

**Cabinet**  
**10 January 2024**  
**Public & Local Member Questions**

	<b>Public Question Time</b>
6.1	<p><b>Question from James Hawketts</b></p> <p>At their full council in November, Norwich City Council unanimously endorsed a motion put by the Lib Dem group, calling on the county council to use a mere 0.1% of the new bus improvement money from the department of transport to fund a trial of a term-time night bus between the UEA and Norwich City Centre. Given the tiny relative cost of such an initiative, and the significant social benefits that could come from it, can I ask the cabinet member to reconsider his prohibitively low financial offer to the UEA and UEASU, and to fully fund the cost of the proposed UEA night bus?</p> <p><b>Response from the Cabinet Member for Highways, Infrastructure and Transport</b></p> <p>Thank you for your question. Funding from the Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) is to support improvements to bus services across the whole of Norfolk and there are many demands on this funding to support numerous different communities and their needs. Allocation of funds to specific services is considered on a case-by-case basis and is not based on ensuring any specific proportion of the available funding is used. It is important that the longer-term financial viability of any service is considered, otherwise there is a strong possibility that services would need to be removed once the short-term funding ends. There is a much higher chance of the UEA (University of East Anglia) bus service continuing post-BSIP funding if funds can also be found from others, hence why we are working with the UEA towards a jointly-funded trial. We also continue to work with First Bus to see if there are other ways that this night bus could be provided in a way that ensures its long-term success.</p>
6.2	<p><b>Question from Judith Taylor</b></p> <p>At the meeting with the Charging Reference Group and Cabinet at The Nest in March 2023, the Leader and Deputy Leader both said to several members of the CRG - "We now have much more understanding of disability and how our decisions affect those people's lives. We shouldn't have done what we did in 2018/19 with regards to the MIG and would not do so again."</p> <p>Will the Leader confirm this is the view of the Cabinet that will be reflected in the forthcoming budget?</p> <p><b>Response from the Leader and Cabinet Member for Strategy and Governance</b></p> <p>Thank you for your question. As you may have seen, local government faces some very difficult funding constraints, and we are still considering the impact of the settlement from Government on our need to provide services to all Norfolk people and balance our budget as legally required.</p>

**Cabinet**  
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	<b>Member Question Time</b>
7.1	<p><b>Question from Cllr Alexandra Kemp</b>  Norfolk is experiencing more extreme weather when highway drainage cannot cope with surface water. NCC needs more gulley suckers.</p> <p>A highway drain in West Winch overflowed, flooding pavement and road on Watering Lane, key route to community centre and shops, in December, for a week. Water froze to ice. Several residents fell over. I asked Highways to send a gulley cleanser. There was a delay. Highways was using equipment for internal flooding. There are 4 gulley suckers in the whole of Norfolk. Clearly not enough. Can County provide 4 more gulley suckers, so each Highway Area has two. The Watering Lane drain has flooded again.</p> <p><b>Response from the Cabinet Member for Highways, Infrastructure and Transport</b>  During autumn and the start of winter, Norfolk has experienced multiple storm weather events which has brought high levels of rainfall. This has resulted in land becoming saturated and main rivers and water courses being at or over capacity. This has meant that at some locations the highway drainage systems have become overwhelmed and unable to operate efficiently, as discharge rates into flooded rivers, ditches and other private systems becomes limited.</p> <p>The local Highway teams have been working around the clock to deal with flood water affecting the highway, and the Highways Out of Hours teams continue to work through the night to ensure residents that need assistance are supported.</p> <p>The Norfolk Strategic Flood Alliance (established by the County Council in February 2021) continues to bring together all agencies and partners who are involved in planning and responding to flooding in Norfolk.</p> <p>In terms of Watering Lane, resources were deployed to this location although the system outfalls on to the common which itself was under water.</p> <p>With regards to gully emptying resources, Norfolk's supply chain currently has six machines permanently in Norfolk. Other sub-contract resources are also available and can be procured at short notice if required.</p> <p><b>Second question from Cllr Alexandra Kemp</b>  The Local Government Association highlighted the invisibility of social care, its impact on unpaid Carers, and the need to increase choice and control. The shortage of respite care in West Norfolk, an area of demographic ageing, impacts on Carers. This leads to hardship and desperation. The current system isn't working. Older Carers are particularly vulnerable, juggling caring with their own healthcare, but Social Care cannot always locate suitable respite care urgently. This results in more permanent admissions to care homes when the Carer can no longer cope. Can NCC work with the NHS to provide a much-needed new Respite Care Establishment in West Norfolk?</p>

**Response from the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care**

Thank you for your Question.

Respite provision available for unpaid Carers in Norfolk is varied to meet a variety of needs, from shared lives, domiciliary care, day services, short breaks through Carers Matter Norfolk, as well as traditional bed-based respite provision. Norfolk County Council is committed to supporting unpaid Carers to have regular and meaningful breaks from Caring responsibilities and is currently reviewing the feedback received from Carers on the kind of breaks and service which is most helpful to them. Further details of the range of respite options are summarised below:

Bed based respite care - Norfolk County Council commissions beds from across Norfolk for planned respite care which can be booked 3 months in advance. In addition, respite care can be requested 3 weeks in advance from any residential or nursing home.

Shared Lives - In 2023 the Shared Lives service was extended to include Older People thus providing an alternative respite care option. Shared Lives is a service where an adult or young person who needs support moves in with or regularly visits an approved Shared Lives carer, after they have been carefully matched for compatibility.

Day Services - There are c.7 Day Services across West Norfolk for Older People, a mixture of specialist services, local community groups and residential settings. Day Service provision for older people in West Norfolk includes support to those with physical and cognitive disabilities including Dementia and Alzheimer's, as well as information & advice and social inclusion. Day Services provides support for unpaid carers by way of regular respite mostly on a weekly basis, and provide early intervention, management of condition, and promoting independence.

It is important to also note the ongoing investment into Carers Matters Norfolk (CMN) which is a county-wide service delivering support for carers, including information, advice, assessment and support. Part of the offer includes the Carers Breaks service, which will provide a personalised, flexible break from caring. Norfolk County Council currently work with the Integrated Care Board (ICB) concerning the funding that is provided through the Better Care Fund, which contributes towards this service, as part of an integrated Health and Social Care offer.

7.2

**Question from Cllr David Sayers**

Norfolk Fire and Rescue Service has shrunk from a headcount of 875 in 2010 to 722 in 2022, this reflects that national decrease of firefighter numbers from 44,307 in 2010 to 34,857 in 2022. This turnover rate coupled with a real term spending reduction has a concerning impact on public safety. What measures is Cabinet considering to address the implications to public safety and the diminishing resources for firefighting services?

**Response from the Cabinet Member for Communities and Partnerships**

The figures quoted are the total number of Norfolk Fire and Rescue Service operational fire fighters. Any changes to front line response, including station closures or removal of pumps (fire engines) is always carried out in consultation with the public as part of our CRMP (Community Risk Management Plan, previously known as Integrated Risk Management plan) with public safety at the forefront of planning and proposals. No

station closures have occurred since 2010, with the exception of Bethel Street with the move to the Diamond Jubilee Station Carrow – during that period we have also opened King's Lynn South which is delivery point. We are carrying some on-call vacancies at present. We have also added in new roles such as Fire Investigation Protection Officers and On-Call Support Officers to strengthen the overall approach.

Significant savings have been made in relation to support services, some of which have been replaced by Norfolk County Council shared service models.

**Second question from Cllr David Sayers**

The difficulties of recruiting and retaining staff within the SEND service are well known. Which positions, such as educational psychologists, is the Cabinet Member most concerned about retaining and recruiting and are we at risk of failing Norfolk's SEND children if the issues of recruitment and retainment are not addressed?

**Response from the Cabinet Member for Children's Services**

Challenges with recruitment and retention of Educational Psychologists (EPs) is well understood across England and it has been pleasing to see further national investment in training for EPs forming a key ambition within the DfE's Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) and alternative provision (AP) Improvement Plan's to create a highly skilled workforce for children and young people with SEND. A strong EP Recruitment and Retention Strategy has been developed between Children's Services and HR in Norfolk to positive effect for our valued EP workforce. A recent recruitment campaign, underpinned by an innovative communication and engagement strategy led by HR has resulted in successful recruitment of 2 EPs who will join Norfolk in 2024.

Additionally, our well established and enduring partnership with the University of East Anglia's trainee EP programme continues to reap rewards by enabling Norfolk's access to a talented pool of trainees who receive expert support from our existing service whilst on placement and who go on to join Norfolk as fully qualified EPs. It is anticipated that through this route we will benefit from a further 2-3 fully qualified EPs joining us in September.

A newly established service structure, supported by local investment, has brought a range of benefits and opportunities to the EP workforce and places Norfolk as a highly attractive employer for both existing and prospective EPs and our Local First Inclusion strategy is enabling innovative partnership between EPs and our school system, especially through the Specialist Resource Base programme which embeds research in practice to further attract this post graduate workforce. A further recruitment campaign is planned for the Spring where we aim to build on the success and place Norfolk as a vibrant and exciting place for EPs to work to the direct benefit of our children and young people with SEND.

7.3

**Question from Cllr John Crofts**

Developments within West Midlands devolution deal and recent comments by Norfolk Police and Crime Commissioner suggest that the powers of the PCC could potentially be

	<p>transferred to Norfolk's directly elected leader. Have these discussions happened with DLUCH and does this cabinet believe that further centralisation will benefit Norfolk's residents?</p> <p><b>Response from the Leader and Cabinet Member for Strategy and Governance</b>  The West Midlands and other areas with devolution deals are Mayoral Combined Authorities, where the Combined Authority is a separate legal entity from the constituent councils (and an additional layer of local government) enabling the transfer of additional functions. Norfolk's devolution deal will be through a County Deal, which does not create this additional tier of governance. Norfolk County Council has a strong record of working in partnership with the PCC (Police and Crime Commissioner) and has no plan to seek to transfer its powers into the County Council.</p>
7.4	<p><b>Question from Cllr Rob Colwell</b>  A recent LGA poll conducted by YouGov found that just 5% of the British public feel prepared for climate change, furthermore, 63% of respondents were worried about the impact of climate change in their local area. In light of this, does the Cabinet member agree with the LGA that it is time for a rapid acceleration in the adaptation work needed to prepare for the impacts of climate change?</p> <p><b>Response from the Cabinet Member for Environment and Waste</b>  Norfolk County Council set out its ambitious Climate Strategy last summer and we have been developing a comprehensive delivery plan over the last few months. The delivery plan covers a diverse range of actions and areas for immediate focus, and we are aware of the need to support adaptation where relevant as well as activity to mitigate Climate Change.</p> <p>In common with many of the goals set out in our Climate Strategy, much of our delivery will continue to be in partnership with District Councils, statutory agencies, third sector organisations, and the private sector. Full details of our delivery plan will continue to be brought forward over the coming months.</p> <p><b>Second question from Cllr Rob Colwell</b>  Given the need to revisit NCC spending plans in the coming weeks due to insufficient funds announced by central government, please can urgent reassurance be given to residents that cuts to flood and water management services will not take place, given indication that further cuts are planned?</p> <p><b>Response from the Cabinet Member for Environment and Waste</b>  Thank you for your question. As you may have seen, local government faces some very difficult funding constraints, and we are still considering the impact of the settlement from Government on the need to provide services to all Norfolk people and balance our budget as legally required.</p>
7.5	<p><b>Question from Cllr Sharon Blundell</b>  Research conducted by Carers UK details a concerning link between mental health and unpaid carers, more than a quarter of unpaid carers are 'in bad or very bad mental</p>

	<p>health'. Unpaid carers are the backbone of our adult social care services, what work is being undertaken to identify and assist those carers suffering from poor mental health?</p> <p><b>Response from the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care</b> Thank you for your question.</p> <p>Norfolk County Council commissions the service Carers Matter Norfolk. This service offers comprehensive information, advice, and Care Act assessments to carers in Norfolk. Understanding of the challenges that caring can bring to someone's mental health is integral to this advice and support. The principles of mental and physical wellbeing underpin the Care Act and are the foundations for assessment.</p> <p>Carers Matter Norfolk work hard to reduce the impact of a caring role on the individual, looking for ways to help them continue to participate in their activities and interests, and links to support networks. They support people to plan breaks and access mental health or counselling services where this is appropriate. They also help people to link with appropriate supportive services such as housing or benefits and work holistically to make changes which reduce stress and worry. Carers Matter Norfolk is available to all adult carers in Norfolk, regardless of demographic.</p> <p>Norfolk County Council works closely in collaboration with carers to ensure we have a good understanding of the experiences of being a carer. We attend partnership groups with Carers Voice to listen to views and give updates. Norfolk and Suffolk Foundation Trust representatives are also part of this collaborative group and attend to ensure that carers voices are being heard by Mental Health services and can give advice on what resources are available.</p>
7.6	<p><b>Question from Cllr Brian Watkins</b> I share members disappointment at the council's recent provisional financial settlement from Government, this clearly puts the authority's budget under even more pressure with the likelihood that the projected deficit for 2024/25 will exceed the £46.2 million already announced with so many Norfolk households still struggling through the cost-of-living crisis can you categorically assure council taxpayers that you will not follow the example of Croydon, Slough and Thurrock councils and seek government permission for a much larger hike in council tax.</p> <p><b>Response from the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance</b> Thank you for your question. As you may have seen, local government faces some very difficult funding constraints, and we are still considering the impact of the settlement from Government on our need to provide services to all Norfolk people and balance our budget as legally required. The Council has not approached the Government in respect of a bespoke referendum threshold for Norfolk and does not anticipate doing so at this time.</p>
7.7	<p><b>Question from Cllr Chrissie Rumsby</b> A report published in October 2023 by Future Health, 'Tackling malnutrition as part of the prevention agenda,' estimates that 6.7% of the Norfolk and Waveney ICB population suffer from malnutrition, the joint highest rate in the UK. The report estimates that Norfolk and Waveney ICB spends over 20% of its annual budget treating and managing</p>

malnutrition, with two thirds of this cost falling on the social care sector. Can the Cabinet Member for Public Health and Wellbeing confirm what steps are being taken to address malnutrition in Norfolk and how the ICB will be responding to the opportunities and recommendations in the report?

**Response from the Cabinet Member for Public Health and Wellbeing**

Thank you for your question. As you are of course aware, the Integrated Care Board (ICB) is a separate organisation from Norfolk County Council. We work closely with the ICB, as part of the Integrated Care System, but as partners. It is possible to ask the ICB questions directly on their performance and priorities. Public Health at Norfolk County Council take an evidenced based approach, focussing on the prevention of ill health. Public Health's strategic ambitions are outlined in the 'Ready to Change, Ready to Act' Public Health Strategic Plan.

**Supplementary question from Cllr Chrissie Rumsby**

The newly published Norfolk Public Health Strategy Plan, "Ready to Change, Ready to Act" makes no mention of malnutrition. Will the Cabinet Member ensure it's a public health priority for Norfolk?

**Response from the Cabinet Member for Public Health and Wellbeing**

Thank you for your question. Nutrition is part of the Strategic Plan. 'Ready to Change, Ready to Act', prioritises prevention and identifies actions Public Health will focus on to improve health and wellbeing outcomes. Working with partners in Health, Social Care and District Councils the Public Health team, informed by data, identifies those issues which need the most attention and action to improve poor health outcomes for our communities and residents. The council is investing over £45m of Public Health grant in helping people to live the healthiest lives they can. The strategic plan prioritises the importance of health improvement for all ages seeking to ensure the best start in life, importantly healthy eating and nutrition are recognised as a significant factor for children and young people. The plan also identifies taking a healthy lifestyle behaviours approach which, includes consumption of a poor diet as one of the key risk behaviours, will aim to look wider than just commissioning services. It will include significant workforce development to upskill key workforces around behaviour change so that they can support people to address barriers to change. In addition, efforts to promote 'positive' health behaviours will be supported by working with communities. Looking at these issues more widely will start to address wider determinants such as food poverty and health literacy in ways that we have not been able to previously.

7.8

**Question from Cllr Brenda Jones**

Given the increasing evidence of malnutrition in older people, what impact does this have on Adult Social Care services and what steps is the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care taking to deal with them?

**Response from the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care**

Thank you for your question:

In line with the Care Act, we support people with a range of needs and this includes supporting people to eat well and manage and maintain their nutrition. When we assess and review people's care and support our teams consider a person's nutrition and take

appropriate steps to support the person to meet any needs they may have. This may include using community resources, family, or friends, as well as direct support.

The UK Malnutrition Task Force and Age UK have highlighted a number of interventions that we can undertake in Adult Social Care to support older people. This includes advice and direction to Food Banks; Introduction to community support groups such as Age Concern, Alzheimer's Society etc; Welfare Benefit Checks; Direct assistance to help eating and drinking and assistance with debts or other costs.

Social Care Community Engagement (SCCE) and the Development workers are introducing people to community groups and support projects which have a meal provision aspect to them and in general social workers will link people to available community groups and services via the Living Well approach.

Domiciliary care directly provides older people and others with assistance, often with eating and drinking and act as a useful fail safe when weight loss is apparent. In addition, our partners at NCH & C have a Nutrition and Hydration pathway which helps to detect malnutrition and the Integrated Care System have created a Nutritional Guidance Booklet for Care Homes (2023) which is an area where malnutrition is a concern due to dietician and other specialist healthcare inputs being limited and the complexity of older people's health needs having increased.

7.9

**Question from Cllr Mike Smith-Clare**

In a Guardian article published on 21<sup>st</sup> December 2023 Dr Sarah Hanson, an associate professor in community health at the University of East Anglia was quoted as saying "there's evidence that not getting enough to eat causes low mood and anxiety, and often leads to stricter discipline in households. For children, their behaviour worsens and it has been linked to increased asthma diagnoses, as well as significantly higher use of emergency care." Will the Cabinet Member for Children's Services explain what actions she is taking to address the underlying causes and the consequences of malnutrition on the children of Norfolk?

**Response from the Cabinet Member for Children's Services**

Thank you for raising this important issue, as we know that poor nutrition in childhood affects the life chances of a child and impacts on their health and wellbeing across their lifetime. This is why nutrition and access to healthy food is an important aspect of the work that Children's Services and other Council departments are undertaking with a range of partners, as part of our shared commitment to children and young people flourishing.

Children's Services community and partnership teams are engaging with families and enabling them to be aware of and where needed, connecting them with the increasing network of community supermarkets/stores which are supporting around 22,000 people from over 8,500 households across the county as part of the Nourishing Norfolk network ([Nourishing Norfolk Network | Norfolk Community Foundation \(norfolkfoundation.com\)](https://www.norfolkfoundation.com)), and which is being supported by the Council. The teams' early help community workers maintain strong links with local food banks and community groups to ensure that wider support that families might need is available, including for example, access to local groups or links with libraries to reduce social isolation and loneliness, as well as there being practical help such as the NCC Client Hardship Services, where debt management and emergency financial assistance is available.



We continue to promote take up of free school meals and, with almost 100% take up. This is in addition to all children in Year Reception, 1 and 2 who automatically receive free school meals.

The Children's Services Inclusion and Opportunity Team supports schools to take a whole-school approach to delivering an effective needs led RSHE curriculum which includes physical health and mental wellbeing, as well as what constitutes a healthy diet, including understanding calories and other nutritional content. The team is also developing an oral health toolkit to support schools with this issue at a whole school and individual pupil level. The toolkit will collate high quality resources and helpful signposting and will include a focus on ensuring that the curriculum is effectively delivered in ways which increase awareness around healthy eating and nutrition.

As part of our early childhood work with partners, services such as the Early Childhood and Family Service (ECFS), commissioned by Children's Services, and the Norfolk Healthy Child Services as part of a Healthy Child Programme (HCP), commissioned by Public Health, are supporting families in the early years to enable good nutrition, providing information, support and guidance on healthy eating including in pregnancy, breast feeding and infant feeding. This includes universal and targeted support such as the healthy weight programme, and promoting take up of the 'healthy start' pre-payment cards. The HCP includes the Just One Number team which provides health advice and information about nutrition, infant feeding and diet, alongside a range of wider related health issues. They are able to support over the telephone, via video calls or via a parentline text service. Specific healthy eating information guidance and resources are available to parents families, young people and health and care professionals via: [Health Advice & Support for Children & Families \(justonenorfolk.nhs.uk\)](https://www.justonenorfolk.nhs.uk).

During 2023, there were over 21,000 page views by nearly 18,000 users accessing Just One Norfolk pages covering healthy eating, diet and nutrition information. For the 12 months period up to August 2023, there were 763 new referrals for HCP interventions following NCMP measuring of children in Year Reception and Year 6 at school, and through Just One Number, over 1,500 calls were specifically related to advice on feeding, diet, nutrition and lifestyle advice for 0-19s. Whilst not specifically focused on healthy eating, over the 12 months up to September 2023, ECFS supported over 2,000 families with bespoke packages of support on a wide range of issues, and in addition nearly 1,300 families were supported to access universal group sessions in their local community. ECFS staff also undertook over 1,000 visits to a range of community settings over the same period.

Through our engagement in the DfE funded Start for Life and family hubs programme we are extending our early childhood focus to include families with children up to the age of 19 (25 with SEND), joining up and enhancing existing services, so that children, young people and their parents and carers can access the early support they need when they need it. As part of this development, recognising the importance of the first 1001 days of children's lives, face-to-face 'pathway to parenting' programmes are on offer to families that include the health and wellbeing of parents as well as supporting newborn babies, and the sessions have been very well received by families, and our school and community teams are delivering a number of community-based group programmes supporting parents/carers with home learning for their children that include healthy

	<p>eating. In the last quarter, our school and community teams have worked with over 650 families, including delivering 105 group sessions, focused on wider issues and support for parents. Through this joined-up approach, services are taking a 'make every contact count' approach to supporting families including with healthy eating even when this is not the primary reason for their engagement.</p> <p>Children's Services will continue to work with colleagues from Public Health, the Integrated Care Board, local community organisations and service providers to explore what else can be done as a priority to promote healthy eating as part of preventing malnutrition in children.</p>
7.10	<p><b>Question from Cllr Julie Brociek-Coulton</b></p> <p>Can the Cabinet Member for Children's Services confirm what progress has been made on converting the Angel Road school site into a SEND school, given the urgent need for additional SEND places?</p> <p><b>Response from the Cabinet Member for Children's Services</b></p> <p>This is the 4<sup>th</sup> time I have been asked this question within subsequent Cabinet meetings. Due to the relative short time-frame between these questions being asked and the timeframe for capital decision making I will have to repeat my previous answer : <i>'...as part of the process for any vacated property we consider the potential use of such assets for Children's Service. This will involve how this building could support our Local First Inclusion Programme and will therefore be considered as part of the SEND Sufficiency and Capital workstream'. I am not able to provide any further update at this time. However, I believe all councillors are aware that SEND developments remain a priority for this council and that Officers continue to work hard to move these developments forward and I will be happy to provide an update when the next stage of the process has concluded....'</i></p> <p>The lease for Angel Road is not yet transferred to the council, which will be the next stage in the process, as we have previously indicated. We continue to both take your suggestion seriously at the same time as following a process that guarantees the right decision is achieved for the long term benefit of the county.</p>
7.11	<p><b>Question from Cllr Catherine Rowett</b></p> <p>Given that animal husbandry is a key source of nutrient neutrality issues in Norfolk's water courses, and also of global heating and destruction of rainforest, does the Cabinet have any plans to enable farmers to reduce the intensity of livestock farms, including reducing the number of animals, or to improve the sustainability of feed sources, without loss of income? Will these issues be addressed as part of the Council's carbon reduction plans?</p> <p><b>Response from the Cabinet Member for Environment and Waste</b></p> <p>Responsibility for national farming subsidies sits with Department for Environment Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA), who administer a number of schemes to support UK farmers. The funding is not devolved to a local area and therefore is not the responsibility of the County Council to manage or implement.</p>

As a vegan, I would personally encourage the benefits of a plant based diet but would also note that British agriculture has some of the highest standards of welfare and environmental management in the world. I would encourage everyone, where possible, to buy British and ideally buy from Norfolk producers.

**Second question from Cllr Catherine Rowett**

It has been encouraging to see materials from the Norfolk Integrated Domestic Abuse Service (NIDAS) being displayed and disseminated in places such as doctors' surgeries. It would be useful to know the objectives of NIDAS and the progress made towards those targets. Can the Cabinet Member please provide details of this?

**Response from the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care**

Thank you for your question

NIDAS stands for Norfolk Integrated Domestic Abuse Service and is a domestic abuse support service for those assessed to be high or medium risk. The service also offers dedicated support for Children and Young People (if their parent/care giver has been/or is being supported by an IDVA (independent domestic violence advisor)), recovery programmes, coordinated multi-agency support, and access to IDVA support in criminal courts for people who are at medium or high risk.

NIDAS is a countywide partnership delivered by specialist service providers – Leeway, Daisy Programme and Safe Partnership. The service has been commissioned and shaped by OPCCN (Office of the Police & Crime Commissioner for Norfolk), Norfolk County Council, Norwich City Council, South Norfolk and Broadland District Councils. It is a consortium of specialist support services working together to ensure people living across the county have access to a full range of help and guidance regardless of where they live.

Since launching in January 2022, NIDAS has grown considerably, and now also employs specialist Independent Domestic Abuse Advocates (IDVAs) supporting vulnerable people with disabilities, people from diverse communities, LGBTQ+ people, male victims, and family support workers.

NIDAS also has dedicated Child and Adolescent to Parent Violence and Abuse IDVAs (CAPVA), following additional funding to deliver the Respect Young Peoples Programme (RYPP) earlier this year.

These specialist roles ensure that support is tailored to the individual, rather than offering generic one-size-fits-all support that does not fully cater to the service users' needs.

NIDAS has an ongoing commitment to providing the best possible support for all survivors across the county, regardless of their support needs or where they live.

7.12

**Question from Cllr Paul Neale**

A BBC investigation in 2020 into the seven gantries, costing £1m, built to help bats fly safely over the Norwich Northern Distributor Road, showed that none of the bridges was effective, with 40% of bats crossing at unsafe heights - a proportion experts considered unsustainable for local populations. Could the Cabinet member tell me what further

evidence they have sought as to whether these bridges work, especially as they are being claimed as mitigating measures for the NWL?

**Response from the Cabinet Member for Highways, Infrastructure and Transport**

Bat gantries do not form part of the council's mitigation proposals for the Norwich Western Link. A combination of green bridges, underpasses and planting is proposed to help guide bats to cross the new road safely, and these measures have been developed by bat specialists who, in carrying out this work, have taken account of relevant guidance and advice from Natural England.

Information on these proposals will be included in the planning application documents and we will need to demonstrate through the planning process that these proposals meet the high standards required for a project of this type.

**Supplementary question from Cllr Paul Neale**

The Leader of the Council's response to my councillor question at the 6th November Cabinet meeting was not completely true and it misled the public. Further, it potentially caused reputational and financial damage to Dr Boswell. Given that the Council's monitoring officer has now admitted that damaging statements about Dr Andrew Boswell made by the Leader were incorrect, does the Leader now intend to issue a written public apology to Dr Boswell?

**Response from the Leader and Cabinet Member for Strategy and Governance**

In response to the question posed by you on the 6th November 2023, it has been concluded by the Monitoring Officer that there was unintended, incorrect information passed to me by an Officer in relation to comments said to have been made by Dr Boswell. These comments were made during the case but by Judge Mrs Justice Thornton, when finding in the Governments side on the case brought forward by Dr Boswell. If Dr Boswell was distressed by this, then of course I am sorry, as it was not my intention to give out incorrect information. I acted in good faith in using the information I had received and which I believed to be true at the time.

7.13

**Question from Cllr Jamie Osborn**

The NWL project risk register lists a risk that "There may be a delay in the funding approval (OBC and/or FBC) from DfT due to a general election being called". What the risk register does not cover is the potential for a new (not Conservative) government which could cancel the funding for the project altogether. Does the Cabinet Member accept that a change in Government could result in the project being scrapped, and will the risk register be updated accordingly?

**Response from the Cabinet Member for Highways, Infrastructure and Transport**

The risk of changes to the local and national political landscape, and the risk this poses to support for funding, is covered under risk Q01 on the risk register. I will ask the project team to amend the wording of this risk to make this clearer in the next update to the risk register. Department for Transport funding (DfT) towards the Norwich Western Link (NWL) is subject to final approvals of all statutory processes. As set out in section 9 of the 4 December 2023 Cabinet report, until the Full Business Case approval is granted by

	<p>DfT there is a risk that the Council would not be able to proceed to the construction phase.</p>
	<p><b>Second question from Cllr Jamie Osborn</b>  Residents in Norwich need a pedestrian crossing on Westwick Street to go from Oak Street and Coslany Square into the city. I put in a request for a feasibility study for a pedestrian crossing on Westwick Street two years ago, but this has not been done. Please will the Cabinet Member lend his support to this?</p> <p><b>Response from the Cabinet Member for Highways, Infrastructure and Transport</b>  I will ask officers to review the status of your request for a crossing at this location and ask them to follow this up directly with you.</p>
7.14	<p><b>Question from Cllr Ben Price</b>  Has the council considered introducing a one-way system on Eade, Patteson, and Buxton Roads as part of the Angel Road revamp?</p> <p><b>Response from the Cabinet Member for Highways, Infrastructure and Transport</b>  Consideration has previously been giving to introducing one-way systems on Eade Road, Buxton Road and Patterson Road but the idea has not progressed as one-way streets almost always result in an increase in speeding traffic. Additionally, the introduction of one-way restrictions in this area is likely to make the streets more attractive for rat running traffic wishing to avoid the St Augustine's gate junction.</p> <p><b>Second question from Cllr Ben Price</b>  Will the Cabinet Member for Highways confirm how many feasibility studies for road improvement projects put forward by councillors have been carried out since 2021, and how many are currently awaiting a feasibility study?</p> <p><b>Response from the Cabinet Member for Highways, Infrastructure and Transport</b>  Officers and councillors engage on a regular basis in discussions about possible improvements to the highway network, many of which result in further investigations, both formal and informal, taking place that are then reported back. However, statistics related to this activity is not collected centrally or reported.</p>