

# Scrutiny Committee

Date: **Wednesday 20 April 2022**

Time: **10 am**

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

## Membership:

Cllr Steve Morpew (Chair)	
Cllr Lana Hemsall (V Chair)	
Cllr Carl Annison	Cllr Keith Kiddie
Cllr Lesley Bambridge	Cllr Ed Maxfield
Cllr Graham Carpenter	Cllr Jamie Osborn
Cllr Phillip Duigan	Cllr Richard Price
Cllr Barry Duffin	Cllr Brian Watkins
Cllr Mark Kiddle-Morris	

## Parent Governor Representatives

Mr Giles Hankinson  
Vacancy

## Church Representatives

Mrs Julie O'Connor  
Mr Paul Dunning

## Advice for members of the public:

This meeting will be held in public and in person. It will be live streamed on YouTube and members of the public can watch remotely by clicking on the following link:

[https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCdyUrFjYNPfPq5psa-LFIJA/videos?view=2&live\\_view=502](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCdyUrFjYNPfPq5psa-LFIJA/videos?view=2&live_view=502)

However, if you wish to attend the meeting in person it would be most helpful if, on this occasion, you could indicate in advance that it is your intention to do so. This can be done by emailing [committees@norfolk.gov.uk](mailto:committees@norfolk.gov.uk) where we will ask you to provide your name, address and details of how we can contact you (in the event of a Covid-19 outbreak). Please note that public seating will be limited.

As you will be aware, the Government is moving away from COVID-19 restrictions and towards living with COVID-19, just as we live with other respiratory infections. To ensure that the meeting is safe we are asking everyone attending to practise good public health and safety behaviours (practising good hand and respiratory hygiene, including wearing face coverings in busy areas at times of high prevalence) and to stay at home when they need to (if they have tested positive for COVID 19; if they have symptoms of a respiratory infection; if they are a close contact of a positive COVID 19 case). This will help make the event safe for all those attending and limit the transmission of respiratory infections including COVID-19.

## **A g e n d a**

### **1 To receive apologies and details of any substitute members attending**

### **2. Minutes**

**(Page 5 )**

To confirm the minutes of the meetings held on 23 March 2022 and 30 March 2022

### **3. Members to Declare any Interests**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

**5 Public Question Time**

Fifteen minutes for questions from members of the public of which due notice has been given. Please note that all questions must be received by the Committee Team ([committees@norfolk.gov.uk](mailto:committees@norfolk.gov.uk)) by **5pm on Tuesday 12 April 2022**. For guidance on submitting a public question, please visit <https://www.norfolk.gov.uk/what-we-do-and-how-we-work/councillors-meetings-decisions-and-elections/committees-agendas-and-recent-decisions/ask-a-question-to-a-committee>

**6 Local Member Issues/Questions**

Fifteen minutes for local member to raise issues of concern of which due notice has been given. Please note that all questions must be received by the Committee Team ([committees@norfolk.gov.uk](mailto:committees@norfolk.gov.uk)) by **5pm on Tuesday 12 April 2022**

**7 The deadline for calling-in matters for consideration at this meeting of the Scrutiny Committee from the Cabinet meeting held on Monday 4 April 2022 was 4pm on Monday 11 April 2022**

**8 Better Together for Norfolk: Delivering our Strategy (Page 23)**

**Report by Executive Director of Strategy and Transformation**

**9 Strategic and Financial Planning 2023-24 (Page 90)**

**Report by Executive Director of Finance and Commercial Services**

**10 Monitoring of NCC Environmental Policy – Development of a Digital Dashboard (Page 121)**

**Report by the Executive Director of Community and Environmental Services**

**11 County Farms – Updates on Actions Following Scrutiny (Not yet available)**

**Report by the Executive Director of Finance and Commercial Services**

**Report by the Director of Governance**

**Tom McCabe**  
**Head of Paid Service**  
County Hall  
Martineau Lane  
Norwich  
NR1 2DH

Date Agenda Published: 8 April 2022



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## Scrutiny Committee

Minutes of the Meeting Held on 23 March 2022  
at 10 am at County Hall Norwich

### Present:

Cllr Steve Morphew (Chair)

Cllr Lana Hemsall (Vice Chair)

Cllr Carl Annison

Cllr Lesley Bambridge

Cllr Barry Duffin

Cllr Phillip Duigan

Cllr Jim Moriarty

Cllr Robert Savage

Cllr John Ward

Cllr Brian Watkins

Cllr Jim Moriarty

Cllr Eric Vardy

### Parent Governor representative

Mr Giles Hankinson

### Church Representative

Mrs Julie O'Connor

### Also present (who took a part in the meeting):

Cllr John Fisher

Cllr Andrew Jamieson

Cllr Martin Wilby

Cllr Mike Smith Clare

Cabinet Member for Children's Services

Cabinet Member for Finance

Cabinet Member for Highways, Infrastructure and Transport

Cllr for call in of Key Decision: Cabinet Decision of Fostering Review.

Cllr Dan Roper

Cllr for call in of Key Decision: Multiple Decisions Associated with the Norwich Western Link Road

Cllr Emma Corlett

Cllr for call in of Key Decision: Cabinet Decision of Fostering Review & Multiple Decisions Associated with the Norwich Western Link Road & Cabinet Member Delegated Decision Ipswich Road Active Travel Fund.

Cllr Terry Jermy

Cllr for call in of Key Decision: Multiple Decisions Associated with the Norwich Western Link Road

Cllr Colleen Walker

Cllr for call in of Key Decision: Cabinet Decision of Fostering Review.

Cllr Maxine Webb

Cllr for call in of Key Decision: Cabinet Decision of Fostering Review.

David Allfrey

Infrastructure Delivery Manager

Graham Bygrave

Director of Highways and Waste

Kate Dexter

Assistant Director Children's Social Care

Simon George

Executive Director of Finance and Commercial Services

Jonathan Hall	Committee Officer
Kat Hulatt	Head of Legal Services
Susan Madden	Foster Carer
Tom McCabe	Executive Director of Community and Environmental Services
Peter Randall	Democratic Support and Scrutiny Manager
Sara Tough	Executive Director of Children's Services
Kevin Townly	Asset & Capital Programme Manager
Phil Watson	Director of Children's Social Care
Jeremy Wiggin	Transport for Norwich Manager

## **1. Apologies for Absence**

- 1.1 Apologies were received from Cllr Kiddle Morris, Cllr Ed Maxfield (substituted by Cllr Jim Moriarity) Cllr Graham Carpenter (substituted by Cllr Robert Savage) Cllr Richard Price (Substituted by Cllr Eric Vardy) and Cllr Keith Kiddie (substituted by Cllr John Ward)

## **2 Minutes**

- 2.1 The minutes of the previous meetings held on 16 February 2022 were confirmed as an accurate record and signed by the Chair.

## **3. Declarations of Interest**

- 3.1 There were no declarations of interest,

## **4 Urgent Business**

- 4.1 No urgent business was discussed.

## **5. Public Question Time**

- 5.1 There were 10 questions from the public and the Chair advised that although answers had been prepared and published, these had been placed in the context of an answer from the service, rather than from the Chair of the committee.

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

- 6.1 There were no local member issues/questions.

## **7 Call In**

- 7.1 The Committee noted that there were 5 call in items to be taken as part of today's agenda.  
Multiple call ins from decisions associated with the Norwich Western Link Rd would be taken as one item (9). The call in for the Norfolk Parking Partnership was to be considered at the next meeting on 30<sup>th</sup> March 2022.

## **8 Call-In of Cabinet Decision of Fostering Review.**

- 8.1 The annexed report (8) related to the call-in of the Cabinet decision of 7 March 2022: Fostering Review.

- 8.2 The Chair explained the way in which he would handle this item to best ensure a fair and balanced scrutiny process and to decide what (if any) issues the Committee would refer to the Cabinet. The options that were available to the Committee were set out in the report.
- 8.3 The Chair welcomed to the meeting Cllr Mike Smith Clare, Cllr Emma Corlett, Cllr Colleen Walker and Cllr Maxine Webb as the the Councillors who had called the the decision in. They outlined their reasons for having done so. They asked questions of Cllr John Fisher (Cabinet Member for Children's Services) and of the officers that were present for the consideration of this item.
- 8.4 Those Cllrs who had called in the item asked the Committee to consider their concerns around the consultation process and the mechanisms of the underlying strategy. Cllr Mike Smith Clare introduced Susan Madden a Norfolk Foster Carer who advised the committee of the following:
- There was disappointment from foster carers that the consultation process had not been properly constituted and as a result foster carers had felt undervalued and poorly treated.
  - Fosters carers undertook their role to look after children but to do so they should not be financially disadvantaged in any way.
  - Work was in progress nationally to propose that foster carers were recognised as employees rather than being consider self-employed. This would enable them to receive the national living wage.
  - The foster carers' home was considered a workplace as various Health and Safety checks and other inspections had to take place on a regular basis.
  - The Covid 19 pandemic had brought about many extra challengers for foster carers who had coped well despite the additional pressures and no extra finance.
  - Foster Carers were experiencing spiralling living costs which was impacting the need to provide a stable home and environment for children to recover and progress in their lives. The new proposals were considered to be a risk for carers to enable them to provide security and stability required for fostered children. It was thought inappropriate to suggest to foster carers that they should claim benefits to make up any shortfall in income following the introduction of the new payment structure.
  - The proposals were thought to be risky as some foster carers may be forced to withdraw their services or consider early retirement. Others may transfer to foster agencies (Independent Fostering Agency – IFA) which will increase the cost of fostering children to Children's Services.
  - Those carers leaving the system would need to be replaced and recruitment was difficult, with training taking many months. The shortfall of carers could be met from IFAs but this increased costs to the department and would also leave more children in undesirable situations such as children's homes.

- If numbers of foster carers fell due to the proposals this would also place a strain on the respite care service which could push more carers into caring fatigue and possible withdrawal from the sector.
- Eight carers had already expressed a wish to transfer to an IFA since the announcement of the proposals, some carers had already left the sector although this number was very small, it was thought others were considering their options.
- The new pay proposals did not accurately reflect the withdrawal of a payment for the first child, if additional children were placed. This means foster carers would see a drop in income of £6,000 a year regardless of whether more than 1 child was fostered.
- Foster carers had budgeted their current placements based on the existing payment system (level 5 fee income) and reductions in income had not been anticipated. Over 50% of foster carers would see a reduction in their income under the new proposals.
- Only 5% of placements would be eligible for the level 5 fee income as only 5% of children are in the higher needs category.
- Kinship carers had remained on the same payment level for the past 18 months and have been advised that they would not be able to progress beyond level 3.
- Current advertising of foster carers from the County Council was still reflecting the existing income structure despite the Council knowing these changes were about to be implemented.

8.5

- Following the evidence provided by the call-in author, supporting members and Mrs Madden, the Chair introduced the Cabinet Member and Officers to respond. The Cabinet Member for Children's Services and Executive Director thanked Mrs Madden for her comments and these had been noted. In addition, they advised that the new proposals were designed to provide a more fair and equitable fee structure to all foster carers and that consultation had taken place and was extended by a further two weeks.
- A presentation was undertaken ([available on the committee's website pages](#)) by the Director and Assistant Director of Children's Social Care to respond to issues raised.

8.6

In reply to questions from both the members that had called the decision in, and the wider committee, the Cabinet Member and the officers present advised:

- Consultation had taken place, although a response as to whether this met the national guidelines of consultation with foster carers would be provided after the meeting.
- Evidence had been gathered that the new proposals were both competitive and attractive and that this should aid recruitment of foster carers. The new package available also concentrated on support, learning and training, as well as pay and was considered a valuable resource to encourage more people to foster.



- It was not intended for carers to rely on benefits. The proposals highlighted the support that could be given to ensure all appropriate benefits were considered and received. The service would work with Department of Work and Pensions to ensure that any foster carer would not be subject to job search reviews. This was enshrined in law for foster carers.
- The co-production of the proposals with foster carers was something that was desirable, although it was regrettable that the foster carers advisory panel had declined to be involved. The panel had indicated that there was some confusion as to what was going to be discussed. The department was and always has been keen to work closely with foster carers.
- The consultation period had been extended by a further 2 weeks although how this extension was communicated was unclear and details would be made available after the meeting.
- The review of the fee scales and payments for foster carers had been started in 2018 although no formal proposals arose and any further work was subsequently delayed by the arrival of the Covid 19 pandemic. Once pressures had eased from the pandemic the review work continued.
- The proposals were not considered by the People and Communities committee as there was insufficient time to ensure momentum was maintained, but instead were placed on the agenda for Corporate Board, although it was acknowledged that members do not see the minutes of the Board.
- The last review was undertaken in 1993 and it had been the department's desire to undertake a review for some time. Some adjustments over the subsequent period would have been necessary due to legislative and guideline changes.
- The use of the Value Care Tool (VCT) was to establish the needs of the child and not to establish the payment structure for the foster carer. All local authorities undertake a review of a child's needs using the same or similar tools.
- The department was keen to establish the new proposals so that urgent and complex needs arising could be addressed as quickly as possible. It was acknowledged that the pandemic had created pressures which needed to be addressed.
- Initially, responses from the new proposals had been encouraging with many more carers thinking about additional placements and new recruitment had not seen any impact in terms of a reduction of numbers coming forward.
- Risk assessments had been undertaken with regard to the new proposals however early indications did not show a significant number wishing to resign or transfer to an IFA.

8.7 It was then moved and duly seconded that the Committee refer the decision back to Cabinet and in doing so recommended the following advisory points were considered:

1. Any reassessment of a child's needs should not adversely affect the payments to the foster carer by reduction of need.
2. All existing placements that would be adversely impacted by the new policy should continue at the same level of payment until the placement ends to provide certainty for the foster carer.
3. The new proposals should be re-examined by **either** an in house **or** independent legal team to ensure nothing has been missed or overlooked to ensure Norfolk County Council's position as an innovator of progressive change is robust.
4. To consider an informal peer review by other relevant local authorities to help spot or advise on unforeseen consequences or changes that would need to be addressed.
5. To establish a rolling programme of review so that fosters carers are aware of when and how changes to fees and allowances are considered and implemented. The programme should also address the governance framework of the review and clearly set out the consultation process and the governance components that would be involved.

**On being put to the vote the motion was unanimously CARRIED on a show of hands**

The committee took a 10 minute break and reconvened at 11.50am

## **9 Call in of Multiple Decisions Associated with the Norwich Western Link.**

- 9.1 The annexed report (9) related to the call-in of multiple Cabinet decisions of 7 March 2022 concerning issues relating to the Norwich Western Link Road. It had been agreed by the Chair to take these items together.
- 9.2 The Chair explained the way in which he would handle this item to best ensure a fair and balanced scrutiny process and to decide what (if any) issues the Committee would refer to the Cabinet. The options that were available to the Committee were set out in the report.
- 9.3 The Chair welcomed to the meeting, Cllr Dan Roper and Cllr Terry Jermy as the Councillors who had called in the item. They explained the reasons for having done so. They asked questions of Cllr Martin Wilby (Cabinet Member for Highways, Infrastructure and Transport) and of the officers that were present for the consideration of this item.
- 9.4 Those Cllrs who had called in the item advised that the call-in would not be based on discussions that had already taken place with regards to the merits of the NWL project. However, concerns were raised at the risks of delivery associated with the project and the way in which those risks were being managed. In particular, the call in councillors raised the following issues:

- Risk RM033 of the corporate risk register highlights the risk associated with non-delivery of the scheme. This risk rating had remained the same for some time despite significant inflationary pressures having arisen.
- Costs for the scheme could rise because of delays to the implementation, the need to consider route alignment to avoid bat disturbance and the increase in inflation(especially for the construction sector), that was running many percentage points higher than the Consumer Prices Index.
- The risk register states that 85% of funding for the scheme will come from the Department of Transport (DfT) and as costs increase the amount allocated by DfT will provide a lesser percentage of the total funds required. There was uncertainty as to whether the Council had adequate contingency plans to bridge any shortfall.
- If the project goes over budget the consequences could see a reduction in the revenue funding allocated to essential services in the future. This was considered a risk to the whole council and not just an individual department. The report to Cabinet projected an inflationary allowance of £2.9m, although it was felt this figure may have already doubled.
- The councillors questioned when the tipping point would be reached for such a significant rerouting of the road that subsequently meant the Outline Business Case (OBC) for the scheme would require resubmission. In addition, if the 85% of funding has been agreed from DfT, this would lead to 100% of new costs, arising from delays, to be funded by the Council.
- There was uncertainty as to why the OBC had been submitted before details of the re-routing were known. The bats resident in the pathway of the scheme had been acknowledged for a long time but the OBC submission wasn't delayed.
- It was assumed that shortfalls in funding would be met from borrowing, although the details around these additional costs was missing from the Cabinet report. The Councillors requested clarity on how the shortfall would be met and what risk mitigation was in place.
- The cabinet papers in March had been promised to provide much more detail and update, however it appeared that it just referred matters to the report to cabinet due in June 2022.
- It was felt that the risk of non-delivery by failure to obtain planning permission was not covered within the corporate risk register and in addition the legal advice around this risk had not been seen by members.
- The cabinet paper also did not cover sufficiently the number of re-routes of the road now being considered and the costs and risks associated with each variant.

9.5 Following the evidence provided by the call-in author and supporting members, the Chair introduced the Cabinet Member and Officers to respond. The Cabinet Member for Highways, Infrastructure and Transport thanked the councillors for their questions and advised that the reason for the cabinet report in March was to provide an update to members and all stakeholders as to the current position of the

scheme. It was acknowledged that some details were not available when the report was written but these would be included in the June report. It was normal for a project of this size and complexity to experience delays and the route alignment work and the bat survey data will come forward in May ready for the June cabinet meeting. The cabinet report in March reflected a desire for the Council to be as open and transparent as possible and to provide what detail it could as early as possible rather than waiting for all details to be ready for submission.

The Executive Director for Community and Environment added that it should be acknowledged just how complex the project was with such a large scheme. It was imperative that the Council did everything properly as the project will come under examination at a public enquiry and it would be essential that everything was in place to ensure it did not fail at that stage. Conversations were being held with DfT about construction inflation to ascertain their view on how this effects projects currently going through the design process. It was felt that a new OBC is unlikely at this stage. Whilst the best and most robust legal advice was always obtained there was a balance between delivery of the project and sharing legal advice widely.

9.6 In reply to questions the Cabinet Member and the officers present advised:

- The fixing of the 85% cap of funding from DfT would only be take place once approval of the scheme had been determined and that dialogue was still ongoing with DfT, especially around inflationary pressures.
- The bat surveys are a continual responsibility, and several surveys would be required throughout the life of the project. There was also an added complication that these needed to be undertaken seasonally.
- Work was ongoing concerning the realignment of the route and options and associated costs would be available in the Cabinet report due for June 2022.
- The ongoing dialogue with DfT would determine any need to resubmit the OBC and whether inflationary costs would be met or mitigated against. This position will be known by June 2022.
- Current spend on the project was in the region of £19m and this spend was being offset by the general (unearmarked reserve). The Executive Director for Finance & Commercial Services said that in absolute terms any spending on the project above the balance of the general reserve, before funding had been secured from DfT, would be a matter for reconsideration.
- The dialogue with DfT was favourable and there was considerable confidence that funding for the scheme would be obtained. A letter had been received from Transport East who fully supported the scheme and its objectives, although it was acknowledged that generally government funding was being squeezed by inflationary pressures.
- A risk allowance of £40m had been placed in to the OBC but this would be reviewed in the June 2022 report.
- All local authorities use capital reserves, both earmarked and general, to offset risks for non-delivery of such large schemes and that it was unreasonable for councils to ring fence funding and reserves for schemes of

this nature and due to the amounts involved would result in projects not happening.

- It was felt the amber rating in the risk register was a fair reflection of where the project was currently sitting.
- The planning process does involve looking at alternative routes with a view to ascertain why the preferred route is considered as the first option.
- The final position on costs will not be known until after the planning process and public enquiry has finished. At this point, with all costs known the Council would be in a position to award the contract for construction.

The Chair was able at this point to advise members of the inflationary percentages assumed for the project that had been detailed in the OBC.

The Chair advised that each call in would be considered and voted on individually.

- 9.7 It was then moved and duly seconded that the Committee refer the decision (12. *Highways Capital Programme 2022/23/24 and Transport Asset Management Plan*) back to Cabinet to provide details in the public domain of the purpose of the NWL allocation in the Highways capital budget and how the issues outlined in the report that affect the scheme have been factored into the allocation

**On being put to the vote the motion was LOST on a show of hands**

**It was then RESOLVED on a show of hands**

**That the Committee notes the call in but takes no further action.**

- 9.8 It was then moved and duly seconded that the Committee refer the decision (14. *Norwich Western Link Update Cabinet RESOLVED to note the work undertaken to progress the NWL and the plan for a further update report to be presented to its meeting on 6 June 2022*) back to Cabinet to explain:
1. Why the contract was let without information on a known major issue that could affect the route
  2. Ask cabinet to put in place precautionary measures to protect the council budget
  3. Clarify issues that will be addressed in detail in the June report to cabinet

**On being put to the vote the motion was LOST on a show of hands**

**It was then RESOLVED on a show of hands**

**That the Committee notes the call in but takes no further action.**

- 9.9 It was then moved and duly seconded that the Committee refer the decision (18. *Risk Management Cabinet RESOLVED: 1. To consider and agree the key messages in paragraphs 2.1 and 2.2 and Appendix A containing key changes to corporate risks since the last risk management report in December 2021. 2. To consider and agree the corporate risks as at March 2022 (Appendix C)*) back to Cabinet to:
1. review the description of the risk and fully set out the requirement to provide all information about risks and

2. clarify with the agreed or an amended approved risk description, how mitigation would be structured and the scale of the consequential risks to other services.

**On being put to the vote the motion was LOST on a show of hands**

**It was then RESOLVED on a show of hands**

**That the Committee notes the call in but takes no further action.**

**10 Call in of Cabinet Member Delegated Decision: Norwich – Ipswich Road – Active Travel Fund**

The annexed report (10) related to the call-in of Cabinet Member Delegated decision of 7 March 2022 concerning issues relating to the Ipswich Road Active Travel Fund. The Chair explained the way in which he would handle this item to best ensure a fair and balanced scrutiny process and to decide what (if any) issues the Committee would refer to the Cabinet. The options that were available to the Committee were set out in the report.

10.1 The Chair welcomed to the meeting, Cllr Emma Corlett the Councillor , the call-in author, who who outlined the reasons behind calling the decision in. She asked questions of Cllr Martin Wilby (Cabinet Member for Highways, Infrastructure and Transport) and of the officers that were present for the consideration of this item.

10.2 Cllr Corlett advised that, in deciding to call-in the decision she had considered;

- Of the 2 options available to the Cabinet Member (either option A or B) the chosen option B was inconsistent with the Local Transport Plan policies. In addition, option B was not proportionate to the views of all stakeholders, as too much weight was placed to 3% of road users.
- Cllr Corlett also felt that the decision contravened wider policy areas including Gear Change the council's own cycling and walking strategy.
- Option A was also the recommended option from officers detailed in the report and extensive consultation had been carried out by local members with their residents who had expressed a preference for option A.
- In a meeting with stakeholders, in which officers were present, both Town House School and City College did not believe that option B would allay any of the concerns raised and that the School believed that the additional parking facilities provided under option B would not be used. This additional parking did disrupt the aims of the policies and the scheme generally as previously mentioned.
- The correspondence from the Norwich Cycling Campaign, although circulated to committee members before the meeting in January 2022, was not discussed and it was felt not proper consideration had been given to this vital stakeholder.

- 10.3 Following the evidence provided by the call-in author, the Chair introduced the Cabinet Member and Officers to respond. The Cabinet Member for Highways, Infrastructure and Transport thanked Cllr Corlett for her questions and advised that the scheme first came to the committee in October 2021 at which it was agreed that officers should look at whether any viable alternatives options could be produced. An alternative (option B) was produced and presented to the committee at the January 2022 meeting. Option A was the original option. The committee were equally split as to what option they preferred and after having read all reports and listened to the discussion he made his decision to proceed with option B.
- 10.4 In response to questions the Cabinet Member and Officers present advised:
- Option A was the original option but following consultation and with a view to addressing concerns raised option B was produced. Both options were viable and met both local and national policy guidelines and objectives, although option A does have the greatest compliance to the objectives.
  - During consultation discussions with the school and City College, the school did have concerns about the drop off and pick up arrangements with Option B, although these comments had been made on behalf of the school and not parents.
  - The Cabinet Member confirmed that he had not been lobbied or had any representation made to him by the school or parents.
  - The Cabinet Member reiterated his thought process in that having read the reports, listened to both feedback from the consultations and from members during the committee meeting he had opted for option B.
  - Officers had worked extensively with both City College and Town House School who both had travel plans to encourage use of cycling, walking and public transport to access their premises. However, because of the catchment area for the school in particular, many pupils travelled long distances to the school and the majority of children, especially those of pre school age, would arrive by car. It would be difficult to change the travel plans of that cohort of parents.
  - The letter from Norwich Cycling Campaign referred to the removal of a cycle lane, however this cycle lane was not an existing lane, but one that would be created within Option A.
  - Government policy was designed to create segregated cycle lanes from moving traffic so switching the road use during different times of the day would not meet the policy guidelines.
- 10.5 It was then moved and duly seconded that the Committee refer the decision back to the Cabinet Member to review decision and approve option A so that it is consistent with National and Local Government policy and legislation, Norfolk County Council policies and strategies, Local Member feedback and engagement with residents, based on the information provided to date and the details discussed at the meeting today.

**On being put to the vote the motion was LOST on a show of hands**

**It was then RESOLVED on a show of hands**

**That the Committee notes the call in but takes no further action.**

**11 Scrutiny Committee Forward Work Programme**

11.1 The annexed report (11) was received.

11.2 The Democratic Support and Scrutiny Manager drew Councillors attention to changes in the work programme which included the timetable up to June 2022.

**11.3 RESOLVED**

**That the Committee:**

- **Note the revised forward work programme as set out in the appendix to the report.**

The meeting concluded at 2.08 pm

**Cllr S Morphew - Chair**





## Scrutiny Committee

Minutes of the Meeting Held on 30 March 2022  
at 10 am at County Hall Norwich

### Present:

Cllr Steve Morpew (Chair)

Cllr Lana Hemsall (Vice Chair)

Cllr Carl Annison

Cllr Lesley Bambridge

Cllr Graham Carpenter

Cllr Phillip Duigan

Cllr Mark Kiddle-Morris

Cllr Kay Mason Billig

Cllr Ed Maxfield

Cllr Jamie Osborn

Cllr Brian Watkins

### Parent Governor representative

Mr Giles Hankinson

### Also present (who took a part in the meeting):

Craig Chalmers

Cllr Daniel Elmer

Cllr John Fisher

Cllr Shelagh Gurney

Director of Community Social Work

Deputy Cabinet Member for Children's Services

Cabinet Member for Children's Services

Deputy Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, Public Health & Prevention

Jonathan Hall

Karen Haywood

Kat Hulatt

Rebecca Hulme

Committee Officer

Democratic Services Manager

Head of Legal Services

Associate Director for Children, Young People and Maternity  
Norfolk and Waveney Clinical Commissioning Group

Rebecca Mann

Head of Integration and Alliance, Children and Young People's  
Mental Health Norfolk and Waveney Clinical Commissioning  
Group

Kelly Semper

Children and Young People Mental Health Programme Manager  
Norfolk and Waveney Clinical Commissioning Group

James Wilson

Director of Quality & Transformation Children's Services

### 1. Apologies for Absence and related issues

- 1.1 Apologies were received from Mrs Julie O'Connor (Church Representative), Cllr Keith Kiddie and Cllr Richard Price (Cllr Kay Mason Billig was substituting)

- 1.2 It was also noted that Rebecca Hulme, Rebecca Mann and Kelly Semper would be joining today's meeting remotely via Microsoft Teams.

## **2. Declarations of Interest**

- 2.1 There were no declarations of interest,

## **3 Urgent Business**

- 3.1 No urgent business was discussed.

## **4. Public Question Time**

- 5.1 There were no public questions.

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

- 5.1 There were no local member issues/questions.

## **6 Call In**

- 6.1 The Chair advised that item 6: Call in of Decision by the Norfolk Parking Partnership: Finance Update, had been dropped from the agenda. Kat Hulatt, Head of Legal Services advised the item had been dropped with the agreement of the Chair, Vice Chair and councillors who had called the item in. A Cabinet Member decision would be undertaken and published and would be subject to call in within the usual 5 day period.

## **7 Mental Health Services for Children and Young People**

- 7.1 The annexed report (7) was received and noted.
- 7.2 The report provided an update on Mental Health Services for Children and Young People as part of the work programme agreed in 2021, and included an introduction to the service, an outline of partnership working arrangements and how moving out of the pandemic the delivery of services and key challenges would be addressed.
- 7.3 The Committee discussed, received answers to questions and considered the following:
- The level of need in the system is high and has increased significantly due to the pandemic.
  - Whilst individuals were waiting to receive treatment, a number of services, especially from the voluntary sector, were available to provide support and guidance.
  - Early intervention of treatment was required as a long-term goal to help make the service provision more manageable and sustainable. A leaflet had been produced giving details to signpost individuals and their parents to the help they could access outside of the NHS.
  - The Cabinet Member reflected that much progress had been made over the past 6 months with the new teams and roles taking shape.
  - There was a large programme of work being undertaken with both Primary Care providers and schools who often see and can spot the first early symptoms of mental health difficulties in children and young people particularly around eating disorders.

- An integrated front door was being developed by the key stakeholders in the provision of services to provide a digital platform that will guide and support individuals as they present with symptoms or seek help. It was hoped this would be available from late 2022.
- The clinical team behind the Integrated front door had already been recruited and can offer support to the helpline of which over 4000 calls are made every month.
- Transition from young people's services (aged 25 and under) was carefully managed, working with colleagues in adult services commission - although there were not hard edges to the transition, especially for eating disorders where an all-age strategy was currently in development.
- It was thought that the pandemic had increased the level of acuity when individuals first present with symptoms as earlier signs could normally be spotted at schools and other social activities which had ceased during lockdowns.
- Disordered eating was now a major symptom for referral as opposed to the more recognised disorders such as anorexia and bulimia. This has increased significantly since the pandemic.
- There was a programme of prevention in progress to talk about eating disorders with schools and colleges. Healthy eating and lifestyle choices were also part of the national curriculum in schools to help promote prevention.
- It was acknowledged that all have a role to play in helping and supporting young people from parents, through to schools and other youth organisations as well as primary care providers.
- Historically, mental health had not been as well funded as physical health. Although there had been levelling up of funding more recently, it still lags behind but the critical targets of increases in proportionate spend had been achieved within Norfolk and Waveney CCG. The investment in long term goals such as early prevention was critical to ensuring funding stays proportionate to the numbers requiring treatment.
- Whilst the direction of travel was felt to be positive, it was acknowledged that much work in reducing waiting times and receiving treatment was required.
- Norfolk has a waiting list of over 3900 which, when benchmarked against the national average, was around 800 more patients requiring help. It was recognised that higher referral numbers sometimes are not necessarily an indicator of poor performance and that higher detection rates were good.
- A child is four times more likely to present with mental health issues if their parents have also done likewise. It was noted that sometimes an intergenerational need was required.
- Whilst there were key targets and goals to reach, the service was realistically always within a period of transformation as needs and demands change and fluctuate. There was a desire to continually enhance and improve services to the end that all children can meet the [County Council's Children's Services 'Flourish'](#) aims.
- The Council and the CCG worked closely together to co-develop policies and services to meet the needs of the children and families.

The Chair acknowledged at this point that the committee needed to take care to ensure there wasn't an obvious overlap with the Health & Overview Scrutiny Committee (HOSC), as outlined in the papers, and that boundaries should not be crossed as both committees work closely together but don't scrutinise the same subject areas.

- Working with Rethink Partners, feedback was obtained and as a result a model

called participation in the social recovery has been developed to continue to receive live feedback from service users. This feedback has helped shape future services.

- The CCG would encourage the County Council to sign up to the Children and Young People's Mental Health Charter.
- The Cabinet Member for Children's Services advised the charter will shortly be considered by Cabinet.
- The CCG has committed to working more actively and to commission services from the voluntary sector to help improve services and the flow of information.
- A request was made for the members to receive benchmark national figures against the data provided in the report so meaningful comparison could be made.

The Chair thanked all those who had taken part in the discussion and suggested a way forward for the committee to consider.

7.4 The Committee **agreed** to:

1. Refer the future scrutiny of Mental Health Services for Children and Young People to the Health and Overview Scrutiny Committee (HOSC) and ensure that capacity is determined to place this item on HOSC's forward work programme.
2. To request that the Peoples and Communities Select committee consider the Children and Young People's Mental Health Charter.
3. Consider whether the Performance Review Panel would have a role to play in the future assessment of the Charter.

## 8 **Performance Review Panels – 6 Month Review**

8.1 The annexed report (8) was received.

8.2 Cllrs Elmer and Gurney, the chairs of the panels, were present to answer questions about the performance review panels meetings and the actions that were being taken as a result of the issues raised. Cllr Elmer advised the committee that his panel relating to Children's Services was set up on the basis of monitoring data from the vital sign indicators already in place and undertaking a deep dive analysis as to when the data reflected a significant under or over performance.

8.3 The Committee discussed, received answers to questions and considered the following:

### Children's Services

- The deep dive topics have been selected by the members of the panel, however, Cllr Elmer indicated that he was open to suggestions from any member as to what topic they might like to examine.
- Some topics had been broken down into smaller sections to ensure sufficient time had been allocated to every element of the topic.
- Cllr Elmer said he was not opposed to the meetings being held in public; however he was unsure as to whether the current Terms of Reference would allow such a move.
- There was a backlog of Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCP)

outstanding, and the position was recognised as a countrywide issue brought about by a lack of child psychologists.

- The headline figure for vital signs indicators was not always a reflection on the service and that by undertaking a deep dive the panel could better appreciate the nuances of an issue and the complexities surrounding it
- The Chair did not believe the sale of Holt Hall was an issue directly for the panel, but they could look at the performance of outdoor learning per se.
- Members were not appointed as party political representatives on the panel although it was acknowledged in terms of feedback there was no Independent or Green councillor on either panel.
- The chair was open to other members, not appointed to the panel, to join the meeting and observe as well as emailing him between meetings if they had questions or matters that they wished to raise.
- The monitoring of home-schooled children was an issue that members were keen to establish further details and information about, particularly as it was felt this is an issue an Ofsted would consider.
- It was thought the circulation of the panel's forward work programme would open-up discussion and comment generally for the panel to consider in due course.
- The chair advised that outcomes from the panel would be addressed formally through committees such as People and Communities Select to develop and strengthen policy. Informally, discussions directly with the Cabinet Member may, in the first instance, provide a solution for the panel to consider at a later point.
- It was thought important to also consider topics that had over performed so that any best practice lessons could be learnt and maybe transferred to other areas.
- Clearer and simpler information was required in future reports to help members identify issues examined, actions taken and resulting outcomes.

### Adult Social Care

Cllr Gurney advised that her panel was starting from a different base position to Children's Services as inspections to the Adult Social Care department had not taken place for over 10 years and preparation for such activity was circumspect. A more detailed report had been provided than previously and although minutes to the panel meetings were not included in the bundle to members, these could be provided upon request. The Chair also advised she was directly engaging with a local group called 'Making it Real' who were providing very candid and useful feedback.

- In response to the issue examined at the last panel meeting concerning Swifts and Night Owls, leaflets and quick access information cards had been produced for distribution by Swifts and Night Owls themselves at the last full council meeting on 28<sup>th</sup> March 2022 to all attendees as it was thought that many members did not know that this vital free service existed.
- Intelligence is being gathered from other local authorities and professional bodies as to what is being examined at inspection and what processes are involved. This preparation work should help when inspectors do eventually arrive.
- Members of the panel have had to quickly understand some significant changes to services such as the Discharge to Assess process (D2A). Officers had welcomed the 'fresh pair of eyes' approach to challenge them to improve services.

- Deep dive assessment of the issues is vital to getting behind the headline data to ensure all angles are examined and all solutions considered. Members had engaged positively with the process.
- The Deputy Cabinet Member advised that she had regular updates with officers and weekly meetings with the Cabinet Member responsible to update on progress.
- Public awareness of the panel could be improved by further promotion, although considering the remit of the panel, public involvement may dilute the work of the panel, and if so then this was something to be avoided.
- The Chair indicated input from Member Champions would be welcomed.

8.4 The Chair thanked, on behalf of the committee, both Cllr Elmer and Gurney for their attendance and for their work to date on their respective panels.

The committee **agreed** to:

- note the reports and the ongoing work to monitor service performance.
- ask the panels to consider how they might be more open and transparent without it detracting from the vital work it undertook.
- request future reports to be clearer and simpler to help identify issues raised, actions proposed and outcomes achieved.

## **9 Update from the Chair of the Norfolk Countywide Community Safety Partnership (NCCSP) Scrutiny Sub Panel.**

9.1 The Committee received a report (9) which provided an update on the Safer Norfolk Plan 2021-24. The Panel had met once on 24 February 2022 since the last update received by the committee. The December meeting had been cancelled due to Covid restrictions.

9.2 The Committee **agreed** to endorse the report and the progress being made by the Scrutiny Sub Panel.

## **10 Scrutiny Committee Forward Work Programme**

10.1 The annexed report (10) was received and noted.

The meeting concluded at 1.21pm

**Chair**

**Cllr Steve Morphew**

# Scrutiny Committee

Item No: 8

**Report Title:** Better Together for Norfolk: Delivering our Strategy

**Date of Meeting:** 20 April 2022

**Responsible Cabinet Member:** Cllr Andrew Proctor (Leader and Cabinet Member for Strategy & Governance)

**Responsible Director:** Paul Cracknell (Executive Director of Strategy and Transformation)

## Executive Summary

At the Cabinet Meeting held on the 4 April 2022, Members approved the 2022-23 Corporate Delivery Plan (appendix A), outlining critical activity and key areas of focus for the next performance year. This report supports the Scrutiny Committee in its role to support delivery of items that form part of the Council's Policy Framework, providing challenge and oversight to ensure progress is made against strategic priorities and targets.

## Recommendations

The committee is asked to:

1. Consider the attached Cabinet report and the 2022-23 Corporate Delivery Plan, providing feedback and recommendations to officers where appropriate.
2. Consider the role of the Scrutiny Committee moving forward with regards to supporting delivery of the Better Together, for Norfolk 2021-2025 strategy, discussing arrangements for further challenge and oversight.

## 1. Background and Purpose

- 1.1. Norfolk County Council formally adopted the new strategy [Better Together, for Norfolk 2021-2025](#) at the Full Council meeting held on the 29<sup>th</sup> November 2021. The papers, minutes and associated documents for this meeting can be found [here](#).
- 1.2. The Strategy outlines five strategic priorities. These are:
  - A Vibrant and Sustainable Economy

- Better Opportunities for Children and Young People
  - Healthy, Fulfilling and Independent Lives
  - Strong, Engaged and Inclusive Communities
  - A Greener, More Resilient Future
- 1.3. When adopted, the publication also set out a commitment to provide a number of further products to support delivery of the above strategic priorities. This included an annual, rolling Corporate Delivery Plan, a public facing document which contains an overview of the critical activity that will contribute to delivery of the strategy, and the key areas of focus for the next performance year. All activity contained in the Corporate Delivery Plan sits within each Department and performance is reviewed in accordance with Governance options described in Section 6.
  - 1.4. At the Cabinet Meeting held on 4 April 2022, Members agreed the appended 2022-23 Corporate Delivery Plan (appendix A). The minutes and associated papers for this meeting, including the summary of decisions notice can be found [here](#).
  - 1.5. The Scrutiny Committee plays an important role in the delivery of items that form part of the Council's Policy Framework, providing challenge and oversight to ensure progress is made against key strategic priorities and targets. The Council Strategy sits within this framework, with the Corporate Delivery Plan forming part of the implementation planning, the detail of which sits with the individual departments responsible for each individual activity or programme of work.
  - 1.6. Some scrutiny activity has already taken place to date with regards to the *Better Together, for Norfolk 2021-2025* strategy since adoption in November 2021, with the committee work programme reformatted to highlight the Scrutiny Committee's role in overall delivery of the County Council's strategic priorities.
  - 1.7. This paper represents the next step in this process, providing an opportunity for the Scrutiny Committee to provide oversight and challenge to the Corporate Delivery Plan – reviewing underpinning activity as it progresses to ensure it delivers against the priorities set out in the Council strategy.
  - 1.8. This is a fairly broad document, providing a high-level overview of activity across all service areas and aligned to the strategic priorities. Members are asked to review the appended Cabinet report/Corporate Delivery plan and consider the role of the Scrutiny Committee with regards to providing challenge and oversight to the Council Strategy, and the practical arrangements moving forward. This should be considered when the Committee pulls together a new forward work programme following the Council AGM in May 2022.

## 2. Evidence and Reasons for Decision

- 2.1 The Scrutiny Committee has a duty to support delivery of items that form part of the Council's Policy Framework, providing challenge and oversight to ensure progress is made against strategic priorities and targets.



### **3. Alternative Options**

3.1 Highlighted in appended report.

### **4. Financial Implications**

4.1 Highlighted in appended report.

### **5. Resource Implications**

#### **5.1 Staff:**

Highlighted in appended report.

#### **7.2 Property:**

Highlighted in appended report.

#### **7.3 IT:**

Highlighted in appended report.

### **6. Other Implications**

#### **6.1 Legal Implications:**

Highlighted in the appended report.

#### **6.2 Human Rights Implications:**

Highlighted in the appended report.

#### **6.3 Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) (this must be included):**

Highlighted in the appended report.

#### **6.4 Data Protection Impact Assessments (DPIA):**

Highlighted in the appended report.

#### **6.5 Health and Safety implications (where appropriate):**

Highlighted in the appended report.

## **6.6 Sustainability implications (where appropriate):**

Highlighted in the appended report.

## **6.7 Any Other Implications:**

None identified.

## **7. Risk Implications / Assessment**

7.1 Highlighted in appended report.

## **8. Select Committee Comments**

8.1 Highlighted in appended report

## **9. Recommendations**

The committee is asked to:

- 1. Consider the attached Cabinet report and the 2022-23 Corporate Delivery Plan, providing feedback and recommendations to officers where appropriate.**
- 2. Consider the role of the Scrutiny Committee moving forward with regards to supporting delivery of the Better Together, for Norfolk 2021-2025 strategy, discussing arrangements for further challenge and oversight.**

## **10. Background Papers**

10.1 Appendix A – Better Together, for Norfolk 2021-25 – Delivering our Strategy

### **Officer Contact**

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

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**Telephone no.:** 01603 307570

**Email:** Peter.randall@norfolk.gov.uk



If you need this report in large print, audio, braille, alternative format or in a different language please contact 0344 800 8020 or 0344 800 8011 (textphone) and we will do our best to help.

# County Council

Item No: 8a

**Report Title:** *Better Together, for Norfolk 2021-2025* – delivering our strategy

**Date of Meeting:** 4 April 2022

**Responsible Cabinet Member:** Cllr Andrew Proctor (Leader and Cabinet Member for Strategy & Governance)

**Responsible Director:** Paul Cracknell, Executive Director for Strategy & Transformation

**Is this a key decision:** Yes

**If this is a key decision, date added to the Forward Plan of Key Decisions:** 2 February 2022

## Executive Summary

On 29 November 2021, Norfolk County Council formally adopted the new strategy [\*Better Together, for Norfolk 2021-2025\*](#) as part of its policy framework. The strategy builds on the vision and ambitions set out in our 2019 corporate plan and has been updated to reflect the needs and priorities for Norfolk as we emerge from the pandemic.

The publication of the strategy also set out a commitment to develop a number of products that will contribute to the delivery of our strategic priorities, more specifically:

- An annual, rolling Corporate Delivery Plan, to contain critical activities that will contribute to the delivery of our strategy and the key areas of focus for the next performance year.
- A refreshed Communication strategy, to ensure effective and targeted communications with our residents and stakeholders across local, regional and national systems.
- A refreshed Workforce strategy, to ensure the Council has people with the skills, knowledge and experience required to achieve its strategic objectives and respond to current and future challenges.

At their meeting on 31 January 2022, Cabinet approved the proposed approach, structure and content of the draft Corporate Delivery Plan. Since then, the plan has been updated, as appropriate, to ensure it reflects any changes in policy, activity or timescales (for example, the publication of the Levelling Up White Paper on 2 February 2022 confirming Norfolk's opportunity to bid for a County Deal).

The purpose of this report is to seek Cabinet’s approval of the 2022/23 the Corporate Delivery Plan, and to provide an update on the progress being made on the Communications and Workforce strategies.

## Recommendations

To:

1. **Approve the 2022/23 Corporate Delivery Plan.**
2. **Provide feedback on the work being done to develop the Communication and Workforce strategies, and the proposed timescale for delivery.**

### 1. Introduction

- 1.1. Norfolk County Council’s strategic framework consists of a number of strategic documents, which set out the Council’s ambitions and priorities, are aligned to the administration’s manifesto pledges, and reflect the national policy and local operating context and challenges. They also ensure that there are clear links between these and operational plans. These documents and plans are underpinned by a Performance Management Framework, which links council activity with performance outcomes and measures at a department, team and individual level.
- 1.2. The process for developing the Council’s strategy [\*\*Better Together, for Norfolk 2021-2025\*\*](#) in the wake of the Covid-19 pandemic, has enabled the Council to reaffirm its vision and ambitions for the County and the Council, and review its strategic priorities. Furthermore, it has created an opportunity for the business planning and performance framework to be reviewed and realigned to the needs of the organisation.
- 1.3. The Council also committed to developing a Workforce strategy and a Communications strategy, as enablers to the delivery of the corporate strategy.

### 2. Better Together, for Norfolk 2021-25

- 2.1. The strategy outlines the Council’s definition of “levelling up” in Norfolk and is structured around these five key strategic and interlinking priorities:
  - **A vibrant and sustainable economy** – this priority is about growing the economy inclusively, so that everyone has opportunities to benefit. It is about growing the skills the County needs and creating high value jobs; drawing down investment; and developing our infrastructure and digital connectivity
  - **Better opportunities for children and young people** – this priority is about raising educational standards and attainment in our County, improving the lives of families and children, and creating better employment opportunities for young people

- **Healthy, fulfilling and independent lives** – this priority focuses on the themes of levelling up health, ensuring people who face disadvantage and poor health can live well, and have access to better services where they live
- **Strong, engaged and inclusive communities** – this priority focuses on improving the relationships between communities and public service provision, so that people and communities are supported, empowered, enabled to help themselves, and have a voice in how services are designed and delivered
- **A greener, more resilient future** – this priority recognises the critical importance of climate change and the environment, as well as the role that our physical and social infrastructure play in creating stronger communities that people can be proud of

2.2. These strategic priorities seek to address challenges and opportunities arising from the pandemic and the government's policy agenda and priorities. They reflect the Council's ambition to support the county to emerge stronger and more sustainable, meet people's needs more effectively, and seize opportunities to embed positive change for the future.

2.3. The strategy will inform what we do within Norfolk County Council as well as beyond and with partners. Internally, it offers the opportunity for the leadership to agree common priorities and objectives, achieve organisational alignment against those, inform our investment choices and form the basis for delivery plans with clear measures of success. Externally, it provides the platform and opportunity for further conversations with our partners and government on how we might work better together to achieve common goals to deliver a better future for Norfolk, for example through a County Deal.

2.4. On 2 February 2022, the government published the long awaited Levelling Up White Paper, containing 4 strategic objectives and 12 missions aimed at addressing and improving geographical inequalities across the UK. The White Paper sets out the policy landscape and initiatives that government will put in place to achieve the 12 missions. One of the key levers of change is a desire to empower local leaders through County Deals to make decisions on a range of issues for the benefit of their residents through devolution of certain powers and associated funding. Norfolk is one of nine counties invited to negotiate an early County Deal under the new published framework, and we will be working with central government on the content of that over the coming months. Achieving a County Deal for Norfolk' is reflected in the overarching strategy and our commitment to 'levelling up Norfolk', and is a specific area of focus on our Corporate Delivery Plan 2022/23.

### 3. NCC Strategic Framework

3.1. At NCC, our strategic framework consists of a number of strategic documents which ensure alignment across the organisation. The latest addition to the framework is the Corporate Delivery Plan, which is described further in the following sections. Briefly, the framework now consists of:

- The Council's **corporate strategy** *Better Together, for Norfolk 2021-25*, which sets out the Council's vision for our county and the council, focuses on mid to long-term goals and explains the basic strategies for achieving them. It is a central part of the policy framework setting out the corporate priorities and outcomes that the council aims to achieve over the next three years and the ethos for doing so.
- The **Corporate Delivery Plan**, which acts as the single business plan for NCC, and sets out the most significant activities which will contribute to the delivery of the outcomes and objectives in our corporate strategy. This is a new element to the planning framework and is described further in the following sections.
- **Cross-cutting priorities**, which will ensure that large-scale activities which affect the whole Council are coordinated across the organisation (e.g. Net Zero, Smarter Working)
- The **Departmental plans**, which are produced by each of our Departments annually and show what they will do to contribute to the achievement of outcomes within the corporate strategy, as well as outlining key operational actions and activities for service delivery.
- The **plans on a page**, which are developed annually at whatever business unit level is deemed appropriate within a department – mostly at Director and Assistant Director level. These plans summarise teams' key priorities and targets for the next performance year and are used to set individual performance goals.
- Finally, the **individual performance goals** contain personal objectives that will help to achieve actions within the relevant department plan, plan on a page and/or the priorities and outcomes in the corporate strategy as appropriate.

## 5. Corporate Delivery Plan 2022/23

- 5.1. In order to have a clear grip and focus on priorities over a period, the Council needs a single whole-council view of key activities.
- 5.2. The Corporate Delivery Plan 2022/23 reflects the council's priorities for the coming year, its response to central government policy, and the Council's transformation programme.
- 5.3. The Plan is structured around our 5 strategic priorities and sets out a narrative of how we will seek to respond to and deliver these priorities, starting with the new financial year. This includes the major programmes and initiatives for the Council over this period as well as how we will respond to political changes and financial pressures.
- 5.4. The Corporate Delivery Plan does not seek to describe everything that the Council does, instead, it focuses on the most significant "big ticket" activities, which:
  - Support the delivery of political ambitions, outcomes and objectives in our strategy
  - Deliver our Medium Term Financial Strategy

- Are business critical

- 5.5. Essential, day-to-day service delivery will continue to be captured in our departmental plans and plans on a page, which will be refreshed in 2022 as part of the 2023/24 budget planning cycle, to ensure alignment with our Medium Term Financial Strategy.
- 5.6. In addition to the 5 strategic priorities in our strategy, the Corporate Delivery Plan also contains a section on Operational Effectiveness, which captures activity aimed at transforming our property, technology, engagement approach, and workforce, to make us the most efficient we can be, ensuring we are on a sustainable financial footing and can offer our residents value for money services.
- 5.7. The implementation detail of activities contained in the Corporate Delivery Plan will continue to sit in departmental plans, programme and project plans and relevant business cases.
- 5.8. The Corporate Delivery Plan is owned by the Leader, Cabinet and Executive Directors. It has been collectively developed with Department Senior Leadership Teams, reflecting Cabinet members' priorities.
- 5.9. The Corporate Delivery Plan is part of the corporate business planning cycle. The Council will report annually against the Corporate Delivery Plan.

## **6. Managing performance**

- 6.1. The launch of our new strategy, the Corporate Delivery Plan, and the reassessment of our strategic priorities and financial challenges, has provided us with the opportunity to review the existing framework, measures and associated management tools, to ensure it is fit for purpose and aligned with our strategy.
- 6.2. Over the past few weeks, a draft of the performance framework has been developed, shaped by the 'Better Together, for Norfolk' strategy and our business planning processes, and following review of our existing management practices. The draft provides an overview of key areas that require further development, much of which centres around developing our culture and accountability organisationally.
- 6.3. Priorities have been shared with Executive Directors to ensure alignment with business requirements, and proposals for the journey moving forward have been endorsed, with a view to enhancing our governance around Performance Management. We continue to work as a Leadership Team on linking in our performance with our strategy outcomes, and as such, the development of the Framework will be in line with planning activities across the year. In the meantime, thought is being given to the implementation of further development of the Corporately Significant Vital Signs Dashboard and our associated Performance Measures.

## **7. NCC Workforce strategy**



- 7.1. A draft of the strategy has been created, influenced by the 'Better Together, for Norfolk' strategy, NCC workforce data and horizon scanning, input from Executive Directors, and testing with the Departmental Management Teams. The draft provides a 'strawman' as agreed with Executive Directors for the themes where there is clear understanding and a consensus about the strategic approach. Gaps remain where a small number of themes require more exploration, development and decision-making by the ED team.
- 7.2. The current draft is ready to be shared with EDs and time has been allocated later in March to receive their comments and to explore and make decisions about the remaining themes. It is anticipated that a complete draft will come to Corporate Select Committee in May 2022. In the meantime thought is being given to implementation planning requirements and how delivery of the workforce strategy will be governed in way that is aligned with other large corporate change initiatives.

## **8. NCC Communications strategy**

- 8.1. The draft new communications strategy is being developed alongside departments to ensure all objectives match the council's ambition for Better Together for Norfolk. This is happening alongside an internal communications approach, so our staff and elected members are clear on, and are advocates for, Better Together for Norfolk in the community.
- 8.2. As laid out previously, aim of the strategy is to create a 'one team' approach working side by side to create a culture with departments that harnesses a more focussed and joined up approach that improves message delivery for service users and shows communication with residents is the responsibility of all officers and elected member. Work has been completed to identify communications roles across the Council which need to be integrated with the central Communications team to ensure this focused and joined up approach. The next steps are to co-ordinate these roles via Four Departmental Communications Groups which are being established with terms of reference and working programmes being created for ED sign off in April.
- 8.3. Work on detailed communications plans, co-produced with our services has begun with a master plan being developed to integrate communication planning across both individual departments and throughout the council.
- 8.4. Work has begun on outlining how the council maximises its communication channels and channels of key stakeholders to maximise effectiveness for both reach and cost.
- 8.5. External partner communications groups have been established or re-established for commonality of message delivery and engagement.
- 8.6. Joint communications roles with partners to maximise effectiveness of delivery have been created with more to follow.
- 8.7. The Communication strategy is expected to be reviewed by the Corporate Select Committee and finalised in the first quarter of the financial year 2022/23.

## 9. Financial Implications

- 9.1. The financial context for the strategy will be set through our annual budget planning process and Medium Term Financial Strategy.

## 10. Resource Implications

10.1. **Staff:** N/A

10.2. **Property:** N/A

10.3. **IT:** N/A

## 11. Other Implications

11.1. **Legal Implications:** N/A

11.2. **Human Rights Implications:** N/A

11.3. **Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) (this must be included):** The Corporate Delivery Plan consolidates projects and business activity required to deliver our strategy ***Better Together, for Norfolk***. Each project will be distinct in its own right, and will have a different level of impact on people with protected characteristics and the armed forces, depending on its nature and focus. All project managers and business leads will therefore be required to ensure that due regard is given to the equality duty in designing, reporting on and delivering their activities. If any negative impacts are identified that cannot be mitigated, these will be reported to Cabinet for determination.

11.4. **Data Protection Impact Assessments (DPIA):** N/A

11.5. **Health and Safety implications (where appropriate):** N/A

11.6. **Sustainability implications (where appropriate):** N/A

11.7. **Any Other Implications:** N/A

## 12. Risk Implications / Assessment

- 12.1. Prioritising key activities, to ensure understanding of and focus on what is absolutely critical within the Council strategy is the major feature of the development of the Corporate Delivery Plan. This prioritisation process provides clarity to staff and our residents about what matters to the Council, and also provides a manageable set of strategic activities for Cabinet and Leadership teams to monitor throughout the year.
- 12.2. The Council maintains a Corporate Risk Register that identifies the most significant corporate and strategic risks. The register contains details of the principal risks to the achievement of the objectives of our strategy. Each of these risks is assessed for likelihood and impact and has a responsible owner and programme of mitigating actions/controls. The register is updated throughout the year and reported quarterly to Cabinet.

## 13. Recommendations

To:

1. Approve the 2022/23 Corporate Delivery Plan.
2. Provide feedback on the work being done to develop the Communication and Workforce strategies, and the proposed timescale for delivery.

## 14. Background Papers

- 14.1. Better Together, for Norfolk 2021-2025
- 14.2. Strategy development and business planning at NCC (page 45)
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# ► **CORPORATE DELIVERY PLAN**

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**2022-23**



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# INTRODUCTION

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**On 29 November 2021, Norfolk County Council adopted the refreshed strategy Better Together, for Norfolk 2021-25 as part of its Council Policy Framework.**

The strategy outlines the Council's definition of "levelling up" in Norfolk and is structured around these five key strategic and interlinking priorities:

- **A vibrant and sustainable economy** – this priority is about growing the economy inclusively, so that everyone has opportunities to thrive. It is about growing the skills the County needs and creating high value jobs; drawing down investment; and developing our infrastructure and digital connectivity
- **Better opportunities for children and young people** – this priority is about raising educational standards and attainment in our County, improving the lives of families and children, and creating better employment opportunities for young people
- **Healthy, fulfilling and independent lives** – this priority focuses on the themes of levelling up health, ensuring people who face disadvantage and poor health can live well, and have access to better services where they live
- **Strong, engaged and inclusive communities** – this priority focuses on improving the relationships between communities and public service provision, so that people and communities are supported, empowered, and enabled to help themselves, and have a voice in how services are designed and delivered
- **A greener, more resilient future** – this priority recognises the critical importance of climate change and the environment, as well as the role that our physical and social infrastructure play in creating stronger communities that people can be proud of

The Council also committed to develop a Corporate Delivery Plan, to provide a whole-Council view of the critical activities that will delivery our strategy as well as our Medium Term Financial Strategy and operational targets.



# OUR CORPORATE DELIVERY PLAN

**In order to have a clear grip and focus on priorities that deliver our strategy and objectives, the Council needs a single whole-council view of key activities.**

The Corporate Delivery Plan will be structured by the 5 strategic priorities outlined in the corporate strategy document and will be focused on NCC's most significant "big ticket" activities, which:

- Support the delivery of the outcomes and objectives in our strategy, and our Medium-Term Financial Strategy
- Are business critical

In the context of the Corporate Delivery Plan, "significant activities" are:

- Areas of significant service activity (e.g. transformational changes in service delivery and business change projects, new services etc.)
- Significant commissioning activities for infrastructure (e.g. highways, property, digital infrastructure) and people services (e.g. children's, adults and public health services)
- Capital delivery (e.g. delivering new education, property and community assets in our capital programme)
- Strategy and policy development (e.g. new strategies, responding to changes in national policy and lobbying)

The Corporate Delivery Plan is not intended as an exhaustive guide of everything we do, but instead provides a clear sense of how the Council will respond to changes in our operating environment to deliver significant activity successfully. Essential day-to-day service delivery continues to be captured in our departmental plans (divisional/service business plans) and plans on a page.

In addition to the 5 strategic priorities in our strategy, the Corporate Delivery Plan also contains a section on Operational Effectiveness, which describes that significant activity which aim to transform the Council - our property, technology, ways of working, engagement,

and workforce. These activities are essential for strategic and corporate services and often require a cross-cutting approach across the Council.

The detail of how and when activity in the Corporate Delivery Plan will be achieved will continue to sit in underpinning documents, such as business cases and programme/project plans.

The plan is owned by the Leader, Cabinet and the Council's Executive Directors. It has been collectively developed with Department Senior Leadership Teams, reflecting Cabinet members' priorities. It is a rolling plan to be updated each year to help the Council to focus on what needs to be delivered over the next short to medium term to improve the quality of life in Norfolk. It is not meant to be only a passive document, instead it is a live document to be reviewed internally quarterly and reported on annually.



# OPERATING CONTEXT

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**Our strategic priorities and the activities outlined in the corporate delivery plan arise from and are influenced by a range of factors, all of which constitute our current operating environment.**

As we move slowly out of the grip of the coronavirus pandemic, our operating environment remains volatile and prone to change. In this document, we outline the key drivers of our operating context as we understand them at the time of writing. These will be reviewed regularly, and the corporate delivery plan updated accordingly, should the need arise.

## **Impact of Covid-19:**

The pandemic has had a significant impact on our economy, our communities and the Council, much of which is ongoing. The local economy has started to recover, making up £3bn of the £4.5bn of Gross Value Added (GVA) lost during the year 2020/21. However, a number of sectors such as food and accommodation, leisure and entertainment, health and social care, agriculture and manufacturing remain more vulnerable to change, the latter two being affected by ongoing disruption to supply chains, and global shortages of key goods. Covid-19 has also highlighted the vulnerability of many groups like people with pre-existing conditions, disabilities or mental health problems, requiring us to work in a more focused way to improve health outcomes for our residents. It has also brought into focus the difficulties of many disadvantaged children and families, with learning severely disrupted, the gap with non-disadvantaged children growing and hardship continuing to affect many people and families.

## **Climate change and Net Zero:**

The momentum on the climate change created by COP26 and the government's Net Zero strategy, as well as the benefits experienced by so many countries over the past 2 years means we must accelerate action on environmental issues, including climate resilience, renewable energy and more cuts to carbon emissions. We have a three-fold role to play: direct action within our own estate and operations to meet the long term net zero carbon targets, influence with partners and our supply chains to promote greener transport, infrastructure, and economic growth, and finally a community leadership role to work with residents, partners and communities on climate action and resilience.

We continue to bring agencies and partners together to address these issues.

**Digital technology:**

Digital and mobile technology continues to change the way we live and work. We are committed to supporting innovation and research that will empower and connect communities and increase productivity. Technology also has powerful potential to radically change the way we work within Norfolk County Council to become a more modern, efficient council.

**Local government finances:**

The financial outlook for local government remains challenging, with growing demand for services set against ongoing uncertainty of funding and workforce pressures. Although the Government has announced reforms to Adult Social Care and some additional funding in the Spending Review 2021, it will take time for their implications for the Council to become clear, meaning the immediate pressure remains squarely on local authorities. We also know there are still major demand and demographic pressures on social care and children's services and areas of significant financial risk such as high needs funding. This will need continued strong financial management and sustainable medium term budget solutions.

**National policy:**

Government have announced a range of policy initiatives and legislation which impact on us as a Council and as a County. "Build Back Better – a plan for growth", the Health & Care Bill 2021-22, and the Health & Social Care Levy Bill all already impact on how we operate and work with our partners in the local system. In June 2021, the UK became the first major economy to pass a Net Zero emissions law, with a target that will require the UK to bring all greenhouse gas emissions to net zero by 2050. More national policy announcements are due in 2022.

The Levelling Up White paper, published on 2 February 2022, sets out 12 missions that government wishes to achieve by 2030. Overall, the missions have a strong economic focus, but are not just about the economy – they require us to address a number of factors that affect peoples' lives. The White Paper also trails more future policy, and although we have already put many of the 12 missions at the centre of our strategy and our plans, we will continue to look for opportunities afforded by further legislation, guidance and frameworks, once published.

# ► STRATEGIC PRIORITY 1

## A VIBRANT AND SUSTAINABLE ECONOMY

**Economic growth, which creates quality jobs with good wages and delivers prosperity back into local communities, has a vital role to play in improving the health and wellbeing of residents.**

We want Norfolk to move from being a low-skill, low-wage and low-productivity economy, to high-skill, high-wage, high-value businesses, which are innovative and can capitalise on our strong digital connectivity. We will work closely with our partners and the business community to ensure that growth is inclusive and builds investment and social value into the local economy.

Activity title	Headline summary
<b>Growth and Development</b>	
<b>Deliver a 5-year investment framework for Norfolk.</b>	In conjunction with a countywide stakeholder group, we will develop a 5-year investment framework of investment priorities for Norfolk, which enables us to compete nationally for funding to support growth. The Framework will develop a sound evidence base to help identify the specific investment opportunities and projects that will have the greatest impact on sustainable economic growth in the county. This will drive a delivery programme of projects in due course.

Activity title	Headline summary
<b>Support the delivery of the Norfolk Rural strategy.</b>	<p>Since 2013 Norfolk County Council has led a steering group of public, private and voluntary sector partners to produce and deliver a three-year Rural Economic Strategy for Norfolk. The 2021-24 strategy has been consulted on with partners is currently going through the review and adoption process with the County Council's Infrastructure and Development Committee and its Cabinet.</p> <p><b>The strategy's priorities are:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New rural economy and market towns</li> <li>• World class environment and the green economy</li> <li>• Community resilience</li> <li>• Skills and rural innovation</li> <li>• Digitalisation and technology adoption</li> <li>• Modern infrastructure</li> </ul>
<b>Continue to roll out our economic plan for recovery and growth.</b>	<p>Our economic plan for recovery and growth offers programmes of support for business planning and development, innovation, digitalisation and business incubation.</p> <p><b>Specific programmes include:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Go Digital;</li> <li>• Innovation Grant Mentoring Programme, and</li> <li>• A proposed new Enterprise and Business Start-Up Programme.</li> </ul> <p>The Enterprise programme will build on the Community Renewal Fund (CRF) self-employment support project and self-employment strand in the FCE C-Care Project (CRF will end June 2022 and FCE funding will end in March 2023). The project will run over 3 years and provide one-to-one support to 1800 people considering setting up a business.</p>

Activity title	Headline summary
<b>Enable the development of sites supporting new technologies.</b>	<p>We will continue to enable the development of sites supporting new technologies, such as the O&amp;M campus in Great Yarmouth.</p> <p>Such strategic sites support the creation of higher value jobs for local people and inward investment opportunities.</p>
<b>Business and Intellectual Property Centres – Norfolk Network.</b>	<p>BIPC Norfolk is part of the British Library Business and Intellectual Property Centre national network offering support to small businesses including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Free and low-cost access to £5 million worth of business intelligence</li> <li>• Business publications - both in branch and online</li> <li>• One-to-ones, workshops and networking events</li> <li>• Intellectual property (IP) support</li> </ul> <p>The main centre is the Norfolk and Norwich Millennium Library with BIPC Locals now operating in our libraries at Cromer, Great Yarmouth, King's Lynn, Thetford, Wroxham and Wymondham.</p>

Activity title	Headline summary
<b>Skills and employment</b>	
<b>Deliver the CHANCES programme.</b>	<p>We will continue to deliver Chances, our support to employment project. Chances is part financed by the European Social Fund and we work with the longer-term unemployed residents of the county to support them into work or closer to the labour market through 1:1 bespoke support. Participants of the programme include the longer-term unemployed, those with health issues (both mental and physical) and those who have other barriers to employment such as caring responsibilities or returning to work after career breaks.</p> <p>We work with our delivery partners who currently employ over 20 Chances Advocate who provide the support for our participants, plotting a journey to reach their goals that can include confidence building, increasing job search skills as well as sourcing reskilling and upskilling opportunities across a number of sectors. The participants receive regular support from the Advocates and can be given financial support where needed to help with things such as travel, childcare, specialised courses and equipment as they search for work.</p> <p>The project runs to September 2023 and aims to support 2,602 people throughout its lifetime.</p>
<b>Continue to deliver the NCC Employer Training Incentive Project.</b>	<p>This programme has been highly successful, committing nearly £300,000 of funds for training in less than 6 months, generating over 1300 training interventions to reskill and upskill individuals. It has also generated in excess of £115K employer match funding.</p> <p>With a waiting list of 200 businesses, we will explore further funding opportunities to continue the programme.</p>

Activity title	Headline summary
<b>Launch the Skills, Progression, Adaptability and Resilience (SPAR) programme.</b>	<p>We will launch the SPAR project in 2022. A European Social Fund project in partnership with Suffolk County Council, it will complement other programmes such as ETIP and CHANCES by providing the Pathways Fund.</p> <p>This is a delegated grant scheme to enable and incentivise businesses to access training, with a focus on key skills needs including: Digital Skills, Leadership &amp; Management and Customer Services &amp; Relationship Management.</p> <p>A further strand, Pathways 50+, is designed to support both SMEs and participants aged 50 or over, through a combination of expert information, advice and guidance, business support services and grant funding, creating 3-month paid work placements for people who are unemployed, under-employed or economically inactive.</p>
<b>Launch the Green Skills Roadmap.</b>	<p>Decarbonisation and Green Energy and Skills is a growing priority across all areas of Government and there is great potential for job creation in this area in Norfolk.</p> <p>The Green Skills Analysis and Roadmap Research project will consolidate existing project information and research to determine the existing and emerging skills gaps across the green economy. This will involve engagement and skills analysis with experts in key sectors, including Low Carbon Services, Nuclear, Off-Shore wind, Solar and Retrofit/Construction. The project will deliver a Green Skills Roadmap for the county, including key actions to develop scalable provision to meet employer demand, and ensure a whole of county approach to the breadth of decarbonisation activities required in the short, medium and long term across Norfolk.</p>

Activity title	Headline summary
<b>Library and Learning Hub in Great Yarmouth.</b>	Working in partnership with Great Yarmouth Borough Council, NCC has committed to the relocation of the GY Library with the introduction of a refreshed Adult Learning Offer, and further education links with East Coast College to create a comprehensive Library and Learning Hub. The project is still at feasibility stage with £2m capital committed from NCC alongside GY Future High Street and Town's Deal money.
<b>Construction and Environmental Sustainability Hubs in Norwich and King's Lynn.</b>	In the current academic year, the Adult Learning Service has implemented a new construction and environmental sustainability curriculum, which provides a creative response to local challenges in the sector and aims to address the deficit of skilled workers and respond to the needs of adult residents who are economically inactive, unemployed and low skilled. In addition, this new curriculum responds to Norfolk's net zero ambitions. The first courses started in January 2022 and the service has secured £560,000 from the Community Renewal Fund to establish two construction training hubs in Norfolk (Norwich and King's Lynn). This work is underway and will be complete by June 2022.
<b>Adult Learning Digital Leaders Programme.</b>	Adult Learning are also taking the national lead in the development of the use of technology in further education. In September 2021, the service secured a £500,000 Further Education Professional Development Grant from the Department for Education to lead a digital leaders project which aims to improve the use of technology across the further education sector. Together with 9 local authority partners, this ground-breaking work positions Norfolk at the forefront of the use of cutting-edge technology to deliver learning.



Activity title	Headline summary
<b>Infrastructure and digital connectivity</b>	
<b>Implement the priorities in the annual Strategic Delivery Infrastructure Plan.</b>	<p>The Norfolk Strategic Delivery Infrastructure Plan sets out Norfolk's high-level strategic infrastructure priorities for the next 10 years. This list of projects has been compiled in conjunction with stakeholders/local partners including internal county council departments, district councils, utility companies and government agencies.</p> <p>These projects are selected on the basis that they deliver considerable housing and jobs growth.</p> <p><b>Priority strategic projects include:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A47 improvements £2-300m (delivered by National Highways)</li> <li>• Great Yarmouth Third River Crossing -£120m</li> <li>• Transforming Cities as part of the Transport for Norwich programme - £66m (all funding sources)</li> <li>• Long Stratton Bypass</li> <li>• West Winch Housing Access Road</li> <li>• Norwich Western Link</li> </ul>

Activity title	Headline summary
<p><b>Deliver the Highways Capital Programme, investing in maintaining and improving this essential asset across Norfolk.</b></p>	<p>In addition to the major infrastructure improvements, significant annual investment is made each year in maintaining and improving the 6,200 miles of road, 2,800 miles of footway and cycleway, 3,400 miles of Norfolk Trails and public footpath. A well maintained and improved network is essential for all business and residents.</p> <p>Annual maintenance programmes include road resurfacing, dressing, patching and pothole repairs which have been boosted by an additional investment from the Council of £10m, plus a further £6m for the Flood Reserve fund to boost the amount the Council spends on drainage maintenance, repairs, and improvements to reduce the risk of flooding.</p> <p>A new £1m Road Safety Community Fund has been launched to deliver 100 additional safety schemes across Norfolk over the next four years.</p> <p>The Local Member Fund has also been expanded to enable tree planting and the installation of Electric Vehicle Charging Points as part of the Council's Net Zero action plan.</p>

Activity title	Headline summary
<b>Deliver fibre broadband infrastructure.</b>	<p>Strong digital connectivity is seen as key enabler for NCC to meet its core corporate strategy.</p> <p><b>It will:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Allow existing Norfolk business to develop and new business to be attracted to Norfolk</li> <li>• Encourage housing, infrastructure and job growth across Norfolk</li> <li>• Reduce digital and social exclusion for the residents and workforce across Norfolk. Allowing improved access to services, encourage innovative ways to; work, learn, and access health/ social care services</li> <li>• Allow the implementation of Assistive Technology to support independent living</li> <li>• Reduce our impact on the environment.</li> </ul> <p><b>Fibre Broadband Infrastructure is integral to this and will focus on the delivery of 3 key programmes:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Local Full Fibre Network – aiming to deliver Fibre To The Premise to 393 public buildings in 2022</li> <li>• Better Broadband for Norfolk – aiming to deliver FTTP to 8821 premises by 2024</li> <li>• Project Gigabit – aiming to deliver gigabit capable infrastructure to 20% of hardest to reach rural premises by 2025/26</li> </ul>

Activity title	Headline summary
<b>Deliver the Shared Rural Network.</b>	<p>This programme supports the implementation of a shared mobile infrastructure by the four mobile network operators in rural communities across Norfolk, with the overall aim of improving mobile coverage in the hardest to reach locations.</p> <p>It directly supports the government's target of achieving 95% 4G coverage across the UK by 2025, which is also the target for Norfolk.</p>
<b>Deliver the Norfolk and Suffolk Innovation network.</b>	<p>This project sees the implementation of a Long-Range Wide Area Network (LoRaWAN) across Norfolk and Suffolk to enable business, public sector, educational organisations and the public to explore, trial and implement Internet of Things (IoT) technology. The infrastructure provides the foundation for a whole ecosystem that could transform our economy using sensor technology and actionable data.</p> <p>The project is a key enabler for the Smart City / Communities agenda enabling the connection of IoT devices (sensors) for public sector innovation, efficiency &amp; service transformation, business growth, carbon reduction initiatives and our digital inclusion ambitions. It drives inclusion and skills by providing the base infrastructure foundation (the accelerator) that can be used free of charge to teach young people and small businesses to experiment, to develop business ideas and to test them.</p>

# ► **STRATEGIC PRIORITY 2**

## **BETTER OPPORTUNITIES FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE**

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**Norfolk's children and young people are the future of the county and we would not want to see them labelled as "the Covid generation". We are ambitious for them and want to ensure that this generation of children do not have to live with the knock-on effects of the pandemic for the rest of their lives, either in terms of their own wellbeing or aspirations for the future.**

We want all children and young people in Norfolk to flourish, have a safe and supportive home, high aspirations, better educational outcomes and access to well-paid jobs. It is by investing in them to achieve their full potential and develop skills which prepare them for life and work, that we lay the foundations for a more resilient future for them and for our county.

Activity title	Headline summary
<b>Levelling up outcomes for families</b>	
<b>Continue to embed our New Roads Service.</b>	<p>This service was launched in June 2021 and takes a non-traditional approach to working with adolescents experiencing complex journeys - with an innovative residential 'Hub' at the heart of the service. It provides short term placements and edge of care support through a range of specialist and wrap around services to help young people on their journey, supporting our vision to reduce the number of looked after Norfolk children.</p> <p>Each young person will have a dedicated key worker and have access to the specialist support embedded within the hub.</p> <p><b>Each hub will also be supported with:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Two dedicated supported accommodation trainer flats for 16-18 year olds</li> <li>• Two High Needs Supported Lodgings (HNSL) hosts. The hosts will be able to provide a room within their home and be the stepping stone for young people moving towards living independently.</li> <li>• Two Hub Community Families. These will be supported and supervised by our fostering team and can call on any of the specialist hub support at any time.</li> </ul> <p>Norfolk County Council successfully obtained £5m funding from the DfE to implement and embed the New Roads service. We are being supported by North Yorkshire County Council (NYCC), who are the innovator authority for the "No Wrong Door" model that we have adopted for the New Roads Service.</p>

Activity title	Headline summary
<p><b>Continue to embed our Targeted Youth Support Service.</b></p>	<p>This service was set up in March 2021 and is aimed at supporting young people at risk of harm outside the family home, through criminal or sexual exploitation. It continues to build on the work already being carried out by the council's detached youth work service in Norwich, as well as support provided across police, social care, the Youth Offending service and voluntary sector services.</p> <p><b>Specifically:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Detached youth workers will support young people across the county, in the places and spaces where young people choose to meet up.</li> <li>• Social workers and family support practitioners working with young people will also be able to call on support from youth workers where they believe young people are at risk of harm outside the home</li> <li>• Practitioners will undertake return home interviews for young people who have gone missing, to explore reasons for going missing, understand any risk or harm experienced and reduce the likelihood of further missing episodes.</li> </ul> <p>We will continue to work closely with other voluntary and commissioned services that work with young people across Norfolk.</p>

Activity title	Headline summary
<b>Deliver the Healthy Child Programme.</b>	<p>The Healthy Child Programme offers every family a programme of activities, including screening tests, immunisations, developmental reviews, and information and guidance to support parenting and healthy choices.</p> <p>The programme aims to have contact with every child in Norfolk at key points in their life in domestic, community, and education settings. Included in the programme are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Health Visiting &amp; School Nursing services</li> <li>• Delivery of Just One Norfolk</li> <li>• Specialist, targeted support for groups such as teenage parents</li> </ul> <p>As part of Covid recovery, we will work with commissioned services and wider partners to understand the impact of COVID on children's health &amp; wellbeing and to implement appropriate, joined-up approaches to address these.</p>
<b>Joined up networks for support.</b>	<p>Since the beginning of the Coronavirus pandemic, partners across the Norfolk system have been working together to provide community support to our residents. This has included support to shield and self-isolate, and more recently to receive information and advice and hardship support.</p> <p>A system has been put in place to facilitate this work, called the Norfolk Vulnerability Hub and work will continue to stabilise, refresh and embed this system to provide a long-term solution to respond to resident needs</p>



Activity title	Headline summary
<b>Hardship Support Programme.</b>	<p>Working as a whole-system with our partners across local government and the voluntary sector, Norfolk County Council will continue to develop sustainable sources of support for Norfolk households experiencing hardship.</p> <p>This will be through a county-wide network of community supermarkets (as part of the Nourish Norfolk plan), as well as supported information and advice pathways to ensure residents have access to the right information, advice and support.</p>
<b>Libraries and Adult Learning – Families offer.</b>	<p>Adult Learning and Libraries offer a range of learning opportunities for families to support their literacy, numeracy, and wider wellbeing. We will continue to develop this across our library network and in partnership with schools, the ECFS and early years settings to ensure that as many families as possible are able to benefit and the support raised aspiration and achievement.</p>

Activity title	Headline summary
<b>Raise educational attainment for children and young people</b>	
<b>Norfolk as an Education Investment Area.</b>	<p>In February 2022, Norfolk was selected by the Department for Education to be one of 55 local authorities to become Education Investment Areas Norfolk's involvement is a positive recognition of what has already been achieved through the local Opportunity Area, as well as of the challenges we continue to face in some parts of the county, particularly as we emerge from Covid. We welcome the focus it places on rural and coastal communities and the recognition of the challenges faced by Norfolk schools in recruiting for key subjects.</p> <p>The plans for Education Investment Areas will seek to target investment, support and action - in and outside of school that help children from all backgrounds to succeed at the very highest levels. They sit alongside those of the Norwich Opportunity Area, which has been and continues to be effective, with its funding extended up to the end of August 2022.</p> <p>Over the coming year, we will continue to work with the Department for Education to understand the size of the opportunity for Norfolk and to develop plans to improve attainment and outcomes for children and young people in Norfolk.</p>
<b>Deliver the £120m investment in new special schools across the county.</b>	<p>Continue with our plans to deliver new special schools across the county. To date, two new schools have been completed and a further two are planned – one in Norwich and one in a location yet to be identified. Our ambitious plans will enable more local children to have their special educational needs met in a high-quality Norfolk school closer to where they live, minimising the need to travel long distances across the County for adequate provision.</p>

Activity title	Headline summary
<b>Implement the Norfolk Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Written Statement of Action Plan.</b>	The statutory need for this piece of activity continues, with future inspection expected. The current priority is to deliver the Action Plan to successfully deliver the improvement required, working closely with Education and Health partners.
<b>Embed the enhanced inclusion service.</b>	<p>The consequences of the pandemic on children's education is well documented. On returning to school in September 2020, many children experienced a number of adjustment difficulties, which has led to schools significantly increasing referrals to the inclusion line, which has been strengthened and enhanced.</p> <p>We will continue to embed the enhanced inclusion service to strengthen the ability of mainstream settings to meet needs and access additional support where necessary so that more children are able to remain in appropriate local educational placements.</p>

Activity title	Headline summary
<b>Roll out the 2022 Schools Local Growth and Investment Plan.</b>	<p>The Schools' Local Growth and Investment Plan (SLGIP) provides a snapshot of NCC plans to fulfil its statutory responsibility to ensure sufficient school places for Norfolk children aged 4-16.</p> <p>Our aim is always to provide school places locally, whilst ensuring schools are of sufficient size (ideally 420 pupils for primary and 900 students for secondary). Norfolk's education landscape has developed over time and is characterised by large numbers of small schools in rural areas.</p> <p>Our plan also seeks to address our core duty of promoting high standards of education.</p> <p>To achieve this, we will use a combination of approaches to either grow or decrease the number of school places for any given local area, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Commissioning new schools</li> <li>• Promoting DfE Free School proposals</li> <li>• Expanding the age range and size of existing schools</li> <li>• Agreeing changes to the planned admission number with associated change to accommodation</li> </ul>

Activity title	Headline summary
<b>Create better employment opportunities for young people</b>	
<b>Deliver our apprenticeships strategy.</b>	<p>Apprenticeships continue to play an important part in upskilling individuals and supporting business growth. Our successful <b>Recruit Retain Reward</b> will continue to offer a grant of £1000 to an SME who employs a young apprentice (aged 16-24).</p> <p>Additionally, two other projects have just been launched.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Access to Apprenticeships (A2A) a FCE C-Care funded programme, it provides bursary grants of up to £500 to improve the opportunity for those aged 16-24 in Norfolk, to be able to start an apprenticeship.</li> <li>• Progression to Apprenticeships (P2A) is a project aiming to increase the number of young people aged 16-24 moving into an apprenticeship by joining up existing initiatives and helping to decrease the number of young people returning to Universal Credit or other benefits following completion of a feeder programme, reducing the 'revolving door' scenario.</li> </ul>

# ► STRATEGIC PRIORITY 3

## HEALTHY, FULFILLING AND INDEPENDENT LIVES

**We want Norfolk to be a place where everyone has the opportunity to live their lives to the full, with independence, and access to the right support at the right time.**

We want to lead the system in Norfolk to focus on prevention and early help, to improve and sustain good health and wellbeing, as well as work with willing partners to create a more accessible Norfolk. We will strive to accelerate health and social care integration to respond to new demands and remove barriers to equal lives, tackling the issues which contribute to widening health inequalities.

Activity title	Headline summary
<b>Levelling up health</b>	
<b>Adult social services “front door” and prevention programme.</b>	<p>Adult Social Care currently spends over £1million per day on meeting the eligible needs of Norfolk residents. It is our duty to be ambitious and progressive in how we meet these needs in a sustainable way.</p> <p>Going forward, we will work with a strategic partner to develop a comprehensive and clear strategy for prevention and early help. Using advanced analytical techniques, we will develop a deeper understanding of Norfolk’s residents, their needs, and the local support they require. Our strategy will aim to proactively leverage community support, with targeted interventions, and a re-purposed ‘front door’.</p>

Activity title	Headline summary
<b>No homelessness in Norfolk strategy.</b>	<p>We will continue to support and contribute to the Norfolk Strategic Housing Partnership strategy “No Homelessness in Norfolk”.</p> <p><b>We are currently in the process of developing an action plan focusing on the 4 strategic priorities:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reduce Homelessness by focussing on homeless prevention services</li> <li>• Improve access to homelessness support services across Norfolk</li> <li>• Continue to develop person-centred services with a focus on co-production</li> <li>• Continue to build partnership working to improve collaboration and whole system change</li> </ul> <p>The programme is currently developing a more detailed action plan for February 2022.</p>

Activity title	Headline summary
<b>Deliver the Public Health and Wellbeing programme.</b>	<p>Our focus on prevention drives our public health and wellbeing programme of activities, aimed at improving population health, reducing fragility in people and delaying the need for critical health and social care interventions.</p> <p><b>Key initiatives include:</b></p> <p><b>NHS Health Checks</b> A health check-up for adults in England aged 40 to 74, designed to spot early signs of stroke, kidney disease, heart disease, type 2 diabetes or dementia</p> <p><b>Stop Smoking Services</b> Offer practical and treatment support to aid quitting smoking through accurate information, advice and individual support by experts, as well as re-establish and lead the Tobacco Control Alliance</p> <p><b>Weight Management Services</b> Practical support including advice, information and intervention programmes for adults in Norfolk struggling with their weight</p> <p><b>Drug &amp; Alcohol Misuse and Dependence</b> Offer specialist clinical treatment and behaviour change approaches to support individuals across Norfolk struggling with drug and alcohol use.</p>



Activity title	Headline summary
<b>Implement Project ADDER.</b>	<p>Project ADDER (Addition, Diversion, Disruption, Enforcement and Recovery) commenced in 2020/21 as a nationally funded pilot; a joint initiative between the Home Office (HO) and the Office for Health Improvement and Disparities (OHID).</p> <p>Greater Norwich was selected as a target location and the ADDER programme has been operating in the locality since March 2021, overseen by a joint delivery group co-chaired by NCC and Norfolk Constabulary. ADDER, with an annual budget of £1.35m, is delivered in addition to Norfolk's core Alcohol &amp; Drug Behavioural Change Service, through which NCC invests £6.6m per year of its Public Health Grant income (circa 16%).</p> <p>The project brings together co-ordinated law enforcement activity, alongside expanded diversionary activity and treatment/recovery provision, and seeks to expand multi-agency partnership working in the Greater Norwich area.</p> <p>The ADDER programme was due to end in March 2023, but this has now been extended to at least March 2025 as an outcome of the strategic spending review, and is a key feature of the governments new 10-year drug strategy From harm to hope.</p> <p>The programme is underpinned by a national evaluation and monitoring framework, to help and inform an evidence base for future Government intervention and national investment.</p>

Activity title	Headline summary
<b>Healthy libraries.</b>	<p>Norfolk Libraries play a key role is supporting the health and wellbeing of residents, with a key focus on health information and social isolation, with well-established initiatives like</p> <p>Just a Cuppa in place in every library. Projects currently in train include Digital Health with the NHS, and further development of our emotional and mental health support offers. The service also delivers specific activities to support children and families such as “feed and read”.</p> <p>The library network also supports addressing period and hygiene poverty and is part of the community collect model for Covid testing.</p>
<b>Living well</b>	
<b>Deliver the capital housing programmes.</b>	<p>This is a 10-year capital contribution programme to facilitate building of new specialist housing of a variety of types and sizes across Norfolk (Independent Living and Supported Living), which meet the needs of older people and working-age people with learning or physical disabilities.</p> <p>The programme has a number of delivery dates for the different builds and will aim to be completed overall by 2028.</p>
<b>Review of community services.</b>	<p>There is a health and social care review of community beds which we want to ensure strengthens current out-of-hospital services and gives people access to therapy-led recovery. Part of this work will be the continued transformation of our in-house Norfolk First Response service which offers reablement to people help keep them independent for longer.</p>

Activity title	Headline summary
<b>Changing places toilets initiative.</b>	The previously committed £600k for changing places toilets has been reviewed in light of additional funding provision at district level. A proposal will be brought to Cabinet in the Spring to finalise the locations for NCC investment.
<b>Better local services</b>	
<b>Home Support Transformation.</b>	<p>We will continue to transform and re-shape the Home Support Market to deliver services that meet the needs of people in Norfolk through the development of a “home first” home support model, including a dementia offer, that builds on the strengths of the person, supporting resilience and independence.</p> <p>Aspects of the programme have been delayed due to the Covid pandemic and milestones will be redefined in 2022.</p>
<b>Care Market Quality Improvement.</b>	<p>It is part of our statutory responsibility to provide a sufficient social care market to deliver quality services for local people. We must promote choice through a diverse social care market, working with a range of independent and voluntary, community and social enterprise sector providers.</p> <p>Our ambition is for a stable, modern care market in Norfolk where 85% of providers are judged Good or Outstanding by the Care Quality Commission (CQC).</p> <p>Aspects of the programme have been delayed due to the impact of the Covid pandemic on the social care market, and it will be reviewed fully in 2022 in the context of other transformation activity.</p>

Activity title	Headline summary
<b>Fulfil our leadership role in the Norfolk and Waveney Integrated Care System.</b>	<p>We will continue to play a leading role in Norfolk and Waveney's Integrated Care Systems (ICS) to improve population health and care, tackle unequal outcomes, enhance value for money and support social and economic development.</p> <p><b>Key priorities include:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establishing an Integrated Care Partnership tasked with strengthening integration between the NHS, local government and wider partners to serve and improve our community's health and care</li> <li>• Developing a place-based approach to service delivery, taking health and care decisions at a more local level and plan how to address the root causes of health inequalities.</li> </ul> <p>Our Integrated Care System will be established in July 2022.</p>
<b>Multi User Hub development programme</b>	<p>Building on the strong community asset base that our libraries provide, we are undertaking a programme to transforming existing Libraries into Multi-User hubs. As a starting point we will be delivering Adult Learning from the majority of sites, as well as strengthening offers from partners within the NHS and voluntary sector.</p> <p>A pilot site exists in Attleborough with additional plans in place for Great Yarmouth, King's Lynn and Great Yarmouth. Dereham is also being reviewed.</p>

Activity title	Headline summary
<b>Delivery of Active Travel and Public Transport Improvements.</b>	<p>Norfolk has been keen to play an active role in enhancing the walking and cycling network across the County and improving sustainable transport.</p> <p>The Government's Active Travel programme has seen investment in Norfolk of over £3m and further funding bids have been submitted. Phase 2 schemes are being delivered in 2022, with more to follow in future years.</p> <p>The sustainable transport improvements from the Transforming Cities programme will continue to be delivered over the next year, along with Norfolk's Bus Service Improvement Plan and the new Enhanced Partnership currently being developed.</p>
<b>Prepare for social care reform.</b>	<p>Putting People at the Heart of Care sets out reform proposals for Adult Social Care. The wide ranging reforms cover housing, carers, technology, workforce and a change to the way people pay for social care.</p> <p>The Government has also confirmed new assurance and inspection arrangements for Adult Social Service. A programme of work to prepare for these changes will be put in place.</p>
<b>Deliver excellent Norfolk Fire and Rescue Services.</b>	<p>The forthcoming Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP) for 2023-6 will be informed by the current Concept of Operations programme, which is reviewing how the Norfolk Fire and Rescue Services resources, enables and delivers services.</p> <p>The CRMP will incorporate all significant strategic implications on the delivery of the Norfolk Fire and Rescue Services for the communities of Norfolk and a full consultation process will be undertaken ahead of finalising the plan.</p>

# ► STRATEGIC PRIORITY 4

## STRONG, ENGAGED, AND INCLUSIVE COMMUNITIES

Individuals, families, and communities are the best guardians of their own interests. We want to deliver a fundamental shift in how we work in partnership, supporting, facilitating, and empowering our many diverse communities to help themselves, building capacity and capability, while improving participation in each place and ensuring that those at risk are protected.

We will work with our partners in the public and voluntary sector and other key stakeholders, such as our armed forces community, to ensure that all our residents have access to good services, information, advice, and guidance which enables them to always be in control of their lives.

Activity title	Headline summary
Involvement and participation	
VCSE engagement.	As part of NCCs commitment to VCSE infrastructure support, we will embed an engagement charter with the VCSE sector, outlining how, when, and where we will engage. We will do this at an early stage in service transformation or where we shape new services. This will mean that we take a whole system approach to the way we support residents in the county to reach their full potential.

Activity title	Headline summary
<b>Norfolk Armed Forces Covenant.</b>	<p>Norfolk County Council has signed the Covenant Pledge to demonstrate its support, as an employer, to the armed forces community.</p> <p>We have been awarded a Gold Award from the Ministry of Defence in national recognition of our commitment to support the armed forces community through our employment practices. We will continue to contribute to the Norfolk Armed Forces Covenant Board's Action Plan 2019-22 with a particular focus on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Building communities</li> <li>• Health, welfare and housing</li> <li>• Education, employment and skills</li> </ul>
<b>Building capacity</b>	
<b>VCSE infrastructure support and integration with ICS VCSE Assembly.</b>	<p>A refreshed infrastructure support offer has been provided by NCC to the Voluntary Sector over the next 3 years, focused on the following key outcome areas:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Funding and finance</li> <li>2) Advice and support</li> <li>3) Volunteer recruitment and deployment</li> <li>4) Training opportunities</li> <li>5) Forums and networking</li> </ol> <p>In recognition of the increased demand that will be placed on the sector in the forthcoming 2 years, we propose extending the funding to £250,000 per annum for 2 years (previously £172k) to provide enhanced capacity for support in these key areas.</p> <p>It is also proposed to add a single, one off "support grant" pot of £150,000 to be managed as part of the overall infrastructure grant, to provide grant funding capacity. This £150,000 is in addition to the £250,000 annual grant detailed above.</p>

Activity title	Headline summary
<b>Empowering our communities</b>	
<b>Joining up our information and signposting.</b>	<p>Across a number of our programmes including VCSE support, Digital Inclusion and our Multi Use Community Hubs we will work with partners and stakeholders to join together the support offers we commission; making it simpler for residents to access the help they need across debt, advice, skills, mental health and wellbeing using seamless methods of referral. We will also make sure that we engage with the voluntary and community sector across the county so that they can easily understand the help that is available and can access it easily and quickly.</p>
<b>Digital Inclusion Strategy.</b>	<p>We have an ambitious 3 year plan to ensure that Norfolk residents have the opportunity to access the skills development opportunities and connectivity they need to become digitally included. By providing support across our Libraries, Adult Learning and the voluntary sector residents will be able to access programmes of learning that enable them to develop digital skills and confidence for life and work. Programmes will be targeted at cohorts of people who are identified as digitally excluded using shared data from across the system, who have been disproportionately affected by the pandemic.</p> <p><b>In particular:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• older people</li> <li>• people with acute health conditions and disabilities</li> <li>• job seekers and low income households</li> <li>• children and young people</li> <li>• people experiencing multiple inequalities</li> </ul> <p>Delivery of the strategy is underpinned by a strategic plan the details of which are appended in the Digital Strategy document</p>



# ► **STRATEGIC PRIORITY 5**

## **A GREENER, MORE RESILIENT FUTURE**

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**Norfolk has many areas of outstanding beauty and it is a clean and safe place to live for our residents. It is also a county with nationally important heritage, both natural and in terms of historic buildings and scheduled monuments. We want to keep it that way and to preserve its quality and integrity for future generations.**

We also want our communities to be resilient, able to enjoy and benefit from sustainable, inclusive and accessible social infrastructure, including high-quality local facilities to make our communities resilient and rewarding places to live.

Activity title	Headline summary
<b>Protecting and enhancing our environment</b>	
<b>Deliver a 5-year investment framework for Norfolk.</b>	<p>The Council's Environmental Policy was launched in November 2019 and takes as its starting point the Government's own 25-year Plan, published in 2018, and is structured to reflect the key environmental concerns embodied in that plan. In addition, it is framed to reflect the increasing importance that climate change has on all aspects of the environment, whether the landscape itself, the species within it, or the rich cultural heritage that occupies it.</p> <p>This policy reflects the areas that the Council sees as key to protecting and maintaining the health of Norfolk's distinctive environment and its occupants.</p> <p><b>Our key priorities in 2022/23 will focus on:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Active and greener travel, which will deliver a Norfolk-wide local cycling and walking infrastructure plan, as well as on-street EV chargepoints in areas with limited off-street parking</li> <li>• Our 1 million trees initiative, with plans to roll out the next phase of the project in 2022/23</li> <li>• Continuing to grow and expand the new Environmental Hub at Gressenhall Farm and Workhouse, which acts as a centre for learning of our environmental aims</li> </ul>

Activity title	Headline summary
<p><b>Implement our Environmental policy – Net Zero programme.</b></p>	<p><b>Both the Council’s strategy and its Environmental policy commit us to:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Achieve ‘net zero’ carbon emissions on our estates by 2030</li> <li>• Work towards ‘carbon neutrality’ by 2030</li> </ul> <p>We are committed to working with our partners in local government, health and business, as well as our communities to reduce and offset carbon emissions wherever possible. We have established a ‘Net Zero’ Programme overseen by a newly established programme board which agrees actions to resolve issues, assigns resources and provides endorsement to secure funding for key initiatives.</p> <p><b>Our focus for 2022/23 will be to continue to:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Install electric vehicle charging points across our estate</li> <li>• Cease to buy gas boilers for our estate and replace with heat pumps or other low-carbon alternatives for those that come to end of life.</li> <li>• Continue with the transition to low-energy lighting in council buildings by 2024, and our target to convert a further 15,000 street lighting units to LED by July 2023.</li> <li>• Develop a business case to convert all remaining street lighting to LED. This would result in all the Council’s 53,000 streetlights being LED.</li> <li>• Use our pipeline of expiring contracts and break points to identify opportunities for supply chain decarbonisation.</li> <li>• Seek to minimise carbon emissions from the retendered Norwich Park and Ride Service.</li> <li>• Set carbon reduction objectives for our wholly owned companies in the same way as we currently set financial objectives.</li> </ul>

Activity title	Headline summary
<b>Access to quality spaces</b>	
<b>Castle Keep.</b>	<p>We will continue our work to deliver “Norwich Castle: Royal Palace Reborn”, our £13.5m project to transform Norwich Castle’s iconic Norman Keep - one of Europe’s most important early medieval castles - by rebuilding its medieval floors and rooms to so that everyone can experience a Norman royal palace and its stories.</p> <p>This restoration is one of the largest heritage projects of its kind currently underway in the UK.</p> <p>In addition to reinstating the principal floor level, offering unique views and creating learning spaces, the Keep will also have a new gallery designed in partnership with the British Museum, to showcase national medieval treasures alongside Norfolk’s own. As part of our commitment to an “accessible Norfolk”, the work will also see the installation of a new lift, ensuring that all five levels of the keep are fully accessible, for the first time in its history.</p>
<b>Greenways to Greenspaces.</b>	<p>“Greenways to Greenspaces” is an umbrella concept that encompasses all work to improve Norfolk’s green travel networks for the benefit of both people and the environment.</p> <p>Greenways aims to improve connectivity between market towns by providing safe, low-carbon travel options while also functioning as linear 62 habitats, linking the county’s Greenspaces into an extensive network and integrating biodiversity enhancement. The work includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A Pollinator Action Plan for Norfolk and the future development of a Pesticide Policy for the County Council.</li> <li>• Designation of 112 roadside nature reserve sites with an extension to 300 over the next three years</li> </ul>

Activity title	Headline summary
<b>Dark Skies.</b>	<p>The Norfolk Coast Partnership (NCP) in conjunction with our partners and other organisations, focuses on celebrating the dark skies and landscapes of the Norfolk Coast Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), while raising awareness of the vital benefits that the dark brings to people and biodiversity, and conversely, the impacts of light pollution. The protected areas of the Norfolk Coast and Broads contain some of the last remaining dark landscapes in the UK, so we aim to conserve and enhance those valuable nightscapes for future generations.</p> <p><b>In 2022/23:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We will continue to work closely with a range of partners, local and national specialists, parish councils, local groups and businesses, and actively participate as a member of the UK Dark Skies Partnership in order to deliver our dark skies aims and objectives.</li> <li>• A 4th Norfolk Dark Skies Festival working with partners, schools and local organisations to host a range of online and in-person public events and activities</li> <li>• Training sessions for specific audiences - parish councils, local businesses and planning officers to encourage their active participation to help reduce light pollution in their area.</li> <li>• Awarding Dark Skies Friendly Accreditation to businesses and organisations which demonstrate their ability to be Dark Sky Ambassadors for the coast.</li> </ul>

Activity title	Headline summary
<b>Water Management strategy.</b>	<p>We will continue to play a leading role within the Norfolk Strategic Flooding Alliance (NSFA) and support the delivery of its Strategy through effective collaboration with key partners across the region and sector.</p> <p>This includes identifying priority sites for joint intervention, delivering education and public awareness campaigns, and working together to access funding and resource opportunities from regional/national bodies and central government.</p> <p>Our support builds on the commitment of £1.5m per annum Flood Reserve from the Norfolk County Council budget which supplements the existing drainage maintenance and repair budgets of £4.5m per year.</p> <p>This all aims to ultimately increase the confidence of the residents of Norfolk that flood risks are as low as reasonably practicable and are being appropriately managed.</p> <p>Work has already begun on 16 priority flood sites and the Alliance is in the process of identifying a second tranche of key sites across the county.</p>

Activity title	Headline summary
<b>Deliver Highways, Transport &amp; Waste improvements.</b>	<p>These improvements aim to reduce the impact of these services on the environment, and will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improvement to streetlighting, the benefit of which is captured as part of our Net Zero programme.</li> <li>• Boost recycling rates at the Council's 20 Recycling Centres through a range of waste reduction and reduce, re-use, recycling initiatives. Continue with the major upgrades and improvements to recycling centres including Sheringham &amp; Wymondham sites.</li> <li>• Through the above Waste initiatives, reduce the amount of waste per household per week.</li> <li>• Planning and delivery of sustainable transport schemes including Active Travel, Bus Services Improvement Plans, and Transport for Norwich which includes the Beryl e-scooter/e-bikes/bike hire schemes.</li> <li>• Support the take up of electric vehicles by implementing the new Electric vehicle strategy, which will result in an increase in the number of charging points across Norfolk. In addition, support bus operators and take advantage of funding opportunities (ZEBRA) to encourage the replacement of the Norfolk bus fleet with electric vehicles.</li> </ul>

Activity title	Headline summary
<p><b>Implement the NCC Libraries and Information Service strategy.</b></p>	<p>In March 2020, Norfolk County Council adopted a strategy for Norfolk Library and Information Service with a vision for our libraries to make a real difference to the people of Norfolk by being there when they need them at the heart of the community, supporting individuals, communities and businesses to be the best they can be.</p> <p>With implementation being impacted by Covid related closures, the service now aims to achieve the service vision by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Offering private PC space with video-enabled equipment for people to attend remote job interviews and online health conversations</li> <li>• Re-introducing study space for students and young people catching up on educational gaps</li> <li>• Increasing accessibility for those most in need and the most vulnerable</li> <li>• Continuing to roll he Norfolk Reading Pathway programme to support literacy</li> <li>• Implement the national programme “Learn my way” to help digitally excluded people learn digital skills.</li> <li>• Working with Devices dot Now to distribute devices, provide connectivity and offer digital support to vulnerable adults</li> <li>• Offering support for early years and families with programmes such as “bounce and rhyme” and “story time”</li> <li>• Helping reduce social isolation through initiatives such as “Just a cuppa” and “Reading Friends”</li> <li>• Offering code clubs, summer reading challenges, and work experience for young people</li> </ul>





# OPERATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS

**The Council continues to face a number of challenges in the way it is funded, how it is able to manage demand for services and demographic pressures, and how it responds to policy and legislative changes. At the same time, new technology and ways of working represent opportunities to transform our business processes and systems; working in more modern and productive ways.**

In order to drive through change and deliver our strategy, we must also be clear about how we can transform our services and workforce to increase capacity and skills, continuously review the way we are organised to ensure the most efficient operating model and have strong and integrated programme governance that enables us to realise our desired benefits and outcomes.

Activity title	Headline summary
<b>Recovery from backlog.</b>	Frontline services have experienced significant disruption to usual workflows during the pandemic, with significant backlogs of assessments, reviews and new cases needing to be addressed.  We will review our workplans regularly and consistently to ensure that we have the right capacity to deliver the best service we can.
<b>Preparing for inspection (Adults / Children's).</b>	In 2022/23 we expect to see Children's Services department inspected by Ofsted, as well as a new inspection regime for Adult Social Services.

Activity title	Headline summary
<b>Smarter Working programme.</b>	<p>The Smarter Working Programme was established following the adoption of the 2020-2024 Medium-Term Financial Strategy with the aim of achieving savings through implementing more business-like Smarter Working, utilising physical space and technology to maximise flexibility for customers and staff whilst effectively delivering good outcomes. While phase 1 has focused inwardly on Council staff and hybrid working, phase 2 in 2022/23 will focus on transformation of the way Directorates deliver outcomes to residents, communities, service users and businesses in collaboration with partner organisations.</p> <p>A number of areas of the Smarter Working programme overlap or connect to the implementation of the Environmental Policy and the reduction of carbon emissions. The two programmes will work together to deliver the most benefit.</p>
<b>Transformation and Innovation integrated governance.</b>	<p>The council has a dedicated Innovation Team which provides practical innovation support to complement the existing innovation and transformation work underway within departments. In line with the council's Innovation Strategy, the team's priorities over the next year will focus on embedding the use of innovation methods – such as prototyping, user research, co-production, service design and behavioural insights - across council priority projects to help them achieve their goals. The team will also continue to help front line staff to build their confidence and capacity to use new technologies, sourcing external funding for new solutions, and trialling new ways to build a culture within the council which is supportive and enabling of innovation.</p>

Activity title	Headline summary
<b>Embed the approach to cross-cutting priorities.</b>	<p>Our programme of transformation includes a number of cross-cutting priorities, where no single department has exclusive accountability or where the impact affects the whole of the Council.</p> <p>We will embed planning processes and disciplines to ensure these priorities have clear ownership and accountability for delivery and performance.</p>
<b>Workforce strategy.</b>	<p>The refreshed workforce strategy will describe how the organisation and its workforce must change over the next few years, in support of its strategic ambitions and in response to the challenges and opportunities coming over the horizon. The strategy timescale will be to 2025, in support of 'Better Together, for Norfolk', and will relate to all colleagues engaged in delivering NCC services.</p> <p><b>The strategy will focus on 5 broad issues:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Council's future size, shape and role within the Norfolk system</li> <li>• Leadership and management development</li> <li>• Developing our talented people</li> <li>• Being a diverse and inclusive employer</li> <li>• Developing an engaging and high-performing culture</li> </ul> <p>The strategy will be developed by April 2022</p>

Activity title	Headline summary
<p><b>Implement our “Digital strategy &amp; roadmap for the 2020s”.</b></p>	<p>The 2018-2021 Digital Norfolk Strategy oversaw many improvements to the Council's technological and digital infrastructure as well as connectivity for Norfolk's residents and businesses.</p> <p>Our refreshed strategy therefore builds on solid foundations as we look forward to how technology and digital services should evolve during the 2020's.</p> <p><b>The internal aspect of the strategy will focus on:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staff having access to the right technology and data, and the skills to use them effectively.</li> <li>• Taking a systematic approach to transactions and redesigning internal systems to be digital by design, improving productivity and taking out cost across the organisation.</li> <li>• More effective use of data and business insight for operational and strategic purposes, and data-driven decision making to enhance our ability to target services more effectively</li> </ul> <p><b>The plan to deliver the strategy will centre on:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Data Centre Infrastructure</li> <li>• Collaboration &amp; End User Technologies</li> <li>• Cloud &amp; Edge Computing</li> <li>• Customer Relationship Management Strategy &amp; Customer Experience</li> <li>• Data Analytics &amp; Artificial Intelligence</li> <li>• Security Management Programmes</li> <li>• Security Technology, Infrastructure &amp; Operations</li> </ul>

Activity title	Headline summary
<b>Strategic Property Asset Management Framework 2021/22 - 2026/27.</b>	<p>In November 2021 NCC adopted the Strategic Property Asset Management Framework 2021/22 - 2026/27 with an overarching aim to maintain and develop an economic, efficient and effective property and land portfolio.</p> <p>This framework supports the delivery of NCC's priorities and outcomes detailed in the Councils Corporate plan "Better Together, for Norfolk 2021-2025" by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensuring NCC's property assets are fit for purpose and in the right location to support service delivery.</li> <li>• Exploiting and reusing property no longer required for operational purposes.</li> </ul> <p>Operational policies and an annual action plan flow from the framework and will be the basis for measuring overall performance.</p>
<b>Service Transformation.</b>	<p>There is a significant programme of transformation taking place across a number of departments and services, looking at how we deliver services, how we further develop customer-focused processes and systems, how we manage increased demand arising from demographic and other pressures, and how we meet changing customer expectations and accessibility needs.</p> <p><b>These programmes sit mainly in:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adult Social Services (Promoting Independence)</li> <li>• Children's Services (Safer Children and Resilient Families, Special Educational Needs and Disabilities)</li> <li>• Customer Services (Customer Services Strategy)</li> </ul> <p>Programmes have both their own programme governance and corporate oversight, and will further link to the Transformation &amp; Innovation Governance activity above.</p>

Activity title	Headline summary
<b>Organisational Design.</b>	<p>The Council faces unprecedented financial challenges over the next few years, and we need to proactively respond to these to ensure that, as an organisation, we remain fit for purpose and able to provide the services upon which our residents rely.</p> <p>To achieve this, we will implement a review of the way we are structured and operate to ensure our organisational design is the most efficient, eliminating duplication, simplifying our decision making, and reducing our operational costs, while at the same time increasing our focus on collaboration and innovation, to improve our service delivery.</p>
<b>A County Deal for Norfolk.</b>	<p>On 2 February, government published its “Levelling Up White Paper”, outlining its approach to addressing geographical inequalities across the UK. One key strand of the White Paper is further devolution of centrally held powers to local areas. Norfolk has been invited to be one of 9 “front-runners” to negotiate an early devolution deal in line with the published framework for devolution.</p> <p><b>“A deal for Norfolk” will be focusing on a number of key priorities:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Skills, employment and economic development</li> <li>• Housing and sustainable communities</li> <li>• Transport and infrastructure</li> <li>• Climate, net zero and the environment</li> <li>• Social care, health and social infrastructure</li> </ul> <p>Over the next 6-9 months, we will be working with central government to develop appropriate and evidence-based proposals to government to ensure we have the powers and the funding to make the best decisions and choices for Norfolk.</p>

# ► GOVERNANCE AND OVERSIGHT

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**The Corporate Delivery Plan is supported and underpinned by a number of internal processes and systems, to ensure timely oversight successful delivery of the benefits defined within.**

- Programmes and Projects: Programme-specific boards in departments and directorates provide oversight of change activity including programmes and projects. This includes reporting to individual Cabinet Members and to Corporate Board. Some programmes are linked to Corporately Significant Vital Signs. Work is underway to review all our Vital Signs to ensure alignment to the strategy delivery.
- Departmental Plans: Activity within the Corporate Delivery Plan continues to be reflected in departmental and service plans, which cover both strategic activity and essential service delivery, acting as important business planning documents for the Council. The delivery of this is monitored through departmental performance indicators, which are also being reviewed.
- Risk management: Activities within the Corporate Delivery Plan will continue to require robust risk management, reflected in both the Corporate Risk Register and the Departmental Risk Registers which are reported through management and formal governance processes. Risks for individual activity may also, at times, be reflected in programme/project risk registers.
- Governance and decision making: Significant activity identified in the Corporate Delivery Plan will progress through the Council's governance and decision-making process, with oversight and input from Elected Members, as set out in the Council's Constitution.
- Transformation & Innovation Governance Board: We are working towards implementing a Transformation & Innovation Board to strengthen the overarching governance of NCCs' transformation portfolio. This will improve the NCC leadership's ability to ensure we gain best value from our investment and improve certainty of outcomes. The main objectives of the Board will be to direct investment decisions, when action is to be taken due to programmes and projects being outside the agreed tolerance in

terms of timescale or spend, ensure plans are viewed from a pan-organisational perspective, and ensure appropriate assurance activity takes place to provide insight and recommendations to improve certainty of outcomes. We aim for this to be in place in early 2022.





**Norfolk** County Council

**BETTER TOGETHER, FOR NORFOLK**

# Scrutiny Committee

Item No: 9

**Report Title:** Strategic and Financial Planning 2023-24

**Date of Meeting:** 20 April 2022

**Responsible Cabinet Member:** Cllr Andrew Jamieson (Cabinet Member for Finance)

**Responsible Director:** Simon George, Executive Director of Finance and Commercial Services

## Executive Summary

This report supports the Committee's scrutiny of the Council's process for developing the 2023-24 Budget, and in particular represents an opportunity for the Committee to consider the overall timeline and activity required to deliver a balanced budget.

## Recommendations

The committee is asked to:

1. **Consider the attached Cabinet report, providing feedback and recommendations to officers where appropriate.**
2. **Consider the proposed strategic and financial planning timeline presented by officers and consider the role of scrutiny moving forward.**

## 1. Background and Purpose

- 1.1. At Cabinet on the 4 April 2022, members received item 15, Strategic and Financial Planning 2023-24 (Appendix A). At the request of the Chairman and Vice-Chairman, this has been brought to scrutiny to ensure effective and timely oversight of the 2023-24 budget setting process.
- 1.2. At the meeting, Cabinet agreed the following recommendations with relation to this report:
  - **To consider the overall budget gap of £96.676m included in the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) set by Full Council in February 2022, and agree:**
    - a. **the gap of £59.927m to be closed for 2023-24; and**

- b. the extension of the MTFS by a further year (to 2026-27) and the resulting overall gap for planning purposes of £115.814m. (Section 4 of appended report).
  - To review the key budget risks and uncertainties as set out in this report (Section 4 of the appended report).
  - To consider the principles of the proposed approach to budget setting for 2023-24, noting that there may be a need for flexibility within both the process itself and the assumptions applied, and agree:
    - a. the process and indicative timetable set out in Section 5 (of the appended report), including the proposed two stage consultation process for 2023-24 to support in the early securing of deliverable saving proposals.
    - b. the savings targets allocated to each Department to be found (Table 10 in the appended report), and that these will be kept under review through the budget process.
- 1.3. The minutes and associated papers for this meeting, including the summary of decisions notice can be found [here](#).
- 1.4. The Chair and Vice-Chair have invited the Cabinet Member for Finance, and the Executive Director of Finance and Commercial Services, to this meeting to provide the Scrutiny Committee with a briefing on the Council's current and future financial position.
- 1.5. This is an annual item that will support the Scrutiny Committee in its duty to provide oversight and challenge to the council's process for developing the 2023-24 budget.
- 1.6. In particular, the appended Cabinet report updates Scrutiny members on:
  - The Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) 2022-27, including an update on current pressures and challenges.
  - The Spring Statement delivered by Government on the 23 March 2022, and the implications for Norfolk County Council's 2023-24 budget.
  - The wider financial and organisational context underpinning the process of developing the 2023-24 budget.
  - An update on proposed savings targets, broken down by department.
- 1.7. Scrutiny Members have a duty to provide effective 'critical friend' challenge to the annual budget process, ensuring sound financial decision making by reviewing how NCC resources are allocated, and exploring the integration between financial and service planning. Members of the Scrutiny Committee are asked to consider the proposed timeline set out below (excerpted from pg. 17, para. 5.4 of the appended report) and determine whether any additional Scrutiny activity is required.

<b>2023-24 Proposed Budget Setting Timeline</b>	<b>Time frame</b>
Cabinet review of the financial planning position for 2023-27 – including formal allocation of targets	4 April 2022
Scrutiny Committee	20 April 2022
Select Committee input to development of 2023-24 Budget – strategy	w/c 23 May 2022
Review of budget pressures and development of budget strategy and detailed savings proposals 2023-27 incorporating: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Budget Challenge 1 (early May) – context / strategy / approach / outline proposals including transformation</li> <li>Budget Challenge 2 (early June) – detailed proposals</li> <li>Budget Challenge 3 (early September) – final proposals</li> </ul>	April to December 2022
<i>Fair Funding Review / DLUHC reform of Local Government funding</i>	<i>TBC early / mid 2022</i>
Cabinet agree strategic budget approach and any initial proposals for summer consultation	4 July 2022
Scrutiny Committee	20 July
Summer consultation activity – service priorities, transformation, approach and early saving proposals	Late July / August(?) 2022
Cabinet approve final proposals for public consultation	3 October 2022
Scrutiny Committee	19 October 2022
Public consultation on 2023-24 Budget proposals, council tax and adult social care precept	Late October to mid December?
Select Committee input to development of 2023-24 Budget – comments on specific proposals	w/c 14 November 2022
<i>Government Autumn Budget</i>	<i>TBC October 2022</i>
<i>Provisional Local Government Finance Settlement announced including provisional council tax and precept arrangements (outcomes of Fair Funding Review?)</i>	<i>TBC December 2022</i>
Cabinet considers outcomes of service and financial planning, EQIA and consultation feedback and agrees revenue budget and capital programme recommendations to County Council	30 January 2023
Confirmation of District Council tax base and Business Rate forecasts	31 January 2023
<i>Final Local Government Finance Settlement</i>	<i>TBC January / February 2022</i>
Scrutiny Committee 2023-24 Budget scrutiny	15 February 2023
County Council agrees Medium Term Financial Strategy 2023-24 to 2026-27, revenue budget, capital programme and level of council tax for 2023-24	21 February 2023

## **2. Evidence and Reasons for Decision**

- 2.1 The Council is legally required to set a balanced budget annually. The appended Cabinet report outlines the wider financial and organisational context underpinning the 2023-24 budget setting process.

## **3. Alternative Options**

- 3.1 Highlighted in appended report.

## **4. Financial Implications**

- 4.1 Financial implications are discussed throughout the appended report. The Cabinet paper sets out activity associated with developing the 2023-24 County Council budget.

## **5. Resource Implications**

### **5.1 Staff:**

Highlighted in the appended report.

### **5.2 Property:**

Highlighted in the appended report.

### **5.3 IT:**

Highlighted in the appended report.

## **6. Other Implications**

### **6.1 Legal Implications:**

Highlighted in the appended report.

### **6.2 Human Rights Implications:**

Highlighted in the appended report.

### **6.3 Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) (this must be included):**

Highlighted in the appended report.

### **6.4 Data Protection Impact Assessments (DPIA):**

Highlighted in the appended report.

#### **6.5 Health and Safety implications (where appropriate):**

Highlighted in the appended report.

#### **6.6 Sustainability implications (where appropriate):**

Highlighted in the appended report.

#### **6.7 Any Other Implications:**

None identified.

### **7. Risk Implications / Assessment**

7.1 Highlighted in appended report.

### **8. Select Committee Comments**

8.1 The Select committees are included as part of the proposed timeline for setting the 2023-24 budget, and will be included in discussions around the implications for their relevant service areas.

### **9. Recommendations**

To:

1. **Consider the attached cabinet report, providing feedback and recommendations to officers where appropriate.**
2. **Consider the proposed strategic and financial planning timeline presented by officers and consider the role of scrutiny moving forward.**

### **10. Background Papers**

10.1 Appendix A – Strategic and Financial Planning 2023-24

#### **Officer Contact**

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

**Officer name:** Peter Randall, Democratic Support and Scrutiny Manager

**Telephone no.:** 01603 307570

**Email:** Peter.randall@norfolk.gov.uk



If you need this report in large print, audio, braille, alternative format or in a different language please contact 0344 800 8020 or 0344 800 8011 (textphone) and we will do our best to help.

# Cabinet

Item No: 9

**Decision making report title: Strategic and financial planning 2023-24**

**Date of meeting: 4 April 2022**

**Responsible Cabinet Member: Cllr Andrew Jamieson (Cabinet Member for Finance)**

**Responsible Director: Simon George (Executive Director of Finance and Commercial Services)**

**Is this a key decision? No**

**If this is a key decision, date added to the Forward Plan of Key Decisions: n/a**

## **Introduction from Cabinet Member**

This report marks an earlier than usual start to the Council's budget setting process, reflecting the scale of the task to be addressed in 2023-24. There is significant uncertainty about funding for 2023-24 onwards, particularly in light of the Government's intention to take forward funding reform during 2022-23. Nevertheless, in the context of a forecast £60m gap for the forthcoming year, it remains essential for the Council to have a robust plan in place to enable the preparation of a balanced and sustainable budget to safeguard the delivery of the essential local services which are so important for all Norfolk's people, businesses and visitors.

This report therefore sets out the framework for how the Council will approach budget setting for 2023-24, and should be read in conjunction with the reports *Better Together, for Norfolk – delivering our strategy* and *Norfolk County Council – Strategic Review*, elsewhere on the agenda. Taken together, these three reports represent key elements that will contribute to setting the strategy and direction for the Council over the next few years.

## **Executive Summary**

While the Council has a well-established process for annual budget setting, the size of the forecast gap for 2023-24 demands a revision to ensure that there is a robust approach to developing savings proposals and other budget changes at the scale and pace required. This report therefore sets out proposals for how this will be achieved to deliver a prudent and transparent approach to budgeting for 2023-24, whilst



incorporating the required key elements such as public consultation and engagement with Select Committees.

Reflecting these considerations, this report proposes the Budget planning cycle for 2023-24 to start immediately in April 2022 and to work in parallel with the full strategic review of how the Council operates to deliver its future services and strategy. As part of 2023-24 Budget setting, a thorough interrogation of identified future cost pressures will also be required. It is particularly important to recognise that the 2022-23 position has been supported through significant one-off measures including use of reserves, which will represent a major challenge to be addressed in future years.

At the same time, the wider budget position remains the subject of extremely high levels of uncertainty. As such, this report sets out details of a proposed budget planning process for 2023-24, but recognises that as always there may be a need for some flexibility. In this context, the report provides a summary of key areas of wider risk and uncertainty for Cabinet to consider. This report should also be read in conjunction with the latest 2021-22 monitoring position reported to Cabinet, and the Strategic Review report, as set out elsewhere on this agenda.

## **Recommendations:**

Cabinet is recommended:

- 1. To consider the overall budget gap of £96.676m included in the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) set by Full Council in February 2022, and agree:**
  - a) the gap of £59.927m to be closed for 2023-24; and**
  - b) the extension of the MTFS by a further year (to 2026-27) and the resulting overall gap for planning purposes of £115.814m. (Section 4).**
- 2. To review the key budget risks and uncertainties as set out in this report. (Section 4).**
- 3. To consider the principles of the proposed approach to budget setting for 2023-24, noting that there may be a need for flexibility within both the process itself and the assumptions applied, and agree:**
  - a) the process and indicative timetable set out in Section 5, including the proposed two stage consultation process for 2023-24 to support in the early securing of deliverable saving proposals.**
  - b) the savings targets allocated to each Department to be found (Table 10), and that these will be kept under review through the budget process.**

## **1. Background and Purpose**

- 1.1. At the time of 2022-23 budget setting, the Section 151 Officer recommended that: *“...early planning is undertaken in respect of 2023-24 and the scope to address pressures within the constraints of the overall budget should be reviewed in the round during 2022-23. This should be informed by, but cannot be contingent upon, the progress of any local government funding reform brought forward for 2023-24. It may be that further specific details of the longer term funding allocations for the Council are not known until late in 2022-23. **In this context it will be essential that the Council is able to produce a realistic plan for reducing the budget requirement in future years through the early identification of saving proposals for 2023-24, or the mitigation of currently identified pressures, and that all proposals are considered in the context of the significant budget gap identified for that year.**”*
- 1.2. There continues to be a growing gap between funding and service pressures. This is driven by demographic changes, unfunded burdens such as the National Living Wage, and the needs of the people who draw upon social care services becoming increasingly complex. Children’s services, in both social care and education (particularly the High Needs Block), are also under very significant stress. Other Council services remain subject to significant financial pressures, for example as a result of increasing fuel costs which have a widespread impact across service delivery and commissioned services. In turn these have a knock on effect by increasing the pressure placed on discretionary and preventative services.
- 1.3. The Council’s February 2021 MTFS therefore made it clear that the Council, in common with other upper tier local authorities, faces a significant budget shortfall to be addressed in 2023-24, which is materially higher than the gap closed for the 2022-23 Budget. Simultaneously, as detailed below, there is major uncertainty linked to Government’s plans to reform local government funding during 2022 (for 2023-24) and linked to the delivery of the levelling up agenda. While the Council’s past success in delivering a balanced budget, coupled with a robust budget planning approach, provides a solid platform for development, it is prudent to begin planning for 2023-24 as early as possible.
- 1.4. Cabinet recognised this in November 2021, when it agreed to undertake a full review of how the Council operates to deliver its future services and strategy. Details of the scope and next steps for this work are set out in the Strategic Review report elsewhere on this agenda. It is anticipated that this review will make a material contribution to closing the forecast gap.
- 1.5. In common with recent years, it is highly likely the Council will not receive detailed information about funding allocations for 2023-24 until autumn 2022 at the earliest. This is particularly likely in light of the Government’s intention to deliver funding reform ahead of the 2023-24 Settlement, as confirmed by the commitment in the [Levelling Up White Paper](#)<sup>1</sup> to “ensuring that funding allocations for councils are based on an up-to-date assessment of their needs and resources”. It is anticipated that the Government will publish further details

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/levelling-up-the-united-kingdom>, page 143.

of its intentions in spring 2022, with any formula changes to be made ahead of 2023-24 funding announcements. However, the scope of this work has not been defined at the time of preparing this report and, in comparison with the approach to the Fair Funding Review, there is very limited time to develop and consult on proposals for fundamental reform. Ministers in the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) have also indicated that implementation of funding reform is a prerequisite for any longer-term funding allocations being announced. It therefore remains to be seen whether the 2023-24 Settlement will provide a multi-year allocation which would enable greater planning certainty. As a result, the overall level of uncertainty means that budget setting for 2023-24, and the wider financial environment for local government, is set to remain highly challenging. Government announced the 2022 Spring Statement on 23 March 2022 and further details are provided in section 2 below, but this did not include further significant policy announcements in terms of local government funding, which would impact on the budget position.

1.6. As in previous years, this report represents the start of the Council's process for setting the 2023-24 Budget and developing the supporting Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS). The report sets out the context and a proposed approach to budget setting including:

- A summary of the Budget and MTFS approved by Full Council in February 2022, including the savings already planned for future years.
- An overview of the significant remaining uncertainties facing local government finances.
- The MTFS position for 2022-23 onwards as agreed in February 2022, extended for a further year to support 2023-24 Budget setting.
- A proposed timetable for 2023-24 Budget setting including the recommended two stage approach to consultation.
- Proposed savings targets by Department.

1.7. Ultimately this report is intended to support the Council in preparing the 2023-24 Budget and identifying savings which will assist in delivering a balanced budget for the year.

## 2. Spring Statement 2022

2.1. The Chancellor announced the Government's [Spring Statement](https://www.gov.uk/government/news/chancellor-announces-tax-cuts-to-support-families-with-cost-of-living)<sup>2</sup> on 23 March 2022. There were limited announcements which will impact on the County Council's budget position directly, although there were some measures which will require administration by local authorities including an extension of the Household Support Fund from April 2022 (a further £500m nationally) and various business rates changes.

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<sup>2</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/chancellor-announces-tax-cuts-to-support-families-with-cost-of-living>

2.2. The Office for Budget Responsibility assessed the Spring Statement position as follows: *“The public finances have emerged from the pandemic in better shape than expected. But Russia’s invasion of Ukraine will push inflation to a 40-year high of almost 9 per cent, and living standards are set for a historic fall over the next 12 months. The Chancellor used his Spring Statement to deliver rebates and tax cuts that reduce that fall by a third to just over 2 per cent and a pair of personal tax cuts that undo one-sixth of the total tax rises he has previously announced. This leaves him with £30 billion of headroom against his fiscal targets.”*<sup>3</sup>

2.3. The key economic forecasts from the Spring Statement were:

- GDP growth forecasts for 2022 have been reduced from 6% to 3.8%.
- CPI inflation is expected to peak in the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter of this year at around 8.7%, and is currently 6.2%. RPI is consistently higher than CPI.
- Borrowing is forecast to increase to £99bn for 2022-23, reducing to £32bn in 2026-27.

2.4. The key policy announcements made as part of the Spring Statement include:

- **Fuel duty will be reduced by 5p a litre** from 6pm 23 March 2022 until March 2023. This is estimated to mean a reduction of just over £3 on a standard tank of fuel;
- The **National Insurance Primary Threshold and Lower Profits Limit (for employees and the self-employed respectively) will be raised** by £3,000, from £9,880 to £12,570 from July 2022. This aligns the NI threshold with the threshold for income tax, meaning people must earn £12,570 per year before paying income tax or NI. This increase is forecast to benefit almost 30 million people, with a typical employee saving over £330 in the year from July. Around 70% of NICs payers will pay less NICs, even after accounting for the introduction of the Health and Social Care Levy;
- **VAT will be reduced to 0% on home energy-saving measures** such as insulation, solar panels and heat pumps for five years from April 2022;
- The **Household Support Fund will be extended** with an additional £500m from April 2022, on top of the £500m already provided since October 2021, bringing total funding to £1 billion. The fund will continue to be administered by local authorities in England;
- The Chancellor confirmed a number of existing business rates measures and including that **SMEs in the retail hospitality and leisure sectors will receive a 50% discount in business rates** up to £0.110m, alongside **targeted business rate exemptions to support the decarbonisation of non-domestic buildings which would be brought forward**;
- A **reduction in the basic rate of income tax** from 20% to 19%, however this will not be implemented until April 2024; and

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<sup>3</sup> <https://obr.uk/>

- Opening the **second round of bidding to the £4.8 billion Levelling Up Fund**.

2.5. Alongside the Spring Statement, the Chancellor published a “[Tax Plan](#)”<sup>4</sup>, setting out a three part plan to strengthen the economy over the remainder of the Parliament. It is intended to:

- help families with the cost of living;
- support growth in the economy, and
- ensure the proceeds of growth are shared fairly.

2.6. The Council will need to respond to any specific consultations arising from the Tax Plan as they are published, and will consider the detailed implications of the Spring Statement for the Council’s 2023-24 Budget as they emerge over the coming weeks and months.

### 3. Budget context

3.1. On 21 February 2022, the County Council approved the 2022-23 Budget and Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) to 2025-26. Based on currently available information, that MTFS set out a budget gap of £96.676m over the period, with a gap of £59.927m to be addressed in 2023-24. The current MTFS is based on an assumption that the funding allocations set out in the 2022-23 final Local Government Finance Settlement<sup>5</sup> will be broadly “rolled over” for 2023-24 and beyond. However, given the Government’s intention to deliver funding reform in time for the 2023-24 settlement<sup>6</sup>, there is some considerable uncertainty attached to this as described previously.

3.2. A summary of the Net Budget provided for by Department in the MTFS approved in February 2022 is shown in Table 1 of this report. The following table (Table 2) sets out a summary of the cost pressures provided for in the February MTFS, with additional detail of the pressures assumed for 2022-23 in Table 3. Full details of all pressures currently assumed within the MTFS are provided in the [2022-23 Budget report to Full Council](#). A number of pressures within the Council’s budget are driven by Central Government decisions, including elements of pay and price market pressures which are linked to the National Living Wage, social care reform, and pressures relating to assumed reductions in funding (for example the New Homes Bonus grant in 2023-24).

<sup>4</sup>[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/1062583/SS\\_Tax\\_Plan.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1062583/SS_Tax_Plan.pdf)

<sup>5</sup><https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/final-local-government-finance-settlement-england-2022-to-2023>

<sup>6</sup><https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/kemi-badenochs-speech-to-the-lga-local-government-finance-conference-2022>

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**Table 1: Net Budget by Department**

	<b>2022-23</b>	<b>2023-24</b>	<b>2024-25</b>	<b>2025-26</b>
	<b>£m</b>	<b>£m</b>	<b>£m</b>	<b>£m</b>
Adult Social Services	263.184	288.295	304.104	319.203
Children's Services	189.065	200.006	212.072	221.078
Community and Environmental Services	166.162	176.758	183.976	191.494
Strategy and Transformation	8.759	9.214	9.572	9.931
Governance Department	1.960	2.316	2.503	2.697
Finance and Commercial Services	33.424	34.542	36.070	37.598
Finance General	-198.432	-168.421	-164.141	-165.111
<b>Total Net Budget</b>	<b>464.123</b>	<b>542.710</b>	<b>584.157</b>	<b>616.890</b>
Council Tax	-464.123	-482.783	-500.110	-520.214
<b>Budget Gap (cumulative)</b>	<b>0.000</b>	<b>59.927</b>	<b>84.047</b>	<b>96.676</b>

3.3. The key elements driving the budget gap for 2023-24 onwards are shown in the following table. One significant factor is the reliance on one-off resources and savings including the use of reserves in 2022-23 which creates a pressure in the following year.

**Table 2: Budget pressures by type in MTFS 2022-23 to 2025-26**

	<b>2022-23</b>	<b>2023-24</b>	<b>2024-25</b>	<b>2025-26</b>
	<b>£m</b>	<b>£m</b>	<b>£m</b>	<b>£m</b>
Cost pressures	51.007	95.848	49.647	32.484
Funding decreases	34.649	1.833	0.000	0.250
Savings identified	-28.434	-9.159	-8.200	0.000
Funding increases	-32.194	-9.936	0.000	0.000
Change in Council Tax / Taxbase / Collection Fund	-25.029	-18.660	-17.327	-20.104
<b>Remaining gap</b>	<b>0.000</b>	<b>59.927</b>	<b>24.120</b>	<b>12.630</b>

**Table 3: Detail of 2023-24 pressures in MTFS**

	<b>2023-24 £m</b>	<b>Detail</b>
Economic and inflationary pressures	22.119	Pay assumed at 3% equates to £9.3m, price inflation of £12.8m includes £6.8m Adult Social Care, £2.4m Children's Services.
Legislative requirements	16.225	£6.7m relates to Adult Social Care pay and price market pressures (including National Living Wage). £7.6m also within Adults relates to anticipated pressures linked to social care reform (offset by equivalent grant). Balance relates to pension fund valuation assumptions.
Demand and demographic pressures	21.270	£6.7m relates to older people demographic growth. £8.0m Children's Services demographic growth including ongoing pandemic impact (plus £3.5m Home to School transport pressures). £1.7m relates to waste tonnages and £1.2m contractual GY third river crossing maintenance.
Council policy decisions	36.234	Policy decisions include £7m within Adults which may ultimately relate to demography and legislative items and cost pressures within Finance General budgets relating to MRP (minimum revenue provision) of £6m, treasury pressures £2.9m, and significantly the <b>reversal of £18m</b> of one off resources used in 2022-23.
<b>Net total pressures</b>	<b>95.848</b>	
Funding decreases	1.833	Reflects assumed loss / removal of New Homes Bonus Grant.  Significant risk also exists in relation to the £10.687m one off 2022-23 "services Grant" broadly assumed to continue in 2023-24 via funding reform.
<b>Total pressures and funding decreases</b>	<b>97.682</b>	

3.4. The following table provides a summary of the agreed savings included in the MTFS and detailed in the February budget papers. Further savings will be required to close the identified budget gap in addition to these. It should be noted that the level of savings included in the Budget for future years is substantial and, as set out above, overall pressures in 2023-24 include the impact of the reversal of the £18m of one-off resources being applied to support a balanced budget in 2022-23. In the current context of significant inflationary pressures, particularly related to fuel and energy, the risk of further cost pressures emerging during the 2023-24 budget process remains high.

**Table 4: Planned savings by Department in MTFS 2022-23 to 2025-26**

	<b>2022-23 £m</b>	<b>2023-24 £m</b>	<b>2024-25 £m</b>	<b>2025-26 £m</b>	<b>Total £m</b>	<b>% of total MTFS savings</b>
Adult Social Services	-10.465	-4.175	-5.700	0.000	<b>-20.340</b>	44.4%
Children's Services	-12.088	-4.900	-2.500	0.000	<b>-19.488</b>	42.6%
Community and Environmental Services	-3.496	-0.236	0.000	0.000	<b>-3.732</b>	8.1%
Strategy and Transformation	-0.439	0.102	0.000	0.000	<b>-0.337</b>	0.7%
Governance	-0.200	0.100	0.000	0.000	<b>-0.100</b>	0.2%
Finance and Commercial Services	0.134	-0.300	0.000	0.000	<b>-0.166</b>	0.4%
Finance General	-1.880	0.250	0.000	0.000	<b>-1.630</b>	3.6%
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>-28.434</b>	<b>-9.159</b>	<b>-8.200</b>	<b>0.000</b>	<b>-45.793</b>	



3.5. The following table sets out the net revenue budget forecast for 2023-24 agreed at February 2022 budget setting and incorporating the current pressures and assumptions as detailed within this report.

**Table 5: Forecast 2023-24 Net Revenue Budget (as at February 2022)**

	Adult Social Services	Children's Services	Community and Environmental Services	Strategy and Transformation	Governance	Finance and Commercial Services	Finance General	Norfolk County Council
	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m
Base Budget 2022-23	263.184	189.065	166.162	8.759	1.960	33.424	-198.432	<b>464.123</b>
<b>Growth</b>								
Economic and inflationary	8.858	5.351	5.103	0.353	0.070	1.471	0.914	<b>22.119</b>
Legislative requirements	14.354	0.000	-0.190	0.000	0.000	0.000	2.061	<b>16.225</b>
Demand and demographic	6.700	11.500	2.990	0.000	0.080	0.000	0.000	<b>21.270</b>
Policy decisions	7.000	-0.960	2.929	0.000	0.105	-0.052	27.212	<b>36.234</b>
Funding reductions	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	1.833	<b>1.833</b>
Cost neutral increases	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.050	<b>0.050</b>
<b>Total budget increase</b>	<b>36.912</b>	<b>15.891</b>	<b>10.832</b>	<b>0.353</b>	<b>0.255</b>	<b>1.419</b>	<b>32.071</b>	<b>97.732</b>
<b>Reductions</b>								
Total savings	-4.175	-4.900	-0.236	0.102	0.100	-0.300	0.250	<b>-9.159</b>
Funding increases	-7.626	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	-2.310	<b>-9.936</b>
Cost neutral decreases	0.000	-0.050	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	<b>-0.050</b>
<b>Total budget decrease</b>	<b>-11.801</b>	<b>-4.950</b>	<b>-0.236</b>	<b>0.102</b>	<b>0.100</b>	<b>-0.300</b>	<b>-2.060</b>	<b>-19.145</b>
<b>Base Budget 2023-24</b>	<b>288.295</b>	<b>200.006</b>	<b>176.758</b>	<b>9.214</b>	<b>2.316</b>	<b>34.542</b>	<b>-168.421</b>	<b>542.710</b>
Funded by: Council tax								-480.783
Collection Fund surplus								-2.000
<b>Total</b>								<b>-482.783</b>
2023-24 Budget Gap								59.927

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## 4. Medium Term Financial Strategy

4.1. The table below sets out the high level MTFS position as agreed in February 2022 and reflecting the addition of a further financial year (for 2026-27) to the planning period. The inclusion of a further year in MTFS planning based on the same broad assumptions adds £19.137m to the forecast gap, bringing it to £115.814m for the MTFS period. The forecast budget gap for 2023-24 remains £59.927m.

**Table 6: Updated Medium Term Financial Strategy 2023-24 to 2026-27**

	<b>2023-24</b>	<b>2024-25</b>	<b>2025-26</b>	<b>2026-27</b>	<b>Total</b>
	<b>£m</b>	<b>£m</b>	<b>£m</b>	<b>£m</b>	<b>£m</b>
<b><u>Growth Pressures</u></b>					
Economic and inflationary	22.119	23.016	23.016	23.670	<b>91.821</b>
Legislative requirements	16.225	6.760	-0.200	0.000	<b>22.785</b>
Demand and demographic	21.270	17.050	11.650	11.000	<b>60.970</b>
Policy decisions	36.234	2.821	-1.732	0.124	<b>37.447</b>
Funding decreases	1.833	0.000	0.000	0.000	<b>1.833</b>
<b><u>Savings and funding increases</u></b>					
Identified savings	-9.159	-8.200	0.000	0.000	<b>-17.359</b>
Funding increases	-9.936	0.000	0.000	0.000	<b>-9.936</b>
Council tax changes	-18.660	-17.327	-20.104	-15.658	<b>-71.749</b>
<b>Forecast Gap (Surplus)/Deficit</b>	<b>59.927</b>	<b>24.120</b>	<b>12.630</b>	<b>19.137</b>	<b>115.814</b>

4.2. The key assumptions underpinning the forecast gap in the current MTFS position include:

- That a balanced outturn position is delivered for 2021-22 and that all the savings proposed and included for 2022-23 can be successfully achieved – planned savings of £45.793m being delivered over the MTFS period.
- Government funding will be broadly flat in 2023-24 (i.e. essentially a rollover of 2022-23 funding levels). This assumption includes Settlement Funding (RSG, business rates), Rural Services Delivery Grant, Social Care Grant, Better Care Fund / improved Better Care Fund, Public Health Grant and [critically] the one-off 2022-23 “Services Grant”. Essentially, the Council has assumed that transitional arrangements will “smooth” some of the impact of such funding changes but details of any proposed approach remain to be announced by Government.
- Cost pressures for 2023-24 including:
  - 3% for pay inflation in 2023-24 to 2026-27. Uncertainty remains about the level of the 2022-23 pay award, with the 2021-22 pay

- award only having been agreed at 1.75% (2.75% at the lowest grade) in March 2022.
- Non-pay inflation in line with contractual rates or CPI forecasts where appropriate totalling £12.8m in 2023-24. This may be an underestimate in light of cost pressures particularly around energy and fuel (with a knock on impact on both NCC activity and services delivered by third parties).
  - Demographic growth pressures for Adults, Childrens, Waste totalling £21.2m in 2023-24.
  - The High Needs Block overspend and brought forward DSG deficit position can continue to be treated in line with the accounting treatment set out by Government, and as such places no pressure on the “core” Council budget.
  - Assumed increases in council tax over the MTFS period as set out in the table below (1.99% for general council tax in all years and 1% for the Adult Social Care precept up to 2025-26). The level of the ASC precept available beyond 2022-23 has not yet been confirmed by Government and therefore remains an area of risk. It also remains the case that Government’s approach to the funding of local authorities in recent years has been predicated on an assumption that councils will increase council tax by the referendum limit, and that average levels of tax base growth will be experienced. This expectation has effectively been reiterated in the *Plan for Health and Social Care*. A decision to increase council tax by less than the referendum threshold therefore results in the Council having lower levels of funding than Government would expect. Final decisions about the level of council tax increase remain a matter for Full Council based on the recommendation of Cabinet and to be agreed in each year.

**Table 7: Council tax assumptions**

	<b>2023-24 £m</b>	<b>2024-25 £m</b>	<b>2025-26 £m</b>	<b>2026-27 £m</b>
Council tax % increase	-9.290	-9.663	-10.052	-10.456
Council tax collection fund change <sup>7</sup>	-0.080	2.000	0.000	0.000
Council tax base (assumes growth of 1.0% in all years)	-4.622	-4.808	-5.001	-5.202
Council tax ASC precept <sup>8</sup>	-4.668	-4.856	-5.051	0.000
<b>Total</b>	<b>-18.660</b>	<b>-17.327</b>	<b>-20.104</b>	<b>-15.658</b>
<b>Key assumptions</b>				
General council tax % increase assumption	1.99%	1.99%	1.99%	1.99%
ASC precept % increase assumption	1.00%	1.00%	1.00%	0.00%

<sup>7</sup> Assumes collection fund surplus in 2023-24.

<sup>8</sup> Adult Social Care precept assumed to continue post 2022-23 but is subject to Government decision.

4.3. As set out at the time of 2022-23 budget setting, the pressures within the current budget planning position are such that the Executive Director of Finance and Commercial Services considers that the Council will have very limited opportunity to vary these assumptions, and **in the event that the Government offered the discretion for larger increases in council tax, or increases in the Adult Social Care precept for 2023-24, this would be the recommendation of the Section 151 Officer** in order to ensure that the Council's financial position remains robust and sustainable.

4.4. A number of significant uncertainties remain which could have an impact on the overall scale of the budget gap to be addressed in 2023-24, linked to ongoing uncertainty around local government (and wider public sector finances) including:

- Further "cost of living" pressures and the wider economic impacts, including the implications of the invasion of Ukraine;
- Further cost pressures emerging to support the achievement of carbon reduction targets, above the funding provided for in the 2022-23 Budget;
- the outcome of funding reforms (previously the Fair Funding Review) intended to be consulted on during 2022-23 and implemented for 2023-24. The short-term nature of the settlement announcement (for 2022-23 only, in spite of a multi-year Spending Review) means that risks remain around the provision of this funding in future years and therefore a material impact and potential cliff-edge may emerge in 2023-24 if these assumptions have to be subsequently reversed. The trajectory for local authority funding implied by both the Spending Review and 2022-23 settlement is for only very limited increases in core ongoing funding in 2023-24 and beyond;
- Government decisions about the council tax referendum limit or further ASC precept flexibilities in 2023-24. Government continues to make assumptions about council tax increases which effectively transfer the burden of funding services to Norfolk taxpayers;
- the need for a long term financial settlement for local government;
- delivery of other reforms to local government funding including the details of the approach to Adult Social Care reforms to implement the cap on care costs, and changes to other funding streams including the New Homes Bonus;
- The financial impact of anticipated social care and send national reviews which are assumed will not result in further unfunded burdens; and
- progress of various elements of Government policy including levelling up, County Deals, and the Shared Prosperity Fund.

4.5. While impact of many of these risks is difficult to quantify at this point, the sensitivity table below demonstrates some potential impacts on the scale of the Council's budget gap.

**Table 8: Budget gap sensitivity analysis 2023-24**

	<b>Approximate impact on 2023-24 gap £m</b>
Additional income from scope to raise Adult Social Care Precept by further 1%*	-4.700
Potential pressure from 2022-23 savings (assuming 20% non-delivery)	5.700
Potential pressure from 2023-24 planned savings feasibility review (assuming 20% unachievable)	1.800
Potential pressure from change in tax base growth +/-1%	+/-4.700
Approximate ASC pressure from every 1p increase in National Living Wage	+0.200
Impact of varying pay award assumptions +/- 1%	+/-2.600

\*A 1% increase in ASC precept is already assumed but availability has not been confirmed by Government.

## 5. Proposals

5.1. The following principles for 2023-24 budget setting are proposed:

- Three rounds of Budget Challenge (initial proposals in May and June and a detailed session for each directorate in September).
- Allocate £60m target for 2023-24 based on a “controllable spend” approach consistent with previous years.
- Seek to identify proposals to address forecast future year budget gaps.
- Budget planning to cover the period 2023-24 to 2026-27 (extend current MTFS by one year).
- In order to inform any revision of 2023-24 MTFS and budget gap, Cabinet to continue to keep MTFS assumptions under review for remainder of budget setting, particularly relating to:
  - council tax and business rates planning assumptions (informed by latest District forecasts).
  - achievement of the 2021-22 outturn position.
  - forecast delivery of planned 2022-23 savings programmes and viability of previously planned 2023-24+ savings.
  - changes in cost and income pressures.
  - any further Government funding announcements for 2022-23 and future years.
- To closely scrutinise any requests for additions to the Capital Programme for 2023-24 requiring additional borrowing to consider the value for money of proposals and assess their impact on the affordability of the revenue budget and MTFS, ensuring that borrowing levels are maintained within appropriate prudent limits and the revenue budget remains robust.
- Select Committees to have a role as part of the budget-setting process, considering areas for savings in May 2022 and commenting on detailed proposals in November 2022.

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- Final decisions about the 2023-24 Budget to be taken in February 2023 in line with the budget setting timetable as set out below.

5.2. It is proposed that the broad approach to budget development should include:

- A review of all current pressures with a view to reducing the level required;
- A review of all earmarked revenue reserves with a view to releasing funding where possible (noting that this would provide a one-off gain which would impact on the future year gap);
- A review of the Council's commercial opportunities, including scope to achieve increased income;
- A review to consider the scope to extend existing saving proposals;
- Identification of new savings; and
- The organisational review approved by Cabinet.

5.3. It should be noted that the changes during the budget setting process may result in the saving targets currently allocated to Services being revised (and potentially materially increased) in the event that further pressures or income changes arise. Options to address any shortfall in savings to close the 2023-24 Budget gap will ultimately include:

- Government providing additional funding;
- Corporate / centrally identified savings opportunities;
- The removal or mitigation of currently identified budget pressures; and
- Service departments identifying further savings.

5.4. The Budget agreed in February 2022 included a high level timetable for the 2023-24 budget process. The detailed timescales for internal "budget challenge" activity and summer consultation will be confirmed following approval of the proposed approach by April Cabinet.

**Table 9: Proposed Budget setting timetable 2023-24**

<b>2023-24 Proposed</b>	<b>Time frame</b>
Cabinet review of the financial planning position for 2023-27 – including formal allocation of targets	4 April 2022
Scrutiny Committee	20 April 2022
Select Committee input to development of 2023-24 Budget – strategy	w/c 23 May 2022
Review of budget pressures and development of budget strategy and detailed savings proposals 2023-27 incorporating: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Budget Challenge 1 (early May) – context / strategy / approach / outline proposals including transformation</li> <li>• Budget Challenge 2 (early June) – detailed proposals</li> <li>• Budget Challenge 3 (early September) – final proposals</li> </ul>	April to December 2022

<b>2023-24 Proposed</b>	<b>Time frame</b>
<i>Fair Funding Review / DLUHC reform of Local Government funding</i>	<i>TBC early / mid 2022</i>
Cabinet agree strategic budget approach and any initial proposals for summer consultation	4 July 2022
Scrutiny Committee	20 July
Summer consultation activity – service priorities, transformation, approach and early saving proposals	Late July / August(?) 2022
Cabinet approve final proposals for public consultation	3 October 2022
Scrutiny Committee	19 October 2022
Public consultation on 2023-24 Budget proposals, council tax and adult social care precept	Late October to mid December?
Select Committee input to development of 2023-24 Budget – comments on specific proposals	w/c 14 November 2022
<i>Government Autumn Budget</i>	<i>TBC October 2022</i>
<i>Provisional Local Government Finance Settlement announced including provisional council tax and precept arrangements (outcomes of Fair Funding Review?)</i>	<i>TBC December 2022</i>
Cabinet considers outcomes of service and financial planning, EQIA and consultation feedback and agrees revenue budget and capital programme recommendations to County Council	30 January 2023
Confirmation of District Council tax base and Business Rate forecasts	31 January 2023
<i>Final Local Government Finance Settlement</i>	<i>TBC January / February 2023</i>
Scrutiny Committee 2023-24 Budget scrutiny	15 February 2023
County Council agrees Medium Term Financial Strategy 2023-24 to 2026-27, revenue budget, capital programme and level of council tax for 2023-24	21 February 2023

*Assumed Government activity and timescales*

5.5. The Budget process will be informed through the year by Government announcements around the Local Government Settlement, as well as any progress on reforms including the Funding Review. As set out elsewhere in the report, the timing for these is currently unknown.

5.6. In respect of the allocation of 2023-24 savings, it is recognised that Adult Social Services brought forward savings late in the 2022-23 budget process which would otherwise have provided a contribution to the department's 2023-24 target. The allocation of savings targets for 2023-24 therefore recognises this and adjusts the proposed targets<sup>9</sup>. Apart from this adjustment, it is proposed to

<sup>9</sup> The adjustment for Adults front door saving ASS030 reflects adding the additional element of the saving to both the gap requirement and departmental budget, apportioning the revised gap based on T:\Democratic Services\Committee Team\Committees\Scrutiny Committee\Agendas and pre agenda\2022\220420\Finals\9a. Strategic and Financial Planning - Budget process 2023-24 v4 FINAL.docx



apply the approach adopted in previous years (i.e. allocation of savings targets to Departments in proportion to net budgets, adjusted for budgets which are not “controllable” (for example Public Health grant, Schools, capital charges)). The figures set out in Table 10 are the new savings to be found in addition to those currently planned for in Table 4. As described above, there is a risk that the targets set out in the table below may need to be revised later in the budget process. As set out in the proposed timetable, the below table reflects the proposal to divide the 2023-24 budget process into two phases, with initial proposals being consulted on during the summer.

**Table 10: Saving targets by Department**

<b><u>Savings Target</u></b>	<b>2023-24 Phase 1</b>	<b>2023-24 Phase 2</b>	<b>2023-24 Total</b>	<b>2024-25</b>	<b>2025-26</b>	<b>2026-27</b>	<b>2023-27 Total</b>	<b>Share</b>
	<b>£m</b>	<b>£m</b>	<b>£m</b>	<b>£m</b>	<b>£m</b>	<b>£m</b>	<b>£m</b>	<b>%</b>
Adult Social Services	6.700	18.400	<b>25.100</b>	9.700	5.600	8.500	<b>48.900</b>	42%
Children's Services	3.400	10.700	<b>14.100</b>	5.900	2.900	4.400	<b>27.300</b>	24%
Community and Environmental Services	3.500	11.200	<b>14.700</b>	6.100	3.000	4.400	<b>28.200</b>	24%
Finance and Commercial Services	0.700	2.200	<b>2.900</b>	1.200	0.600	0.900	<b>5.600</b>	5%
Finance General	0.400	1.400	<b>1.800</b>	0.700	0.300	0.500	<b>3.300</b>	3%
Governance	0.100	0.550	<b>0.650</b>	0.250	0.100	0.200	<b>1.200</b>	1%
Strategy and Transformation	0.200	0.550	<b>0.750</b>	0.350	0.100	0.200	<b>1.400</b>	1%
	<b>15.000</b>	<b>45.000</b>	<b>60.000</b>	<b>24.200</b>	<b>12.600</b>	<b>19.100</b>	<b>115.900</b>	<b>100%</b>

5.7. It should be noted that the Phase 1 total of £15m represents a minimum target of savings to be found for summer consultation. Any savings above this level would contribute towards departmental targets for Phase 2 and would help to reduce the overall level of risk for the 2023-24 budget setting process. The level of the Phase 1 target is not intended to prohibit departments from bringing forward material savings programmes or strategies if they are above the indicative Phase 1 amounts.

## 6. Impact of the Proposal

6.1. This paper sets out an outline timetable and approach to the Council’s budget planning process for 2023-24, while recognising that significant risks and uncertainties remain. The proposals in this report are intended to:

- set the context for service financial planning for the year to come;
- provide a robust approach to tackling the significant budget gap forecast for 2023-24;

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the new notional budget prior to impact of the saving, then removing the additional ASS030 saving from the resulting Adults share of target.

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- assist the Council in managing the continuing significant uncertainty around local authority funding including funding reform while providing sufficient flexibility to respond to any changes required; and
- contribute to the Council setting a balanced budget for 2022-23.

## **7. Evidence and Reasons for Decision**

7.1. After more than ten years of savings identification and delivery, and in the face of both continuing significant financial pressures and Government plans for funding reform, it is essential that the Council has a robust approach to budget setting and the identification of saving proposals. Simultaneously, it is critical to continue to engage with Government, MPs and other stakeholders to campaign for adequate and sustainable funding for Norfolk to enable the delivery of vital services to residents, businesses and visitors. In the context of funding reform, it will be even more imperative than it has been in previous years that Government issue guidance on the direction of travel for reform, financial planning assumptions, and indicative funding allocations for 2023-24, as soon as possible.

7.2. In view of the size of the gap forecast for 2023-24 there is a significant risk that the Council will be obliged to consider reductions in service levels. As such it is important that the process of identifying, and consulting on, savings proposals is undertaken as soon as possible. This will provide additional time for the preparation and consultation and engagement work around saving proposals, which should, in turn, support effective delivery and implementation of any proposals that are ultimately agreed to provide a full year saving for 2023-24.

7.3. The Council's planning within the MTFS forecast is based on the position agreed in February 2022 and it is important to note that this will be kept under review throughout the 2023-24 Budget setting process, particularly in the event that further information about funding becomes available. It remains prudent to establish a process to begin planning for savings at the level required to close the underlying gap identified in February 2022.

7.4. The proposals in the report are intended to reflect a proportionate response to the challenges and uncertainties present in the 2023-24 planning process and will ultimately support the Council to develop a robust budget for the year.

## **8. Alternative Options**

8.1. This report sets out a framework for developing detailed saving proposals for 2023-24 and at this stage no proposals have been agreed, meaning that a range of alternative options remain open.

8.2. In addition, there are a number of areas where Cabinet could choose to consider different parameters for the budget setting process, such as:

- Adopting an alternative allocation of targets between services, or retaining a target corporately.
- Considering an alternative timetable within the time constraints required to develop proposals, undertake public consultation, and meet statutory deadlines for the setting of council tax.
- Changing assumptions within the MTFS (including the level of council tax) and therefore varying the level of savings sought.

8.3. The planning context for the Council will be updated if further information becomes available. Final decisions about the overall shape of the 2023-24 Budget, savings, and council tax will not be made until February 2023.

## 9. Financial Implications

9.1. Financial implications are discussed in detail throughout this report, which sets out the proposed indicative savings targets which will need to be found by each department to contribute to closing the 2023-24 and future year budget gap, subject to formal approval by Full Council in February 2023. The proposals in the report will require services to identify further very significant savings to be delivered against current budget levels. The scope to achieve savings at the level required may be limited by the legacy impact of COVID-19 on cost pressures, service delivery expectations, and existing saving programmes.

9.2. The Council is legally required to set a balanced Budget annually and should plan to achieve this using a prudent set of assumptions. However, Cabinet could choose to vary the allocation of indicative targets between directorates, or to establish an alternative approach to identifying savings. The scale of the budget gap and savings required are such that if the Council is required to deliver savings at this level there is a risk that this could result in the Council failing to fulfil its statutory responsibilities. As such the Government's response and decisions about Council funding in 2023-24 will be hugely significant. Any changes in Government funding could have a material impact on both the level of savings to be identified, and the Council's wider budget process. Government has hitherto failed to deliver the paradigm shift needed in the recognition of the importance and costs of providing social care, and to adequately fund local authorities to provide these and other vital services. Fundamentally there is a need for a larger quantum of funding to be provided to local government to deliver a sustainable level of funding for future years.

9.3. Work to deliver additional Government funding could therefore have an impact on the overall budget gap to be addressed. Equally, in the event that funding reform sees resources shifted away from shire counties, the Council's forecast 2023-24 gap could increase. At this point, Government has not confirmed details of the proposed approach or timescales for consultation on funding reform. The 2023-24 MTFS position also assumes that approximately £12m of funding will be rolled forward from the one-off 2022-23 Services Grant and New Homes Bonus. These assumptions remain to be confirmed and should be considered a key area of risk.

- 9.4. As a result of the above, the budget setting process and savings targets will be kept under review as budget planning progresses. In the event that additional budget pressures for 2023-24 emerge through budget planning, there may be a requirement to revisit the indicative saving targets.

## 10. Resource Implications

- 10.1. **Staff:** There are no direct implications arising from this report although there is a potential that staffing implications may be linked to specific saving proposals developed. These will be identified as they arise later in the budget planning process.
- 10.2. **Property:** There are no direct property implications arising from this report although existing saving plans include activities linked to property budgets and assumptions around capital receipts to be achieved.
- 10.3. **IT:** There are no direct IT implications arising from this report although existing saving plans include activities linked to IMT budgets. In addition, activities planned within Business Transformation will include further work to deliver savings through activity related to digital and IT initiatives.

## 11. Other Implications

- 11.1. **Legal Implications:** This report sets out a process that will enable the Council to set a balanced budget for 2023-24 in line with statutory requirements, including those relating to setting council tax, and undertaking public consultation.
- 11.2. **Human Rights implications:** No specific human rights implications have been identified.
- 11.3. **Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) (this must be included):** Any saving proposals with an impact on service delivery will require public consultation, and an Equality Impact Assessment of all proposals will need to be completed as part of budget-setting in due course. The results of public consultation and the findings of all EqIAs will be presented to Cabinet in January 2023 in order to inform budget recommendations to County Council.
- 11.4. No specific EqIA has been undertaken in respect of this report, although the equality impact assessment of the Council's resilience and recovery planning for COVID-19 can be found [here](#). The EqIA in relation to the 2022-23 Budget can be found as part of the [budget papers considered in February 2022](#).
- 11.5. **Data Protection Impact Assessments (DPIA):** N/a
- 11.6. **Health and Safety implications (where appropriate):** N/a

11.7. **Sustainability implications (where appropriate):** There are no direct sustainability implications arising from this report although existing 2022-23 budget plans include funding for activities which may have an impact on the environmental sustainability of the County Council through the delivery of the Environmental Policy. These issues were considered in more detail within the February budget report to Full Council. Further details are set out in the *Net Zero and Natural Norfolk Progress Update* elsewhere on the agenda. Ultimately sustainability issues and any associated financial implications in relation to either new 2023-24 proposals, or activities developed during 2022-23, will need to be fully considered once such initiatives are finalised, and ultimately as part of budget setting in February 2023.

11.8. **Any other implications:** Significant issues, risks, assumptions and implications have been set out throughout the report.

## 12. Risk Implications/Assessment

12.1. A number of significant risks have been identified throughout this report. Risks in respect of the MTFS were also set out within the February 2022 report to Full Council. Uncertainties remain which could have an impact on the overall scale of the budget gap to be addressed in 2023-24. These include:

- Any further impact of COVID-19 on the budget in 2022-23, including in particular:
  - any ongoing cost pressures within service delivery and contracted services which have not currently been provided for
  - future pressures on income particularly in relation to business rates and council tax
  - the implications of any measures implemented by Government to restore the national finances in the medium to longer term
- Ongoing uncertainty around local government (and wider public sector finances) including:
  - the impact of “cost of living pressures” and the wider impact of the invasion of Ukraine on the economy
  - the need for a long term financial settlement for local government. Spending Review announcements in 2021 covered one year only, and as a result there remains high uncertainty about the levels of funding for 2023-24 and beyond. In particular, it is of major concern that Government continues to place significant reliance and expectations on locally raised income. If this trend persists, the financial pressures for 2023-24 and beyond may become unsustainable. There remains a specific risk in relation to longer term reform of local government funding and the planned funding review, which is now expected to impact on 2023-24 budget setting, in that a failure by the Government to provide adequate resources to fund local authorities could lead to a requirement for further service reductions, particularly where these result in a redistribution between authority types or geographical areas. Changing Government

policies around the nature, role, responsibilities and requirements of Local Government may also represent an area of risk, as will changing expectations of the public, taxpayers and service users.

- linked to this are risks around delivery of reforms to local government funding including actions to deliver “Levelling Up”, the funding review, the detailed implications of Adult Social Care reform, reforms to the Business Rates system, and changes to other funding streams including the New Homes Bonus
- Further decisions about Local Government reorganisation and the progress of negotiations related to a County Deal.

12.2. The Council's Corporate Risk Register provides a full description of corporate risks, including corporate level financial risks, mitigating actions and the progress made in managing the level of risk. A majority of risks, if not treated, could have significant financial consequences such as failing to generate income or to realise savings. These corporate risks include:

- RM002 – The potential risk of failure to manage significant reductions in local and national income streams.
- RM006 – The potential risk of failure to deliver our services within the resources available for the period 2021-22 to the end of 2023-24.
- RM022b – Implications of Brexit for a) external funding and b) Norfolk businesses
- RM023 - Lack of clarity on sustainable long-term funding approach for adult social services at a time of increasing demographic pressures and growing complexity of need.
- RM031 – NCC Funded Children's Services Overspend

Further details of all corporate risks, including those outlined above, can be found in Appendix C of the March 2022 Risk Management report to Cabinet. There is close oversight of the Council's expenditure with monthly financial reports to Cabinet. Any emerging risks arising will continue to be identified and treated as necessary.

The Council is in the process of implementing a new HR and Finance System, following approval of the business case presented in May 2019, with the new system due to go live in April 2022. The successful implementation of this system is a key prerequisite for the 2023-24 Budget in terms of the system supporting delivery of both the budget process itself, and providing a mechanism through which savings and efficiencies are intended to be achieved.

## **13. Select Committee comments**

13.1. Select Committees provided commentary and input to the 2022-23 Budget process during budget development. Where relevant these have been set out within the budget setting approach proposed in this report. No specific input was sought in respect of the report itself, however Select Committees will

again have the opportunity to comment when they consider the implications of 2023-24 budget setting for the service areas within their remit when they meet during the year as set out in the proposed timetable.

## **14. Recommendations**

14.1. Cabinet is recommended:

- 1. To consider the overall budget gap of £96.676m included in the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) set by Full Council in February 2022, and agree:**
  - c) the gap of £59.927m to be closed for 2023-24; and**
  - d) the extension of the MTFS by a further year (to 2026-27) and the resulting overall gap for planning purposes of £115.814m. (Section 4).**
- 2. To review the key budget risks and uncertainties as set out in this report. (Section 4).**
- 3. To consider the principles of the proposed approach to budget setting for 2023-24, noting that there may be a need for flexibility within both the process itself and the assumptions applied, and agree:**
  - c) the process and indicative timetable set out in Section 5, including the proposed two stage consultation process for 2023-24 to support in the early securing of deliverable saving proposals.**
  - d) the savings targets allocated to each Department to be found (Table 10), and that these will be kept under review through the budget process.**

## **15. Background Papers**

15.1. Background papers relevant to this report include:

[Norfolk County Council Revenue and Capital Budget 2022-23 to 2025-26, County Council 21/02/2022, agenda item 5](#)

Finance Monitoring Report 2021-22 P11, Cabinet, 04/05/2022 (on this agenda)

Better Together, for Norfolk – delivering our strategy, Cabinet, 04/05/2022 (on this agenda)

Norfolk County Council – Strategic Review, Cabinet, 04/05/2022 (on this agenda)

[Risk Management, Cabinet 07/03/2022, agenda item 17](#)

## **Officer Contact**

T:\Democratic Services\Committee Team\Committees\Scrutiny Committee\Agendas and pre agenda\2022\220420\Finals\9a. Strategic and Financial Planning - Budget process 2023-24 v4 FINAL.docx

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

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## Scrutiny Committee

Item No:10

**Report Title: Monitoring of NCC Environmental Policy – Development of a Digital Dashboard**

**Date of Meeting: 20 April 2022**

**Responsible Cabinet Members:** Cllr Andy Grant (Cabinet Member for Environment & Waste)

**Responsible Director: Tom McCabe** (Executive Director of Community and Environmental Services)

### **Executive Summary**

The purpose of this paper is to update the Scrutiny Committee on progress towards the development of a digital emissions dashboard. A feasibility report was conducted by the Information Management Team to assess the options for developing a digital dashboard. Following recommendations from this, a phased approach is being taken in light of the effect of the transition to the new Oracle system on resource availability.

An interim emissions dashboard using existing energy data reports is being created, which will be succeeded by a more comprehensive dashboard delivered through the new cloud-based data hosting systems. A solution development team is currently producing the phase 1 interim dashboard, with oversight being provided by the Net Zero board.

### **Recommendation:**

**Scrutiny is asked to:**

- 1. Acknowledge the progress being made in the development of a digital emissions dashboard**

## Background and purpose

The Scrutiny Committee received an update on the NCC Environmental Policy at its November meeting, the minutes and papers for which can be found [here](#). Following discussion, it was agreed by the Committee that the most appropriate way for Scrutiny to get involved in monitoring progress against key environmental targets would be to take a high-level overview of the digital dashboard currently in development. The Committee has requested for Members to comment on progress of the development of the digital dashboard. Additionally, the Committee invited an update on progress against the Council's environmental targets. This paper provides the Committee with the relevant updates to fulfil these requests.

## Dashboard Progress Update

### Feasibility review

Following Scrutiny in November, the Information Management Team has conducted a feasibility report to assess options for the digital dashboard. The report reviewed the benefits and drawbacks in terms of form, functionality and deliverability of a dashboard developed through different reporting platform options.

Three viable options were outlined for the dashboard:

- Option 1: Utilise the internal data warehouse to extract, transform and load data from multiples sources for the purposes of Power BI reporting
- Option 2: Utilise the Azure (cloud-based) platform to extract, transform and load data from multiple sources for the purposes of Power BI reporting
- Option 3: Develop Power BI reports based on the existing energy data outputs

The most significant factor in appraising these options is the effect of the migration to the new Oracle system. The transition is drawing the Council's analytical and data engineering capability as a key priority. In tandem is the process of migrating the Council's data warehouse from its internal servers – which are near capacity - to Microsoft Azure (a cloud-based system). As a result, the specialist resources that can be drawn on to develop a dashboard are currently limited.

In addition, the transition to a new data hosting system will necessitate a period of acclimatisation to their functionality. As analysts build familiarity with Azure and with Oracle Analytics they will be better positioned to decide how the dashboard can be optimally designed and future-proofed within the new system.

## Phased approach

In light of the above points, the study recommended that delivery of the dashboard should be across two phases, starting with Option 3 and moving to Option 2.

Through initially pursuing Option 3, officers can immediately develop an interim emissions dashboard that draws on readily available energy data sources and does not require significant data engineer resource at a time when this is limited. This will be superseded in a second phase as specialist resources are freed up after Oracle settles in and the cloud-based Azure functionality is clearer.

The phase 1 interim dashboard will provide an interactive visualisation of the council's core emissions forming the Council's net zero public commitment for its estates. This includes annual emissions from 2016/17 to present from building heating (Scope 1), building electricity and streetlight electricity (mainly Scope 2 with Scope 3 transmission losses), and vehicles (Scope 1 NCC controlled vehicles and Scope 3 grey fleet).

Whilst this interim digital dashboard will present information on the Council's own emissions, it is important to note that information on the emissions relating to the county of Norfolk are already published for the public on [Norfolk Insight](#). Available here is an engaging breakdown of the county's emissions per capita, sectoral emissions, land use emissions and energy usage. The data underpinning this is the UK local authority and regional carbon dioxide emissions statistics published by the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy.

In moving to phase 2 of producing an Azure-based dashboard, consideration will be given to how to integrate data relating to broader Environmental Policy goals including important work towards nature recovery in Norfolk. Presenting these alongside the emissions data will offer a more rounded impression to the public of the Council's work towards its strategic priority of enabling a greener, more resilient future for Norfolk.

Some of the data streams relating to the Environmental Policy areas are more complex to handle (for example, via geographical information systems) and, therefore, will require specialist attention. A business assessment will be made of the internal resources that will be needed to deliver phase 2.

## Delivery and oversight

Phase 1 work to deliver the interim dashboard is currently under way. A solution development team is building a prototype which will lead into go-live. Oversight of the dashboard approach and progress is provided by the Council's new Net Zero Board. This Board currently meets monthly to steer progress on the broader net zero programme of work and is chaired by the Head of Paid Service.

## Environment Policy Progress

For a broader overview of progress on the Council's net zero and Natural Norfolk work programmes, we invite the committee to review the paper produced for the April Cabinet meeting. This is attached as a background paper.

## **Impact of the proposals**

The proposed approach will facilitate transparency for both Members and the public in relation to the Council's performance towards reducing its carbon emissions and reaching its net zero commitment. In time it will also enable visibility of the broader work being done in relation to the Council's Environmental Policy.

## **Evidence and Reasons for Decision**

The evidence for this decision is based on the feasibility study conducted by the Information Management Team. Officers are proceeding with the recommended pathway for developing the dashboard set out in the feasibility study attached as a background paper.

## **Alternative Options**

The alternative options are set out in the feasibility study conducted by the Information Management Team.

## **Financial Implications**

The initial work to develop the dashboard has been supported from existing resources. There will be an internal resource cost to developing the phase 2 dashboard, a business case will be produced to identify the financial implications and the potential options to develop the dashboard further.

## **Resource Implications**

Staff and IT resources will be required to develop a more comprehensive phase 2 dashboard. These will be formally assessed in the business case mentioned above.

## **Other implications**

### **Legal implications**

No direct legal implications identified.

### **Human rights implications**

No implications identified.

### **Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) (this must be included)**

The data which will be publicly presented through the dashboard is non-specific to individuals or protected characteristic groups. No direct equalities impacts are identified.

### **Health and Safety implications (where appropriate)**

N/A

## **Sustainability implications (where appropriate)**

N/A

## **Any other implications**

No further implications identified

## **Risk Implications/Assessment**

No risks identified beyond those set out in the November cabinet paper

## **Select Committee comments**

No specific comments

## **Background papers**

[Report to cabinet on 4<sup>th</sup> April 2022](#) (Net Zero and Natural Norfolk Progress update)

Appendix A - Feasibility Report, Carbon reduction dashboard. Project Reference: IMT00989.

## **Officer contact**

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

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# Feasibility Report

## Carbon reduction dashboard

Project Reference: IMT00989

# Purpose

The purpose of this document is to present the outcomes of a feasibility study for a proposed project.

It is used to:

- Define the business requirements
- Describe options for a solution to meet those requirements
- Present the conclusions and recommendations of the study
- Record the business approval of any agreed option
- Facilitate gate approval to move to next project stage

# Introduction

The Corporate Carbon Reduction Programme is a significant strategic priority.

To improve the visibility of progress in carbon reduction, a project has been initiated to develop a carbon reduction dashboard that shows a baseline position, enables forecasting, progress tracking and makes information accessible to all.

The dashboard should present data from various sources such as Stark, Esight, GIS and LoRaWAN air quality sensors.

An IMT work request was submitted requesting support with developing requirements for the carbon reduction dashboard. The project was assigned to the IMT programme Data 'theme'.

Initial stakeholder engagement revealed that a prototyping and iterative approach to solution development is preferred.



# Approach

A dashboard is dependent on its data supply and therefore the business analysis focussed on the current state of data, the reporting requirements and the options; with a view to using Power BI as the dashboard solution due to its integral position at NCC as the corporate business intelligence tool.

By analysing the data feeds and the processing steps, areas for improvement can be identified which inform the recommendations for managing the data supply in future. A transparent account of the data available enables report analysts to make informed choices on report design.

To determine the approach for dashboard development, a feasibility assessment is required to determine whether the data in its current form is suitable for Power BI reporting or whether utilising a reporting platform would deliver greater benefit.

## **Business Analyst activities**

- Establish what data is used for existing carbon emissions reporting and how often it can be supplied
- Review the data preparation processes to assess compatibility with business intelligence tools
- Identify opportunities to streamline data processing/improve reporting capability
- Develop requirements for carbon data reporting and the options available

## **Products/Outputs**

Carbon Data Audit  
Stark Data Journey  
Feasibility Report

# Business Requirements

- Ability to publish carbon reduction progress and make information accessible to all
- Produce a carbon reduction dashboard that includes historic data
- Ability to track carbon reduction progress against targets
- To provide a quarterly refresh of data feeding into the dashboard
- Present a baseline position of carbon emissions
- To be able to scale up and accommodate new customers and data sets
- To reduce the time spent preparing energy data by utilising automation
- To consolidate energy data sets to maximise reporting potential
- Enable access and use of energy data across the authority for a variety of business intelligence purposes
- Provide a secure, stable and robust platform for the dashboard and data
- Data sets must be compatible with the Power BI platform and software

## Stakeholders consulted:

Deborah Carr

Al Collier

Data Services Team

Michael Dawson

Tim Hudson

John Jones

Samuel Jones

***The requirements highlight the importance of data supply, automation and accessibility. This indicates a need to explore reporting platform options for managing energy reporting data sets in future.***

## Current Situation

The Corporate property team produce an annual report from the Stark energy database to provide information on the 3 scopes of energy emissions. The system receives data feeds from a variety of sources, each with varying supply frequencies, processing requirements and limitations of usability. In collaboration with the energy and sustainability manager, the '**Carbon Data Audit**' has now been developed to improve the transparency and understanding of the energy data supply for this project.

The majority of data feeds are imported into the Stark system as part of the business operating procedures. This is to ensure a single source of energy information for reporting. The steps to prepare data for reporting are important for report analysts and data engineers to understand as informs their choices on dashboard design and whether any changes/improvements need to be made to data management.

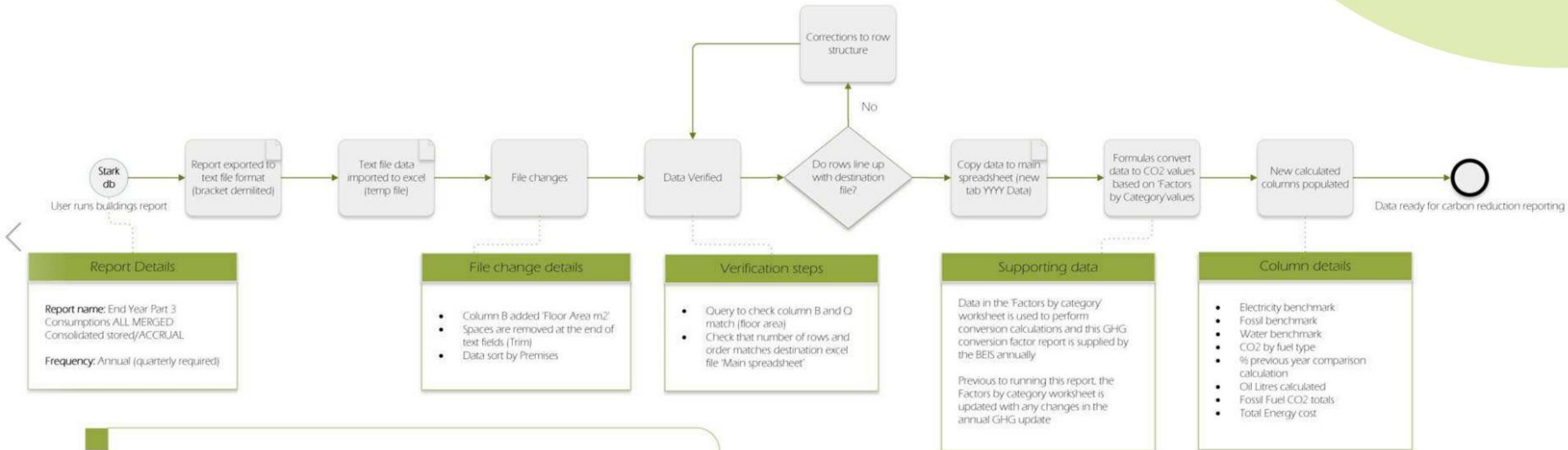
In summary, Stark is an internally hosted SQL database from which a report is run and exported as a text file. The text file contents are then copied into Excel where the data is validated, new calculated columns are populated and data is converted into the required CO2 values. The conversion factors for these calculations change each year requiring manual input to amend the excel formulas.

There was a gap in documentation for this procedure and so the '**Stark Data Journey**' was created and used during consultation discussions with the Data Services team to determine the options available.

# Stark Data Journey

## Project

Stark 'Buildings' Data Transformation Process – As Is  
Extract and preparation of energy data



### Summary

**Stage 1** - Determines the data to report on and exports the data into an external text file.

**Stage 2** - Verifies the data has been exported from Stark correctly, matches the row structure of the destination file and undergoes some minor formatting changes in preparation for the next phase of data processing.

**Stage 3** - Further verifies and enriches data using conversion data from the BEIS to inform the calculations that populate the benchmark and totalising columns.

## Conclusion

With such a manual and time consuming data preparation process for Stark, the functionality of a dashboard is limited. There are some additional options for more regularly refreshed data sets such as 'Esight' which can provide weekly meter reading data from energy suppliers (at half hourly rate). However, the data is less accurate as can contain blanks or be changed retrospectively once readings are properly calculated at year end. There is an API available (not yet configured) that could be used to retrieve the data, but Esight may be discontinued in 2022 with alternative data supply options currently being considered.

The Stark data could however be used to track and compare progress each year with a historic data set in place. By introducing a Power BI workspace, the data can be made easier to access for analysts and customers, improve collaborative working as well as enable additional data sets to be included in a central location. This approach will not address the data preparation issues and each data set would need to have a data owner who is responsible for preparing and staging the data in the workspace.

With a reporting platform such as the data warehouse, it is feasible that the data could be obtained directly from source systems and data feeds, and save time in the data preparation stages by introducing some automation. This approach is more resilient as reduces reliance on specific team members in the data supply chain.

***In consultation with Data Services about the approaches available for working with energy data and the aspirations of the programme, 3 options have been identified.***

# Options

- **Option 1 – On premises data warehouse (reporting platform)**
  - Utilise the existing Grid Data Warehouse to extract, transform and load data from multiples sources for the purposes of Power BI reporting
- **Option 2 – Azure (cloud) data warehouse (reporting platform)**
  - Use the Azure cloud platform to extract, transform and load data from multiple sources for the purposes of Power BI reporting
- **Option 3 – Build reports on existing excel data sets**
  - Develop Power BI reports based on the existing energy data outputs

# Option 1 – on premises DW ‘Grid’

Positives	Negatives
Established platform	Platform is near capacity
Allows for pipeline of data to be developed	Significant resource required to program transformations which may have to be duplicated when migrating to cloud at later date
Dashboard capability improved with a scheduled refresh of its data sets	Performance issues associated with busy platform
Data collection, preparation and transformation automation	
Delivers business continuity and time saving benefits through data supply automation	
Ability to join to other data sets in the DW	
Reporting platform is a supported service	

# Option 2 – Azure (cloud) DW

Positives	Negatives
Resilient and robust platform	Cost for Azure data transactions unclear
Expected to provide good system performance	Slower time to deliver – Azure in procurement phase
Easier to scale and develop platform based on demand and future requirements	New technical territory – proof of concept
Ability to join to other data sets in the DW	Significant data engineer resource required
Data collection, preparation and transformation automation	
Allows for pipeline of data to be developed	
Delivers business continuity and time saving benefits through data supply automation	
Some data (LoRaWAN) already in proof of concept in Azure	
Dashboard capability improved with a scheduled refresh of its data sets	



# Option 3 – Use existing excel data

Positives	Negatives
Fastest to deliver	Manual data preparation continues
Power BI workspace enables collaborative report design	Longer gaps between data refresh as process not automated
Ability to provide a history of emissions data	Business continuity risk as reliance on single point of contact for data remains
Suited to incremental delivery through prototyping approach	Greater dependency on data owners and report analysts to manage solution
	Limited scope to use data for other purposes

# Customer Decision

To be delivered across 2 phases. Although Azure is the preferred option, decision to wait until Oracle is live and Azure procurement is more advanced.

### **Phase 1 – Option 3 (use existing data exports)**

Delivery of initial dashboard based on the existing Stark database exports. Incremental delivery to prototype, gain feedback and improve. To continue data discovery activities to build on the data audit. Use the lessons learnt to inform dashboard re-design when the Azure phase begins.

### **Phase 2 – Option 2 (Azure reporting platform)**

Develop an automated pipeline of energy data into the Azure platform. Look at options for joining with GIS and Lorawan data. Opportunity to redesign dashboard and enhance reporting capability.

# Recommendations

The project should move into the development phase beginning with phase 1. For phase 1, a solution development team (SDT) should be formed and initially focus on developing a Power BI report using the Stark excel extracts hosted in a Power BI workspace. This rapid action team will use a prototyping approach to development where there are regular change and feedback cycles. As the Azure procurement work matures and becomes available to use, Phase 2 will start as a project with IMT Data Services and should include evaluation of linking with GIS and LoraWAN data.

## **The phase 1 SDT should include the following roles:**

- Team Leader (Business area project lead) – Co-ordination and task management
- IMT Business Analyst – Requirements facilitation between business and developers
- Solution Developers (I&A or business area report analysts for reporting building, Data Services for Power BI workspace)
- Business Ambassadors (representing existing Stark data, future business vision and customer experience)

## **Activities for the SDT should include:**

- Prepare 5 years of stark data 2016 - 2021 as individual files. Simplify and standardise the column structure, remove previous year comparison columns, and save as csv file type to validate the data and reduce errors.
- Work with Data Services to place the data files into a new Power BI workspace.
- Build report in line with current reporting specification. Develop further requirements through prototyping and as new data feeds are identified.
- Incremental change – rapid development, test and feedback cycle.
- Review of progress towards original business requirements.

# Data Protection Impact Assessment

Project

Question	Response
Is a DPIA required for this project?	No
If required – has the customer created one?	
If required but not created - has the Compliance team been informed?	
Has a data transfer risk assessment been completed? (If data will be transferred outside the UK)	No

# Scrutiny Committee

Item No: 12

**Report Title: Scrutiny Committee Forward Work Programme**

**Date of Meeting: 20 April 2022**

**Responsible Cabinet Member: None**

**Responsible Director: Director of Governance**

## Executive Summary

This paper sets out the current forward work programme for the Scrutiny Committee, outlining committee dates and items for consideration through to June 2022.

## Recommendations

Members of the committee are asked to:

1. Note the current Scrutiny Committee forward work programme and discuss potential future items for consideration.

## 1. Background and Purpose

- 1.1 Members agreed a forward programme of work at the meeting of the Scrutiny Committee on the 21 July 2021.
- 1.2 The work programme attached is amended frequently to better reflect officer pressures and changes to the Cabinet forward plan of decisions.
- 1.3 All topics are subject to change, with the committee remaining flexible to ensure the ability to adapt to emerging and urgent topics for consideration.
- 1.4 Members are advised that a further work programming session is to be scheduled for May 2022, following the Full Council AGM.

## 2. Proposal

- 2.1 Members are asked to note the attached forward programme of work (**Appendix A**) and discuss potential further items for consideration.

## 3. Impact of the Proposal

- 3.1 Maintaining the proposed work programme will ensure that the Scrutiny Committee has a full schedule of work, and officers are well prepared to present to the committee.

## **4. Financial Implications**

- 4.1 None

## **5. Resource Implications**

### **5.1 Staff:**

The County Council is still dealing with the COVID crisis and the focus for Officers will be in supporting this work. Some Officers may be redeployed from their current roles elsewhere to support ongoing work during the pandemic and the Committee may need to be mindful of focusing requests on essential information at this time.

### **5.2 Property:**

None

### **5.3 IT:**

None

## **6. Other Implications**

### **6.1 Legal Implications:**

None

### **6.2 Human Rights Implications:**

None

### **6.3 Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) (this must be included):**

None

### **6.4 Data Protection Impact Assessments (DPIA):**

None

## **6.5 Health and Safety implications (where appropriate):**

None

## **6.6 Sustainability implications (where appropriate):**

None

## **6.7 Any Other Implications:**

None

## **7. Risk Implications / Assessment**

7.1 None

## **8. Select Committee Comments**

8.1 None

## **9. Recommendations**

Members of the Scrutiny Committee are asked to:

1. Note the current Scrutiny Committee forward work programme and discuss potential future items for consideration.

## **10. Background Papers**

10.1 **Appendix A** – Scrutiny Committee Forward Programme of Work

### **Officer Contact**

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

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## Scrutiny Committee Forward Work Programme

<b>Date</b>	<b>Report</b>	<b>Further notes/Comments</b>	<b>Better Together for Norfolk - Strategic Goal(s)*</b>	<b>Cabinet Member</b>	<b>Exec Director</b>
<b>20/04/22</b>	Better Together, for Norfolk – Delivering our Strategy	Requested by the Committee as part of the 2021 work programming round.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- A Vibrant and Sustainable Economy</li> <li>- Better Opportunities for Children and Young People</li> <li>- Healthy, Fulfilling and Independent Lives</li> <li>- Strong, Engaged and Inclusive Communities</li> <li>- A Greener, More Resilient Future</li> </ul>	Cllr Andrew Proctor, Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Strategy and Governance	Paul Cracknell, Executive Director of Strategy and Transformation
	Strategic and Financial Planning 2023-24	Standard scene setting item for the annual budget setting process.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- A Vibrant and Sustainable Economy</li> </ul>	Cllr Andrew Jamieson, Cabinet Member for Finance	Simon George, Executive Director of Finance and Commercial Services



	Monitoring of NCC Environment Policy – Development of Digital Dashboard	Requested by the Committee at the meeting held on the 24 November 2021.	- A Greener, More Resilient Future	Cllr Andy Grant, Cabinet Member for Environment and Waste	Tom McCabe, Executive Director of Community and Environmental Services
	County Farms – update on actions following committee	Requested by the Committee at the meeting held on the 22 September 2021.	- A Greener, More Resilient Future - A Vibrant and Sustainable Economy - Better Opportunities for Children and Young People	Cllr Greg Peck, Cabinet Member for Commercial Services and Asset Management	Simon George, Executive Director of Finance and Commercial Services
<b>18/05/22</b>	NALEP - Update on Economic Renewal Strategy	Requested at the meeting of the Scrutiny Committee on the 22 September 2021	- A Vibrant and Sustainable Economy	Cllr Graham Plant, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Growing the Economy	Tom McCabe, Executive Director of Community and Environmental Services
<b>23/06/22</b>	Local Transport Plan – implementation plan	Requested by the Committee as part of the 2021 work programming round.	- A Greener, More Resilient Future - A Vibrant and Sustainable Economy	Cllr Graham Plant, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Growing the Economy	Tom McCabe, Executive Director of Community and Environmental Services
	Performance Review Panels – Quarterly Update	Agreed by the Scrutiny Committee at the meeting held on 21 July 2021	- Better Opportunities for Children and Young People	Cllr Bill Borrett, Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care,	James Bullion, Executive Director of Adult Social Care

			- Healthy, Fulfilling and Independent Lives	Public Health and Prevention & Cllr John Fisher, Cabinet Member for Children's Services	& Sarah Tough, Executive Director of Children's Services
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*\*The 'Better Together for Norfolk – County Council Strategy 2021-25' outlines five strategic priorities. These are:*

- *A Vibrant and Sustainable Economy*
- *Better Opportunities for Children and Young People*
- *Healthy, Fulfilling and Independent Lives*
- *Strong, Engaged and Inclusive Communities*
- *A Greener, More Resilient Future*

*When scheduling items for the work programme the committee should consider, where applicable, the item contributes to the above strategic goals and overall delivery of the County Council's strategy for 2021-25.*

**Issues to be considered for addition to work programme:**

- Better Together for Norfolk – Corporate Strategy
- Implementation of New Technology in Adult Social Care
- Onshore Renewable Energy
- Waste Disposal
- Quality of Care & Care Market in Norfolk
- Norfolk Rural Strategy 2021-24
- Local Transport Plan
- Social Value in Procurement (pending review of the Cawston Park SAR at the Norfolk HOSC).

- People with Disabilities – Engagement and Charging Policy
- Update on Flood Prevention Activity
- Monitoring of NCC Environment Policy – Development of Digital Dashboard
- County Farms – update on actions following committee