norfolk County Council’s budgetary position. Is it inevitable that we will see cutbacks in road maintenance across Norfolk as a result of this situation?</p> <p>Response from the Cabinet Member for Highways, Infrastructure and Transport</p> <p>The Council is currently awaiting confirmation from the Department for Transport of the highway maintenance allocations for the new financial year. The autumn statement in 2022 indicated a ‘flat’ settlement in 2022/23, 23/24 and 24/25 with no allowance for inflation.</p> <p>Inflation in the construction sector has been significantly higher than the general indices at around 30% so far this financial year. This effectively reduces our buying power. As a result, we will continue with our proactive asset management</p>

	<p>approach and maintenance programme, but this is likely to involve more cost-effective treatments. Safety for all highway users will be prioritised.</p>
7.4	<p>Question from Cllr Brian Watkins</p> <p>What reassurance can you give the Norfolk public that the Council is doing everything in its power to work alongside providers in the NHS and Social Care sectors to address the current care emergency in the county?</p> <p>Response from the Cabinet Member for Public Health, Adult Social Care and Prevention</p> <p>Thank you for your question. I can give every assurance. As you are already aware Norfolk's Adult Social Care Winter Plan forms part of the wider Winter Framework of key activity planned across Norfolk. Norfolk County Council, NHS Norfolk and Waveney and wider Integrated Care System partners are all working together. The Council is working flat out to meet the needs of our population, to maintain high quality and safe service provision in a climate of increasing pressure as we continue to recover from the COVID pandemic and work through the increased challenges for the sector that winter and cold weather bring.</p> <p>Like the rest of the country, these challenges are very real and affecting service delivery. All partners and providers are working tirelessly and flexibly to support solutions to best meet the care needs of local residents.</p> <p>The integrated Plan was recently supported by the Integrated Care Partnership and includes capacity to address increased demand over the winter period across health and social care.</p> <p>Specific additional capacity is being delivered by Norfolk County Council, including through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support to home care providers across the care market, including higher fees, enhanced hourly rates, and increased block commissioned capacity, • Additional resources to support provision of reablement over the winter, • Housing with Care flats to be used as innovative community step down beds to provide short term 24/7 home care support, • NCC supporting deployment of NHS intermediate care beds for hospital discharge. <p>The Council works closely with Norfolk Care Association to support ongoing engagement and to respond to market issues. In December the Council and NorCA representatives met with Norfolk MPs and the Social Care Minister to discuss the challenges for providers and the actions needed.</p> <p>Engagement with providers is ongoing and the Council has built strong relationships that is enabling open dialogue around specific issues for providers. In addition, ongoing projects and initiatives continue to be implemented with the support of partners including Norfolk and Suffolk Care Support Ltd, NorCA and the Integrated Care Board to support a range of actions including recruitment and retention; digital transformation and quality improvement.</p> <p>Second Question from Cllr Brian Watkins</p> <p>When the Transforming Cities Joint Committee finally approved the St. Stephen's Street scheme back in 2021, the estimated cost was £5.9 million. Many people in Norwich had considerable doubts that the scheme represented good value for</p>

	<p>money, and it has subsequently been beset by delays and rising costs. Even now, we are still waiting for new bus shelters to be installed. Can you please confirm the likely final cost of the St. Stephen's Street scheme?</p> <p>Response from the Cabinet Member for Highways, Infrastructure and Transport</p> <p>Whilst the majority of the scheme is complete, there are still works related to planting and the installation of bus shelters to complete. The final cost of the scheme will not be known until all aspects are fully completed. At the current time, spend is in line with the estimate outlined by Cllr Watkins.</p>
7.5	<p>Question from Cllr David Sayers</p> <p>According to the ONS, UK food price inflation hit a new high of 16.5% in November. This rise in the cost of everyday essentials is likely to hit poorest households hardest, many of which are already struggling with higher energy bills. Many families simply cannot afford to send their children to school with nutritious packed lunches. The "School Food Plan" explains that hunger impairs thinking, and that behavioural, emotional and academic problems are more prevalent among hungry children. Does the Council recognise that food poverty is still affecting families and that it should do more to support those families in Norfolk at risk of food poverty?</p> <p>Response from the Cabinet Member for Children's Services</p> <p>As a council, we recognise the challenges that many families are facing as a result of rising food costs. This is why we have continued to use a large proportion of the household support fund from central government to provide cost of living vouchers for children eligible for free school meals at a cost of £3.6m this winter. This means that 30,000 children are receiving a monthly voucher for £15 and they also received an additional £30 voucher at Christmas. As a result, over the winter, eligible families will receive £120 per child. In 2022/23 Norfolk County Council has invested £7.2m in cost of living support for families eligible for free school meals.</p> <p>As part of the Nourishing Norfolk Initiative, the County Council has invested £500,000 to support 15 Community Food Hubs to open across Norfolk. The 15th opened the week before Christmas and these hubs are supporting over 13,000 residents across the county.</p> <p>If families require additional financial support they can also make an application to our Norfolk Assistance Scheme.</p> <p>As a council, we recognise the important role that schools play in encouraging children to enjoy growing, cooking and eating proper food as part of the school food plan. The Department for Education provides practical guidance on implementing statutory requirements of the School Food Regulations (2014) and produce practical guidance for schools, leaders and governors on implementing school food standards so that children have healthy, balanced diets.</p> <p>Second Question from Cllr David Sayers</p> <p>Councils across the country are recognising the benefits of a default 20mph Speed Limit, not only in reducing deaths, but also from improved public health, through reduced noise / pollution and by encouraging greater use by pedestrians and cyclists. There are cost benefits to the health system from increased public exercise and reduced admissions to A&E. Other counties, such as Oxfordshire and Lancashire, have agreed 20mph for residential areas. As a Campaigner for '20s</p>

	<p>Plenty' in my division of Gaywood North & Central, I would ask if the Council might adopt 20 mph across the county where people live, work and play?</p> <p>Response from the Cabinet Member for Highways, Infrastructure and Transport</p> <p>During 2022 Norfolk County Council revised its Speed Management Strategy. The draft strategy was reviewed by Infrastructure and Development Committee on 16 November 2022 with a report being taken to Cabinet later this month.</p> <p>The draft strategy outlines the that a 20mph speed limit is appropriate in areas of high concentration of vulnerable road users, such as in busy shopping areas or some larger village centres or residential areas and heavily used tourist locations. 20mph speed limits and zones are also an integral part of all new housing estate layouts. Furthermore, it is an ambition of the County Council for all schools to located within a 20mph speed limit, although all of the above is subject to identifying the necessary funding for implementation. Several school part time 20mph speed limits have been taken forward as Local Member funded schemes, where it has been appropriate to do so.</p>
7.6	<p>Question from Cllr Sharon Blundell</p> <p>The capped fare scheme for bus travel has started this month. If this scheme persuades more residents to use the bus service, reduces car usage, and is more affordable, will you try and encourage the bus companies to continue this scheme beyond March?</p> <p>Response from the Cabinet Member for Highways, Infrastructure and Transport</p> <p>We will be closely monitoring the success of the government's capped fare scheme, which only has funding until the end of March. It goes without saying that we support appropriate measures which lead to increased use of public transport.</p> <p>This is why we were so pleased that the Council's work on improving public transport was recently recognised and rewarded by the successful award of £50m Bus Service Improvement Plan funding from government. As part of this we are considering fare improvements, including offers for passengers up to the age of 25, flat fares, multi operator schemes and fare capping.</p>
7.7	<p>Question from Cllr Maxine Webb</p> <p>Can the Cabinet Member for Children's Services confirm when were the Bands of Support Needs indicative budgets for Short Breaks for children with disabilities last reviewed?</p> <p>Response from the Cabinet Member for Children's Services</p> <p>The Resource Allocation System that determines the Bands of Support Needs for children accessing Short Breaks and their associated budgets was last reviewed in 2018.</p> <p>We are currently working with families to review our Short Break strategy for 2023-26 to ensure that we are offering the right level of support and types of services to families that need to use the service.</p>

7.8	<p>Question from Cllr Julie Brociek-Coulton</p> <p>The maintenance backlog for Norfolk roads could be virtually eliminated if the amount the county council intends to spend on the Norwich Western Link was instead of spent on upgrading the existing network. Does the Cabinet Member for Highways, Infrastructure and Transport agree that it is time for a rethink?</p> <p>Response from the Cabinet Member for Highways, Infrastructure and Transport</p> <p>It is important that the Council has a balance of maintaining the existing network as well as investing in important new infrastructure. The Norwich Western Link is identified as part of the essential infrastructure to support future growth and resolve existing traffic issues that are having detrimental impacts on communities west of Norwich. It is being delivered alongside other key infrastructure projects which also includes wider sustainable transport investments such as the Transforming Cities Fund and Bus Service Improvement Plan. All of these projects are important with much of the funding provided through bids to Government, therefore providing a good investment for the future of Norfolk.</p>
7.9	<p>Question from Cllr Alison Birmingham</p> <p>Please can the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, Public Health and Prevention confirm how many care home beds were lost in 2022?</p> <p>Response from the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, Public Health and Prevention</p> <p>Thank you for your question. In the period 1 January 2022 – 1 December 2022, which is the latest period that figures are available, there was a net increase of 40 beds across residential and nursing provision in Norfolk.</p>
7.10	<p>Question from Cllr Brenda Jones</p> <p>Social care is on its knees and must be improved to help resolve the NHS crisis. What emergency plans and long-term proposals has the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, Public Health and Prevention put to government?</p> <p>Response from the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, Public Health and Prevention</p> <p>Thank you for your question. Norfolk's Adult Social Care Winter Plan forms part of a wider Winter Framework of key activity planned across Adult Social Care, NHS Norfolk and Waveney and wider Integrated Care System partners. The Council is an active partner to ensure resilience over the coming months to meet the needs of our population, to maintain high quality and safe service provision in a climate of increasing pressure as we continue to recover from the COVID pandemic and work through the increased challenges for the sector that winter and cold weather bring. Like the rest of the country, these challenges are very real and affecting service delivery. All partners and providers are working tirelessly and flexibly to support solutions to best meet the care needs of local residents.</p>

	<p>The integrated Plan was recently supported by the Integrated Care Partnership and includes capacity to address increased demand over the winter period across health and social care.</p> <p>Specific additional capacity is being delivered by Norfolk County Council, including through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support to home care providers across the care market, including higher fees, enhanced hourly rates, and increased block commissioned capacity, • Additional resources to support provision of reablement over the winter, • Housing with Care flats to be used as innovative community step down beds to provide short term 24/7 home care support, • NCC supporting deployment of NHS intermediate care beds for hospital discharge. <p>The Council works closely with Norfolk Care Association to support ongoing engagement and to respond to market issues. In December the Council and NorCA representatives met with Norfolk MPs and the Social Care Minister to discuss the challenges for providers and the actions needed.</p> <p>Engagement with providers is ongoing and the Council has built strong relationships that is enabling open dialogue around specific issues for providers. In addition, ongoing projects and initiatives continue to be implemented with the support of partners including Norfolk and Suffolk Care Support Ltd, NorCA and the Integrated Care Board to support a range of actions including recruitment and retention; digital transformation and quality improvement.</p>
7.11	<p>Question from Cllr Emma Corlett</p> <p>The devolution ambition included in the delivery plan for Together for Norfolk included Adult Social Care. Why did the Leader agree to dropping the most significant issue facing the county without consulting council?</p> <p>Response from the Leader and Cabinet Member for Strategy and Governance</p> <p>The devolution framework published in February 2022, in the then Levelling Up White paper, did not include a provision for any health and social care powers to be devolved from central government. In our subsequent discussions, and with the policy drive being to implement and embed the Integrated Care Boards and Partnerships, government was not in a position to commit to devolution in this space at this time. This position is not unique to us, and along with those other areas with a deal or on the pathway to one, we remain firm in our ambition to explore how the lever of devolution can enable us to achieve more. I can assure Council that we have not dropped this issue in the least and continue to engage with government on this and other critical issues. The current Deal is the foundation on which we will build</p>
7.12	<p>Question from Cllr Steve Morpew</p> <p>Although any revised governance arrangements have to be agreed by Council it seems the Leader doesn't intend to give full Council a vote on the substantive devolution deal. Will he agree Council should change our constitution to give Norfolk's elected councillors the right to vote on the full devolution deal rather than just the Cabinet he personally appointed?</p>

	<p>Response from the Leader and Cabinet Member for Strategy and Governance</p> <p>Thank you for your question. Cllr Morphew is well aware of the roles and responsibilities of a Strong Leader and Cabinet Model and the process of proceeding with a County Deal. In line with all other areas going through this process the decision lies with the Executive and is subject to Scrutiny processes. This is in no way incorrect or unusual. I hope that all members have had a chance to read the published Deal proposal and agree that this is a fantastic opportunity for Norfolk to get the powers and funding it deserves to grow our economy and invest for the people of Norfolk.</p> <p>I look forward to a positive debate on 17 January where all 84 members will get the opportunity to give their opinion on the Deal.</p> <p>I hope Cllr Morphew and his Group will join Keir Starmer in committing to supporting Devolution and levelling up pioneered by successive Conservative Governments.</p>
7.13	<p>Question from Cllr Mike Sands</p> <p>Will the Leader commit that we will use any new house building powers through a future devolution deal to build at least 50% of homes for social rent?</p> <p>Response from the Leader and Cabinet Member for Strategy and Governance</p> <p>It is premature to speculate or make bold statements about future deals at this point in time. We are committed to enabling the delivery of affordable housing in Norfolk, and will work with our district partners and Homes England to develop a pipeline of housing projects, using the powers that the current deal affords the council.</p>
7.14	<p>Question from Cllr Jamie Osborn</p> <p>The new Cabinet Member for highways inherits the enormous burden of the stalling Norwich Western Link. He has to admit that the future of the NWL is in considerable doubt, as it is hundreds of millions over budget, Government funding isn't exactly forthcoming, and it faces legal challenges. Does Cllr Plant agree with the Cabinet Member for Finance who has said that the project may need to be reconsidered if it doesn't get Government funding?</p> <p>Response from the Cabinet Member for Highways, Infrastructure and Transport</p> <p>The NWL project is a major investment and the majority of the funding (85%) will be provided by Government as part of its national Large Local Majors programme of projects. Clearly if that funding is not provided, there would need to be a review of the delivery of the project. However, as agreed by the Council in July last year, the Outline Business Case has been updated and submitted to the Department for Transport and we are confident that a decision from them regarding the funding for the project will be provided soon.</p> <p>Supplementary question from Cllr Jamie Osborn</p> <p>Is the new Cabinet Member for Highways prepared to put his political reputation on the line and guarantee that the NWL can be delivered without even more cost increases?</p>

	<p>Response from the Cabinet Member for Highways, Infrastructure and Transport</p> <p>There are no guarantees regarding the costs of major infrastructure projects, particularly in light of the current inflationary implications driven by worldwide events. The key is to ensure there is good governance associated to their delivery. Impacts to project costs for the NWL will be brought before Cabinet, and Full Council if necessary, and if budget decisions are required.</p>
7.15	<p>Question from Cllr Paul Neale</p> <p>Some Conservatives tell us that we should be grateful for the £20m funding allocated to Norfolk County Council under the county deal. Yet this amounts to less than 10% of the £220m cut from the council's budget by the Government under austerity. And this year alone the council will have to cut a further £60m, three times more than is being offered under the county deal. Can the Cabinet Member honestly say that what is on the table is good enough?</p> <p>Response from the Leader and Cabinet Member for Strategy and Governance</p> <p>The investment fund is not a replacement for local government funding and there is no such thing as a perfect deal. This is funding that government is entrusting to Norfolk County Council to drive economic growth and regeneration, housing and transport and start to tackle the skills deficit we face as a county, with our partners across all sectors. The current deal represents a stepping-stone on the way to further powers and gets us a seat at the table to be able to have stronger conversations with Government. And that is how it is seen in other areas with a Deal, as in Suffolk, Cornwall and the East Midlands. We continue to press Government for a better and more sustainable model for local government funding and greater investment in the social care and health system.</p> <p>Second Question from Cllr Paul Neale</p> <p>Is the Cabinet Member ashamed of the way that the Conservative Government has overseen the NHS being pushed to breaking point, with queues of nearly 40 ambulances waiting outside the Norfolk and Norwich Hospital and handovers taking 18 hours? Will he write to the Government to support the demands of ambulance drivers and NHS staff to help resolve the crisis?</p> <p>Response from the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, Public Health and Prevention</p> <p>Thank you for your question. As you are already aware the causes of the current crisis are the consequences of the Covid pandemic which has led to dramatically increased demand in the Health and Social Care system. It is a matter of record from the independent Kings Fund, whose recent analysis show that Department of Health and Social Care Spending has increased in both real and absolute terms year on year since 2008/9. Striking is only going to make the situation worse. The NHS budget and how it has changed The King's Fund (kingsfund.org.uk)</p>
7.16	<p>Question from Cllr Ben Price</p> <p>A mass of independent research and recent House of Commons reports have all found that hydrogen is unviable for home heating. Norfolk-based Cornwall Insight found that hydrogen would be "uneconomical" now and in the future, and that plans to use hydrogen for heating could mean nearly doubling fuel bills for decades to come. So it is very concerning to hear claims that Bacton could be used to produce hydrogen to heat homes across the south-east. Will the Environment Cabinet</p>

Member write to Government and relevant partners to call for only green hydrogen to be produced at Bacton and for this to be used for industry and transport, not home heating?

Response from the Cabinet Member for Environment and Waste

Whilst acknowledging the seriousness of this matter, it is a complex subject which ultimately sits with Government in terms of policy relating to energy security and use, both now and into the future.

We will keep this matter under review.

Second Question from Cllr Ben Price

Recently a high court judge found it arguable that the environmental impacts of cumulative carbon emissions from the three National Highways A47 schemes around Norwich, and the Norwich Western Link (NWL), had not been legitimately assessed, and ordered a full Judicial Review of the three A47 DCO consents. What steps are being taken to review the Environmental Impact Assessment Scoping Report for the NWL to ensure its legitimacy if the NWL comes forward to planning?

Response from the Cabinet Member for Highways, Infrastructure and Transport

The three National Highways A47 schemes do have confirmed DCOs, including the North Tuddenham to Easton scheme into which the Norwich Western Link is due to tie in. The NWL project team will continue to monitor this challenge to the National Highways' schemes and await the outcome of the judicial review. It's too early to say if there will be any implications for the Norwich Western Link.

The scope of the planning application for the NWL will be compliant with the appropriate legislation and guidance when it is submitted.