

Corporate Select Committee

Date: **Monday 16 January 2023**

Time: **2pm**

Venue: **Council Chamber, County Hall, Martineau Lane, Norwich**

Membership:

Cllr A Birmingham
Cllr S Blundell
Cllr G Carpenter
Cllr S Clancy
Cllr E Colman (Chair)
Cllr N Daubney
Cllr B Duffin

Cllr L Hempsall
Cllr J James
Cllr T Jermy
Cllr K Mason Billig (Vice-Chair)
Cllr B Price
Cllr V Thomson

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 may watch remotely by clicking on the following link: [Norfolk County Council YouTube](#)

However, if you wish to attend in person it would be helpful if you could indicate in advance that it is your intention to do so as public seating will be limited. This can be done by emailing committees@norfolk.gov.uk

We have amended the previous guidance relating to respiratory infections to reflect current practice but we still ask everyone attending to maintain good hand and respiratory hygiene and, at times of high prevalence and in busy areas, please consider wearing a face covering.

Please stay at home if you are unwell, have tested positive for COVID 19, have symptoms of a respiratory infection or if you are a close contact of a positive COVID 19 case. This will help make the event safe for attendees 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

To receive the minutes of the previous meeting held on 14 November 2022

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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 Chairman 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) by **5pm Tuesday 10**

January 2023. For guidance on submitting a public question, view the Constitution at: [Ask a question to a committee - Norfolk County Council](#)

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) by **5pm Tuesday 10 January 2023.**

7. Smarter Working Update

Report by the Executive Director for of Strategy & Transformation

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8. Work Force Strategy

Report by the Executive Director of Strategy & Transformation and Director of People

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9. Emerging Equality Diversity & Inclusion (EDI) Objectives for 2023-2026

Report by Executive Director for Community and Environmental Services

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10 Forward Work Plan 2023

Note by the Executive Director for Strategy & Transformation

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Tom McCabe
Head of Paid Service
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Date Agenda Published: 6 January 2023



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Corporate Select Committee

Minutes of the Meeting Held on 14 November 2022 at
2pm in Council Chamber, County Hall, Martineau Lane Norwich NR1 2DL

Present:

Cllr Ed Colman (Chair)
Cllr S Blundell
Cllr A Birmingham
Cllr G Carpenter
Cllr N Daubney
Cllr L Hemsall
Cllr K Mason Billig
Cllr B Price
Cllr V Thomson

Substitute Members Present:

Cllr B Jones (until 3.37pm) for Cllr T Jermy

Also Present:

Cllr Tom FitzPatrick	Cabinet Member for Innovation, Transformation and Performance.
Cllr Andrew Jamieson	Cabinet Member for Finance.

1 Apologies for Absence

- 1.1 Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs Duffin, James, Clancy and Jermy (substituted by Cllr B Jones).

2 Minutes

- 2.1 The minutes of the meeting held on 11 July 2022 were agreed as an accurate record and signed by the Chair.
- The Chair offered to meet Cllr Birmingham with Cllr Peck and Simon Hughes, Director of Property, concerning an unanswered question regarding the new tier of the car park at County Hall.

3 Declarations of Interest

- 3.1 There were no declarations of interest.

4 Items of Urgent Business

- 4.1 There were no items of urgent business.

5 Public Question Time

5.1 There were no public questions.

6 Local Member Issues/Questions

6.1 None

7 Strategic and Financial Planning 2023-24

Report by the Executive Director for Finance and Commercial Services

7.1 The annexed report (7) by the Executive Director for Finance and Commercial Services was received and presented by Cllr Andrew Jamieson, Cabinet Member for Finance. The report, following on from the latest Cabinet report, provided details of the saving proposals identified to date for the 2023-24 budget setting process.

7.2 The Cabinet Member for Finance advised:

- The council had an unprecedented challenge to meet the savings required of £60m. There was little room for manoeuvre given the recent budget savings achieved in previous years. There were additional challenges with uncertainty of central government support and further increases in inflation.
- The Chancellor's Autumn statement, due to be presented to Parliament on 17th November 2022 will provide a framework for local government finance, although it would not be until mid December that the allocations for each individual council would be known.
- The saving proposals in the report, including those announced in July total £32.51m. The sum excludes any savings from the Strategic Review which is anticipated will create savings of £15m+.
- Since the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) had been produced additional pressures on the Council's finances have arisen such as the pay award which averages out at a 6% increase across the board. This increase adds an additional £7m to the savings gap over and above that was budgeted for.
- Any national living wage increase adds additional cost to commissioned services, especially within adult social services. Every additional 1p per hour increase adds £270k to the bottom line. These increases could add significant cost to the Council's budget.
- More work was being undertaken to establish the impact of inflationary pressures on departmental budgets. Inflation was in September running at 10.1% and expected to climb higher to a peak in mid 2023. This rate was substantially above what was anticipated when setting the budget for 2023-24.
- Reforms within funding for adult social care were uncertain. The Autumn statement may provide some clarity. Changes to funding could have an impact on Council finances.
- The Council are in negotiation with Department of Education as part of the Government's safety value programme relating to the funding pressures for special educational and disabilities needs. The aim is to agree a plan with the department to eliminate the historic deficit that has arisen because of under funding. This could also have implications for the MTFS.
- Service demand in children's and adult services could see growth in department deficits on an annual basis. The fair funding review implementation date had again been postponed by government ministers and is not expected to be revived in 2023.
- The service grant received in 22/23 as an one off grant of £10.68m has been assumed within the MTFS, that this will be received again in 23/24, although this has yet to be confirmed. Non receipt of the grant would increase the savings gap further.

7.3 In response to questions from members it was discussed and noted:

- The Council was actively engaging in a consultation with residents, parish and town councils to ascertain their views on levels of proposed council tax rises.
- The Cabinet Member for Finance confirmed that budget targets for 2018/19, 2019/20 and 2020/21 had been achieved. Departments providing demand driven services such as adult social care and children's services may struggle to keep within budget constraints, in any one given year as they have statutory duties to undertake, particularly with regard to vulnerable children and adults.
- The Cabinet Member for Finance confirmed extensive lobbying was taking place to central government regarding the fair funding review, although this had little impact.
- The MTFS had accounted for inflationary pressures but not at the level of current inflation of 10.1%. The current level had been universally underestimated by all financial institutions including the Bank of England.
- The Council were committed to 15% of the cost of the Norwich Western Link road and this had been accounted for within the MTFS. A proposal by Cllr Ben Price to use those monies to divert them away from the Norwich Western Link road and towards helping reduce the funding gap did not find a seconder.

7.4 The Select committee **reviewed and:**

- **Considered** the latest Budget and Medium Term Financial Strategy position as reported to Cabinet in October 2022 (Appendix 1), **noted** in particular the emerging risks and uncertainties within the Council's planning position.
- **Considered** and **commented** on the savings proposals for 2023-24 as set out in Appendix 1, which fall within the Committee's remit.
- **Noted** the significant budget gap which remains to be closed for 2023-24 and in this context **commented** on any areas the Select Committee would recommend exploring for savings development in relation to the services within the Select Committee's remit, in order to provide further input to the 2023-24 budget process and inform the final package of saving proposals put forward to Cabinet later in the year. In particular, the Committee **considered** savings opportunities under the following headings:
 - a. New initiatives which would deliver savings;
 - b. Activities which could be ceased in order to deliver a saving;
 - c. Activities which the Council should seek to maintain at the current level as far as possible (i.e. areas where the Committee considers there is limited scope for savings);
 - d. Commercialisation opportunities.

8 **Amendments to the Constitution to include Financial Regulations update 2022-23 & changes to statutory officer designations**

8.1 The annexed report (8) was received and introduced by Helen Edwards, Director of Governance. The report included proposed changes to the Constitution before recommendations are made to Full Council. These proposals included the annual review and update of Financial Regulations as well as changes to statutory roles following the resignations of the Director of Governance and Executive Director for Finance and Commercial Services.

- 8.2 In response to questions asked the committee discussed and noted the following:
- The changes to the Financial Regulations were minor and most were within the remit of tidying up the document for clarity.
 - To a question asked regarding regulation of treasury management, the Executive Director for Finance and Commercial Services committed to return to the committee as he was not familiar with the position that councils would have to consider selling assets before undertaking further borrowing.
 - Carbon pricing guidance was now embedded into the Financial Regulations.
 - Any grant received over £1.25m will now be allocated to an individual Cabinet Member decision to accept the monies and be added to the budget. This would provide more transparency for members, if funds are received mid way in any financial year.
 - The Chair, on behalf of the committee, thanked both Director of Governance and Executive Director of Finance and Commercial Services for the help and support they have provided the committee in their time at the Council.

The Select Committee **resolved** to:

- **Note** the proposed amendments to Financial Regulations and recommend these to Full Council.
- **Note** the proposed amendments to statutory officer designations set out in para 2.2 below and **recommend** these to Full Council
- **Agree** that later changes required following the departure of the Executive Director for Finance and Commercial Services, to go directly to Full Council without needing to be brought first to the Select Committee.

9. Policy for Parental Leave for Councillors

9.1 The committee received the annexed report (9) from the Director of Governance and was presented by Karen Haywood, Democratic Services Manager.

9.2 The report outlined details of a draft policy for parental leave, to include sickness, for Councillors which makes appropriate provision for the payment of allowances.

- 9.1 In response to member's questions the following was discussed and noted:
- The policy is not a legal requirement but had been drafted following the guidelines and best practice from the Local Government Association (LGA).
 - It was considered that the policy should reflect still birth and that this should be added to the document before consideration by Full Council.
 - Similar policies to that proposed had been adopted by a wide range of councils across the country.

9.2 The select committee **resolved** to:

- **Endorse** the attached draft policy for parental leave, which includes cover for extended periods of leave for Councillors and recommend it to full Council for adoption.
- **Recommend** to Council that it agrees to authorise the Director of Governance (in consultation with the Leader of the Council) to make any minor or consequential amendments to the Constitution necessary for, or incidental to, the implementation of these proposals.

10 Digital Strategy Update

- 10.1 The annexed report (10) by the Executive Director for Finance and Commercial Services was received and introduced by the Cabinet Member for Innovation, Transformation & Performance.
- 10.2 The report provided an update on the NCC Digital Strategy and Roadmap for the 2020s which had been approved by cabinet in April 2021. Geoff Connell, Director of Information Management Technology (IMT) undertook a presentation which is [available on the committee's website pages](#).
- 10.3 In response to questions asked the committee discussed and noted the following:
- When applying for planning permission, mobile phone network providers often did not consider the limitations of the sites proposed for masts. This could mean that even when permission was granted masts may still not be erected.
 - The Director of IMT committed to consider developing an app so that residents could easily provide details of 'not spots' in the county for mobile coverage. This information was available on the County Council's website.
 - Coverage for the mobile network in Norfolk is not as comprehensive for individuals using older handsets and where possible upgrades should be considered to take advantage of the 5G network that is rolling out across the county.
 - myOracle software had experienced some minor clinches when first commissioned, but given the scale and purpose of the software this was to be expected. All errors, which related to a very small number of total payments, had been fixed promptly and payments and salaries paid. The Cabinet Member for Innovation, Transformation and Performance praised officers, who had worked diligently at home, during the pandemic to bring the new software online. The software was a global system and was used by a large number of councils and other large organisations. The project had been split in to two phases, the first of which was implementation. The second phase would see the system being refined and streamlined.
 - Broadband connectivity issues with providers should be report to Ofcom for resolution.
 - The voucher scheme for Broadband roll out was about to be relaunched and the Director of IMT committed to provide members with an update.
 - All information regarding mobile phone coverage and broadband availability was [available on the County Council's website](#).
 - The committee suggested that an app could be developed for rural bus users giving them real time information of location of buses and services.
 - The digital inclusion programme was helping residents to get connected by re purposing older NCC laptops with free software licensing added. The County Council's website also highlights packages that are available from providers for those on universal credit.
 - The Director of IMT committed to providing training to update all members on mobile and broadband technologies available in Norfolk to enable them to promote and advise their residents.
 - The libraries network across the county held digital and technology sessions aimed specially at children. The sessions provided children with the opportunity to use IT kit and learn new skills.
 - The Chair commented that for future meetings separating the digital strategy and the programme focus and resource priorities should be considered as separate papers providing shorter, sharper updates on a quarterly basis.

10.4 The Select Committee **resolved to:**

1. **Note** the updates contained in the report.
2. **Commented** on whether the Committee would wish to consider any alterations or additions to the current plans.
3. **Consider** options to improve mobile coverage.

11. 2022 Staff Survey 'Our Voice Our Council': Summary Report and Next Steps

- 11.1 The annexed report (11) by the Executive Director for Strategy and Transformation and Director for People was received. The report provided the headline findings from the 2022 survey and an overview of action plans at Directorate and organisational level.
- 11.2 Rob Stafford, Head of Organisation Effectiveness & Learning presented the report and advised that the period covered by the survey was when employees were working under some level of Covid restrictions and the results reflect a stabilising environment, following actions that had been put in place following previous survey results. The current results placed NCC in the top quartile of comparable organisations. Key drivers of openness and honesty, wellbeing, goal setting, leadership and empowerment all featured highly within the survey. The 2022 survey is the fourth year a survey has been undertaken, and the focus for action is switching away from new initiatives to embedding and developing existing ones. The survey also reflected the employees were adapting well to hybrid working in the post pandemic world of work.
- 11.3 In response to questions from members the following points were discussed and noted:
- The Executive Director for Strategy and Transformation confirmed that market supplements were available across all departments of the Council and that a pay and reward strategy was being developed to ensure clarity around where NCC may vary its pay structure from the norm.
 - The apprentice levy was actively promoted and had been taken up by all professions and levels across the organisation. This provided opportunities and helped retention of staff as well as providing pathways for new careers to aid recruitment.
- 11.4 The committee **resolved to:**
- **Note** both the key messages from this year's survey and the actions being taken in response
 - **Provide** support for the performance, engagement and wellbeing of colleagues.

12. Organisational Performance Framework

- 12.1 The annexed report (12) by the Executive Director for Strategy and Transformation was Received and introduced by Cabinet Member for Innovation, Transformation and Performance. The report provided the committee with an update on the Council's Organisational Performance Framework. The Framework lays out the approach and expectations against the following areas:

- Performance Framework Principles
- Performance Governance
- Performance Management Culture
- Vital Signs measurement, reporting, target setting and trend analysis
- Performance Reporting Cycle

- 12.2 Stacey Palmer, Organisational performance Lead gave a presentation which is [available on the committee's website pages.](#)

- 12.3 In response to questions from members the following points were discussed and noted:
- Introducing and embedding cultural changes within the Council would develop as the strategic review moves forward and the challenges arising from that producing a more collaborative working approach. Work within adult social services was already seeing better outcomes working collaboratively to address performance culture in locality teams.
 - The strategic review will include how ownership of responsibilities is managed within the changing culture of the organisation and how this best fits with delivery of services to residents. Working with Councillors will be key to ensuring the roadmap of implementation is successful.
 - It was suggested the quickest way to bring about cultural change was to adopt a top down approach with senior officers and members delivering from their positions of influence.
 - It was recommended that a full list of policy framework documents were made available to councillors to include expiry and renewal dates to enhance member's understand before debating items at meetings.
 - The report, before being presented to the committee, had been reviewed by all performance leaders in each Directorate as well as the executive leadership team.
 - The Chair suggested that an updated report could be brought back to the committee regarding the KPIs outlined, possibly within three months if there was sufficient information and data available. Otherwise, this update item would be placed on the forward work programme.

- 12.4 The committee **resolved** to:
- Endorse** the accompanying framework document and **recommend** to Cabinet for approval.

13 **Forward Work Programme 2022/23**

The committee **resolved to agree** the forward work programme.

Meeting concluded at 4.12 pm

Corporate Select Committee

Item No:7

Report Title: Smarter Working Update

Date of Meeting: 16 January 2023

Responsible Cabinet Member: Cllr FitzPatrick (Cabinet Member for Innovation, Transformation & Performance)

Responsible Director: Paul Cracknell (Executive Director Strategy & Transformation)

Introduction from Cabinet Member

This month's report focuses on our increasing understanding of Hybrid working, work on providing Smarter Places for colleagues to deliver their services from, as well as the data and research being gathered to inform our decisions.

Executive Summary

- Since the last report to committee in July 2022, Smarter Working focus has been on the Smart Places we provide colleagues to deliver their services.
- Focus will expand to include the Smart Tools we provide colleagues to deliver their services once the Strategic Review has established the new operating model and associated accountabilities.
- Ongoing monitoring and learning will continue, with emerging evidence validating our approach and giving confidence to our plans.
- Utilisation of our buildings has continued to show the same gradually increasing, yet predictable, trend since the summer, as Services settle into Hybrid Working patterns.
- Manual utilisation count throughout October provided evidence of the post pandemic shift to event-based attendance by colleagues.
- Internal research, on colleagues' view of place-based facilities, and collaborative external research, supported by the University of East Anglia on the impacts of Hybrid Working on social care colleagues, has commenced and will continue through H1 2023.
- A range of measures to reduce energy consumption across the NCC estate have been implemented, to reduce costs and carbon use, linking to our Net Zero target.
- Work to identify prospective tenants for underutilised areas of the estate has commenced, to enable us to move swiftly, if we wish, once the utilisation data for the winter period is available.

Actions Required

The Select Committee is asked to review the work completed and plans to date, consider the next steps and provide feedback on any areas of assurance the Committee requires to form part of the next report.

1. Background











Smarter Working is the way NCC aims to continually improve the places and tools we provide colleagues to deliver their services. This report is intended to provide the committee with an update on progress and the opportunity to comment on and shape ongoing activities.

We remain confident that our Smarter Working approach is working well, with good feedback from Services. Our approach to Hybrid Working provides choice and flexibility which enables NCC to achieve the best possible outcomes for the organisation, colleagues, members, service users and citizens. It is fundamental to the creation of an up to date and fit for purpose workplace in 2023 and beyond.

The Government Property Agency, an executive agency of the Cabinet Office, issues a range of Smarter Working guidelines that must be followed by the civil service. They recommended that local government use the guidelines as a best practice. Our Smarter Working approach, activities and plans are aligned with this GPA guidance.

“Well designed, activity-based work environments empower our people to work in different ways and in different locations, accessing a variety of settings to support them to deliver a range of tasks. Our people need to be responsive and adaptable to changing business needs. Smarter working optimises the use of our workplaces and technology to improve productivity through a focus on outputs and enables a better work life balance for all.”

Source: Government Property Agency Workplace Design Guide v3

“I feel safe and secure in my workplace.”	“I am confident my workplace is inclusive.”	“I have the ICT and tools I need to do my job well.”	“I have a choice of when, how and where I work.”	“I feel physically and mentally well at work.”	“I feel a sense of community at my place of work.”	“I can help reduce my carbon footprint at my workplace.”	“I have ready access to services that make my work life easier.”	“I can get to work easier.”	“I feel proud of and inspired by my workplace.”
									
Safe Safe and secure	Inclusive Accessible for everyone	Digital Digital tools that support teams and locations	Choice Choice in how and where to work	Wellbeing Health and wellbeing are supported	Community Friendly, social and vibrant	Sustainable Highest environmental standards	Services Responsive services with a human touch	Journey Easy to access by public transport	Condition Modern, good quality facilities are available
“We keep our people safe and secure.”	“We help our diverse workforce realise their full potential.”	“We enable our business to be digital and well connected.”	“We provide flexible workplaces to support productivity.”	“We ensure our people flourish and thrive in their work.”	“We create an environment in which teams come together.”	“We contribute to Net Zero by reducing our carbon footprint.”	“Our people are supported in their jobs by responsive & seamless services.”	“We are well located & easily accessible to our people and our partners.”	“We offer modern workplaces that help us to attract and retain talent.”

2. Progress

2.1 Strategic Focus

The last report to committee was in July 2022, when removal of infection control measures was relatively new. We have continued to monitor, and build on our evidence base, and therefore understanding, on which we can make decisions.

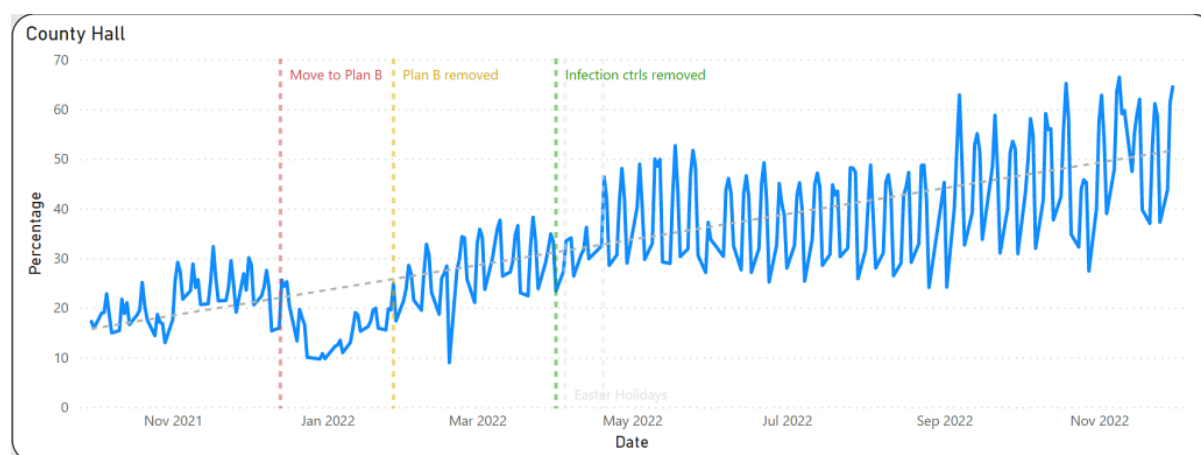
By the end of Q1 2023 we anticipate having a robust evidence base to inform decisions relating to our property strategy and how we progress Hybrid working.

Focus since the summer has been on the places, and associated facilities, we provide colleagues from which to deliver their services, as they test and establish their Hybrid Working patterns.

Our focus will increase to include the tools we provide colleagues once the Strategic review has established the new operating model and accountabilities.

2.2 Buildings Utilisation

We have seen an increasing trend in headline building utilisation since the end of the summer.



Source: CSC Smarter Working dashboard – showing county hall utilisation as %age of fully equipped workstations.

Once we have this data on a full winter season of Hybrid working, around the end of Q1 2023, the Corporate Property team will be able to make recommendations regarding optimal utilisation of our estate.

External comparable data is not easily available (in a consistent format) from other organisations. However, through networking groups, notably with other County Councils, we have been able to confirm that our building utilisation is similar. Nationally, work patterns and preferences (rather than geography) appear to be influencing how and when people access corporate estates.

Hybrid Working at NCC, as well as our steer to colleagues and services that some activities are better when done together, continues to be embraced by colleagues for appropriate roles and services. There is also evidence from the wider market that staff value the flexibility that some home working offers, and it is increasingly a differentiating factor during recruitment.

We need to understand what this means for the specific places and facilities we provide colleagues and how we should change and align them with new working patterns and practices.

To this end, during October, we conducted a manual office utilisation count, across County Hall, Havenbridge House and Priory House, measuring the usage of workstations, collaboration, and meeting spaces on an hourly basis throughout each day.

This provided evidence that a significant majority of colleagues are now attending NCC buildings for specific “Events” where collaboration and interactions are key to successful outcomes. They therefore require a different balance between workstations, collaborative or meeting spaces and other place-based facilities, than they did pre-pandemic.

The exercise was extremely useful for validating high level trends and conclusions, however going forward we require more detailed, ongoing and automated capture of this data, in order to understand changing colleague needs over time, make robust decisions about space use / disposal and avoid expensive regular manual exercises.

Obtaining automated data at this level of detail on a new subject area is a challenge all employers are facing and so this will be developed collaboratively with IMT, I&A the Corporate Property Team and Smarter Working. The colleague research we are conducting will compliment this utilisation data and enable evidence led decisions.

In parallel we are creating a central register for place-based facilities, this will allow us to view the full range of facilities in one place, make it easy for colleagues to identify, find information on, and provide feedback about them. It will ensure we design data capture and evidence gathering approaches for all facilities and also serve as a way for us to prioritise change.

The correlation of our facilities register, more granular data and research conclusions will inform our strategic Places and Tools Strategies in 2023 and beyond.

2.3 Research

An initial internal research pilot was commenced in November, surveying colleagues in County Hall about their reasons for attendance that day, the facilities they needed, their view on where facilities could be improved and some information on how they travelled to work that day.

Unfortunately, the pilot had to be paused due to Covid-19 affecting members of the survey team and will recommence in the New Year when research will also be conducted in other buildings across the estate.

We have also commenced work with the University of East Anglia, who are supporting us in designing a research programme aimed at understanding the impacts of Hybrid working on Health and Social Care colleagues, with many of the findings and consequent actions expected to be extrapolated to benefit all NCC colleagues / roles. The programme is still in the design phase and will commence in Q1 2023.

2.4 Energy Saving Measures

The Corporate Property Team conducted an exercise in August to identify opportunities to reduce energy consumption (and therefore costs and carbon production) across our property estate. Planning and implementation was managed in September under Smarter Working and resulted in:

- Moving some teams to different areas of County Hall, allowing Floor 1, floor 7 and the Annexe to be made dormant and their lighting, non-critical electrical and heating systems to be switched off.
- Turning off heating & lighting and closing County Hall Tower floors 6,5,3,2&1 at 9pm each evening, and at weekends. Colleagues are able to use South Wing out of hours.
- Changes to external lighting schedules (pathways and carparks), in conjunction with Health & Safety, to ensure lighting does not remain on longer than external conditions require.
- A reduction in minimum temperatures for heating systems in the winter (from 23 to 21 degrees) and increase maximum temperatures for cooling systems in the summer (from 23 to 25 degrees), also in consultation with Health & Safety advice.
- A reduction in the total time heating and cooling systems are running by 10 hours per week across most NCC buildings and brought forward the daily switch-off of other non-critical electrical systems.
- This was scheduled to coincide with the installation of an upgraded electrical and lighting control system in floors 1-8 of the County Hall tower, following extensive work with our electrical suppliers, saving 23t of CO2 per annum.

CPT and Norse continue to monitor the situation to ensure that whilst reducing energy consumption, County Hall is a safe and comfortable environment to use.

2.5 Property Strategy Implications

While we continue to learn about the needs arising from Hybrid Working for our workforce, and the facilities we need to develop and / or improve, we can be confident that there is underutilised capacity in County Hall.

We are developing a Smarter Places strategy, a key outcome of which is to determine how much capacity we can afford to share, either with additional NCC staff (i.e. further consolidation) or with other public sector bodies, without negatively impacting the workplace facilities.

The Corporate Property Team have been actively engaged with potential public sector tenants and focus has been on partner organisations where being based in the same building as NCC colleagues will bring efficiency, collaboration and therefore service benefits for citizens.

It is anticipated that we will have the evidence to make confident, no regrets, decisions on potential new tenants towards the end of Q1 2023 and work already completed means we will be in a position to act swiftly once decisions have been formalised through the appropriate channels.

With private and public organisations, within the UK and internationally, there are similar discussions as to how much office space is required to deliver services and the balance

of different working styles. Data and evidence in a post-pandemic environment will be key.

Other aspects of our Smarter Places strategy will focus on the creation and/or continuous improvement of place-based facilities, informed by colleague research, and is likely to run at least throughout 2023 and then on a continuous improvement basis.

3. Next Steps

3.1 A further progress update will be provided to committee for the May 2023 meeting following the conclusion of the Strategic Review.

4. Actions Required

The Select Committee is asked to review the work completed to date, consider the next steps and provide feedback on any areas of assurance the Committee requires to form part of the next report.

Officer Contact

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

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Corporate Select Committee

Item No. 8

Report title:	Workforce Strategy (Final)
Date of meeting:	16th January 2023
Responsible Cabinet Member:	Cllr Andrew Proctor, Leader
Responsible Director:	Paul Cracknell, Executive Director, Strategy and Transformation Jane Naumkin, Director for People

Introduction

The NCC Workforce Strategy as detailed below, is provided as 'final' and 'for information' having incorporated relevant feedback from its previous review by this Select Committee in 2022 and its subsequent approval and sign off by the Executive Directors.

Executive Summary

The purpose of the NCC Workforce Strategy is to support the 'Better Together, for Norfolk' strategy, to set out the workforce themes that are common to all NCC services and directorates, and to provide context for directorate-specific workforce strategies.

One of the key responsibilities of the Executive Director team is to provide strategic direction, and this collective direction is reflected in the themes and ambitions outlined in the final document presented.

Since its last review by the Select Committee in 2022, Executive Directors have continued to provide input and sponsorship to its successful conclusion.

Actions required

This report comes at a point where all relevant engagements and sign offs are complete, with preceding relevant feedback from this Select Committee having been incorporated where appropriate.

It is considered that the final Workforce Strategy presented,

- a. effectively supports the 'Better Together, for Norfolk' strategy,
- b. accurately reflects NCC's ambitions and direction of travel as an organisation, and
- c. provides context and direction for directorate-level workforce strategies

Recommendations:

- The resubmission of the Workforce Strategy to this Committee is for information and represents a relatively light touch following previous comprehensive reviews.
- Corporate Select Committee is asked to consider how Members can continue to support the Better Together, for Norfolk' approach to its Workforce Strategy with any suggestions and ideas welcomed.

1. Financial Implications

None.

2. Resource Implications (staff, IT, property)

None.

3. Other Implications**a. Legal Implications**

None

b. Human Rights Implications

None

c. Equality Impact Assessment (this must be included)

The workforce strategy has been constructed specifically to promote equality for people with protected characteristics in Norfolk. They will also ensure the Council continues to take full account of equality, diversity, and inclusion with regards to its future workforce and is designed specifically to overcome and address any barriers faced by people with protected characteristic.

d. Health and Safety Implications

None

4. Sustainability Implications

None

5. Any other Implications

None

6. Action Required

- This resubmission is as a final courtesy and for information only.
- Corporate Select Committee is asked to consider how Members can continue to support the Better Together, for Norfolk' approach with suggestions welcomed.

7. Background Papers

None

Officer Contact

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

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NCC Workforce Strategy 2022-2025 'Working Together, for Norfolk'

1. Introduction: looking back and looking forward

As we emerge from the pandemic and look to the future, now is a good time to reflect, learn, and get ready for the new challenges that are on the horizon.

We know that COVID-19 brought immense pressure, difficulty, and loss. Despite that, we saw our colleagues demonstrate extraordinary flexibility and collaboration, cutting through barriers to help the people of Norfolk. We probably don't yet know the full extent of the impact on ourselves and on colleagues, and it will take time for us to develop a full understanding.

As we work together now towards our 'new normal', we want to take the learning from the past two years, look at what's ahead of us, and build a thriving workforce that can deliver for the people of Norfolk. Our ambition is to be the employer of choice in Norfolk and within the service sector, offering a supportive, challenging and rewarding work environment for colleagues, so that they are equipped to deliver great service, and to have a fulfilling and varied career.

2. Our Service Delivery Landscape: Opportunities and Challenges

As the world emerges from the pandemic, at NCC we see colleagues reflecting on the past two years, taking stock, and in some cases making new life and career choices. Twenty five percent of our workforce is over the age of fifty-

five and therefore in a position to consider retirement options, reflecting our ageing population within Norfolk. And with only seven percent of our workforce under the age of twenty-five, we also see a pool of talent and potential that we are not fully reaching or attracting to our roles. There is an extraordinary amount of movement in the employment market, fuelled in part by newly widespread remote and hybrid ways of working. Despite this, we continue to find it difficult to attract as many colleagues as we need in some of our key professions.

Looking at the broader picture we see a political drive for 'levelling up' and a potential county deal for Norfolk, an Integrated Care System (ICS) on the horizon, growing financial challenges in public service, changes in demand for services, and a move towards 'digital first' service delivery.

In the context of these challenges and opportunities, our 'Better Together, for Norfolk' (BTfN) strategy sets out five strategic priorities for the next few years:

- 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

These priorities are supported by six ways of working: to be innovative, empowering, collaborative, evidence-driven, prudent, and developmental.

To emerge resilient from the pandemic and deliver the BTfN strategy, it is important that we think about how our workforce needs to be in the next four years, and for the long-term, and that we describe this in a way that gives clarity about what will be different from today. This strategy sets out clearly the key workforce priorities we will focus on, describing broadly how we will equip ourselves to deliver for the people of Norfolk in a time of great change. It's a statement of ambition and intent; achieving it won't be easy, and we won't get it right all the time, but our workforce is made up of many talented and resourceful people, and we will continue to work together, for Norfolk.

3. Workforce ambitions: we will create the conditions for sustained organisational health and success

We will continue to play a key leadership role in the future success of the Norfolk public service system. We will need to attract, develop, and nurture talented people from all backgrounds and communities in Norfolk (and beyond). As we set out in our opening paragraph, our ambition is to be the employer that Norfolk citizens most want to work for. That means we will need to provide a high support, high challenge, rewarding work environment for all colleagues, so that they are equipped to deliver great service, and want to stay for a life-friendly fulfilling, and varied career.

We know that NCC people already feel engaged with their jobs and gain satisfaction from making a difference to the lives of people in Norfolk. Sometimes, despite best efforts, the wider organisation gets in the way of that, and so we aim to become more agile and flexible in support of front-line service delivery. We also know that financial challenges mean we will need to be a more cost-effective workforce in the future, and we will address that challenge in a way that is open, fair, and constructive.

Our colleagues tell us, via our staff survey 'Our Voice, our Council', that we have a trustworthy and increasingly developmental culture, and that people have embraced the practice of 'smarter working' very effectively through the past two years. Having said that, we know full remote working has been tough for many, and we want to get better at promoting and sustaining our colleagues' mental health and wellbeing as we move towards a steady state hybrid approach.

4. We will continue to provide system leadership across Norfolk

In service of the broad ambitions outlined above, we will focus on four principal areas of strategic change at the organisational level. These will be:

- Negotiating a county deal for Norfolk
- The Integrated Care System
- Delivering a sustainable funding model for NCC
- Achieving a stronger sense of organisational unity and identity

a. We will negotiate a county deal for Norfolk

The government intends to empower local leaders and communities as part of its 'levelling up' agenda, through the mechanism of devolution deals which transfer increased power and funding to local areas. As part of this 'devolution revolution', Norfolk is one of the nine new areas currently invited to negotiate a new county deal. This means the prospect of increased accountability and funding for a variety of areas which could include adult learning, transport, and infrastructure projects; all areas which would contribute enormously to the delivery of our BTfN strategy. The levels of additional accountability and funding available depend on the type and strength of local elected leadership, with the most extensive requiring a directly elected mayor. We are working collaboratively with local partners to establish our ambition for Norfolk's county deal, and we will lead on the negotiation to achieve the best possible outcome for Norfolk communities.

In workforce terms, a county deal for Norfolk may mean more collaborative and flexible working with partners and communities in Norfolk, a need for us to develop new and different roles and skills, and the need to change our organisation size and shape in order to discharge new responsibilities. It may change people's perceptions of NCC as an employer and we may wish to ensure we have an updated employer 'brand' and reputation with

prospective colleagues. Overall, we see a county deal as a very positive development for Norfolk as a county and also for NCC employees as it will bring increased opportunity for learning and careers within our large and varied organisation.

b. We will help to develop the Integrated Care System (ICS)

Integrated Care Systems (ICSs) are new partnerships between organisations that meet health and care needs within an area. At NCC, we are playing a vital role in the creation and development of the ICS in Norfolk and Waveney, alongside Health, District, Community and Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise partners. Through NCC's secretariat of the Integrated Care Partnership (ICP), leaders and partners are coming together at a local level to facilitate joint action to improve health and care outcomes and experiences across their populations, and influencing the wider determinants of health, including creating healthier environments and inclusive and sustainable economies.

This is an ongoing process with collaborative working and shared aims at its heart, and of course skilled and talented people are the key to making it work. To improve shared health and care understanding and outcomes in Norfolk, we will continue to work collaboratively with our partners. We will share data and understanding about our communities and contribute to an integrated Care Strategy that goes across organisational boundaries and puts care users at its centre. Increased flexibility and cross-organisation integration will be key to our workforce approach, as we support colleagues carrying out their career across different organisations within the sector, moving towards a 'one workforce' approach. We will empower NCC leaders to rise to the challenge, enabling team members to feel engaged with their role and with NCC as an organisational 'home', whilst also feeling part of a cross-organisational delivery team.

c. We will ensure a sustainable funding model

We must deliver effective services for citizens that do not over-burden them financially. We will meet this challenge in part by a 'digital first' approaches to service delivery, but we will also think carefully about the size and shape of our organisation. It is crucial that we safeguard the stability of and improvement in safety-critical services and consider the wider system changes such as a potential county deal and the integrated care system.

With this in mind, we will carry out our first strategic organisation review for ten years and work collaboratively to reduce duplication and inefficiency in the design of the organisation. This will lead to a more cost-effective but more agile organisation supported by a sustainable stream of finance. Whilst we are not looking to change operating models at this point, we will, in the first year of the strategy, reduce excess managerial layers where appropriate and optimise spans of control, reduce duplicative roles,

organise our central support functions in a way that maximises efficiency, and use our resulting improved organisation design to become more agile in our governance and decision making.

In conjunction with work this we will explore the effectiveness of our current approach to pay and reward in year one of the strategy, assessing how well it supports our ambitions for performance, competitiveness, and a fair, equitable and empowered working environment for everyone. We know that this will be a challenge given the wider employment market and financial constraints, but it is imperative that we are intentional about how we reward colleagues in a way that supports delivery of the Better Together, for Norfolk strategy.

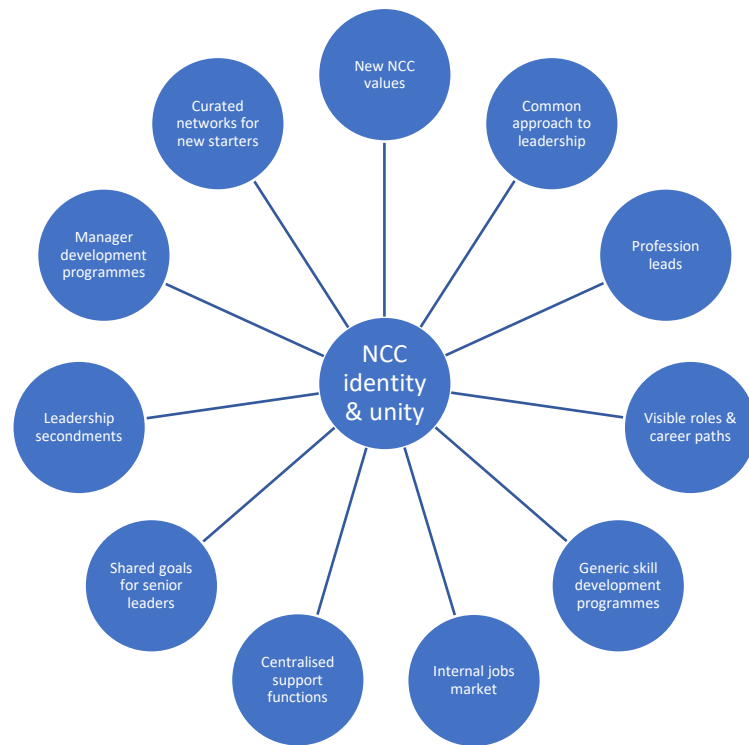
The agility we gain from the above work will lead to a future phase of significant service transformation, in which we will identify additional cost reductions and increases in productivity through collaborative reviews of how services are delivered.

Clearly this is a significant leadership challenge for us as an organisation and it will be incumbent upon us to lead the changes in a collaborative, fair, transparent and equitable manner. We will all need to find more collaborative and innovative ways of working if we are to address our significant funding challenges, and we will need to ensure that our leadership community members are empowered, equipped and supported to be role models as we go through a period of transformation.

d. We will promote organisational unity and identity

We know that NCC colleagues feel very engaged with their roles and their own teams, but that they don't always feel part of a wider organisation. We see too few colleagues changing career within NCC or progressing their careers into different services and directorates. Swift progress with cross-NCC work can sometimes be difficult to achieve, and some central functions have become duplicated within front line services. We also know that our senior leadership community want clarity – balanced with freedom - to enable them to carry out their important collective leadership role together. Remote and hybrid working has amplified all these challenges, especially for colleagues who have joined NCC during the pandemic.

To enable us to address these challenges, we intend to get clearer about what our NCC identity is, and what every NCC colleague can expect to be consistent no matter which service they belong to. This will require collaborative conversations over the coming months, and may include:



This stronger sense of organisation unity will be supported by an NCC communications strategy and the development of an NCC Employer Proposition (outlined in section 8) rooted in Norfolk as a great place to live and work.

We will need to balance our drive for a stronger NCC identity with the need to work positively and collaboratively with many different partners. We will need to give just enough common architecture to provide clarity and support, leaving enough freedom for people to collaborate and share common purpose with colleagues from other organisations, as well as working to directorate-specific workforce strategies and plans.

5. We will enable our leaders to improve performance and wellbeing

We know that our leaders and managers are the face of the organisation to their teams, and that they have the greatest influence on performance, engagement, and wellbeing. They have had a challenging time through COVID-19, experiencing the sudden switch to remote working in March 2020 and needing to keep team members focused, healthy and connected over a sustained period.

As we emerge from the necessity of full remote working, we want to retain our increased flexibility and outcome focus, whilst also bringing back people's sense of connection, belonging, and healthy work boundaries that have sometimes felt hard to maintain over the past two years. Whilst grappling with

this challenge, leaders and managers will also need to be role models for smarter working, provide challenge, development and support in equal measure, lead through significant organisation change, and create the conditions for team members to innovate, collaborate, and thrive.

To help us achieve our ambitions, we will continue our 'smarter working' journey, applying technology and innovation to remove duplication, waste, and low value tasks, and paying early attention to ensuring accessibility to these new ways of working for disabled colleagues. Through this we will achieve sustainable and ongoing improvements to service delivery, colleague experience, environmental aims, and efficiency and effectiveness.

We know from our staff survey that a key driver of engagement (and therefore performance) is the ability to see a clear connection between individual and team goals. Whilst we are continually getting better at this, we still wish to strengthen that 'golden thread' that brings organisational goals through to the individual colleague's day to day work. All leaders and managers need to make this happen through high-quality performance conversations, using the Performance Development Conversations language of goals, strengths, and evidence.

We have identified that a common NCC leadership model will help leaders and managers to provide a consistent NCC employee experience, and this new model of 'Engaging Leadership' will be tested with the senior leadership community before being adapted, adopted, and used throughout the organisation. It will provide a common basis for conversations about leadership and management practice throughout NCC, as well as providing a framework for the development of everyone in the leader and manager community regardless of their grade or service. A common leadership model will support our senior leader community in their development of more impactful 'collective leadership'.

We know that investment in staff development is important not only to delivery of great services, but also to colleagues' sense of being invested in and being in a fair relationship with their employer. Whilst much staff development will continue to be profession or service specific, we will support performance and wellbeing through development of skills that are core to all – for example working as part of a team, communicating, influencing, resilience, prioritising, decision-making, managing change – with the aim of equipping colleagues for success and for dealing with challenging situations.

A positive health, safety and wellbeing culture is a prerequisite for engagement and performance, and something we wish to support and improve continuously. As outlined in the NCC Health, Safety and Wellbeing Annual Report 2021-22, our objective is to support all colleagues to be at work, well and productive. The staff survey tells us that genuine concern for colleagues' health, safety and wellbeing is a key driver for (i.e. has a disproportionately high impact on) employee engagement. We also know that absence due to mental health issues and musculo-skeletal issues have risen as a proportion of absence generally, with the context of the pandemic having contributed to these trends.

Executive Directors will therefore encourage line managers to develop their conversational practice skills and prioritise team and individual wellbeing. They will use the data from the HSW report to understand areas for focus, and they will ensure all the fundamentals are in place such as training, risk assessments, incident investigations and DSE assessments. We will review and improve the package of tools and support available to improve quality and take-up, along with a communication and promotion plan for managers to help them deliver the fundamentals of good health, safety and wellbeing management.

Our new MyOracle system will support our leadership and management ambitions by providing easy and quick access to data, insight, and processes, freeing up time for high-quality discussions with team members. We will support leaders and managers so that they can embrace the new system and be role models for others moving to an increasingly self-service approach. Over time we will work to make best use of the additional functionality to support learning and development, recruitment, and talent and career discussions.

6. We will ensure our workforce is equitable, inclusive and diverse

Our 'Better Together, for Norfolk' strategy sets out the importance of developing 'strong, engaged, and inclusive communities' in Norfolk. We need to do this within NCC too, and the last two years have seen a great deal of conversation, work, and progress in the field of equality, diversity, and inclusion.

Our advisory networks began in 2020 and are open to all staff, gaining momentum over the past two years. Vital in shaping NCC's ability to become a properly diverse, equitable and inclusive place to work, our advisory and employee networks provide safe spaces for staff to connect with each other, and to advise on different areas of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion using a range of expert knowledge and lived experiences. We currently have advisory networks for racial equality, disability, LGBTQ+, and carers. We have employee networks for Black and Asian employees, international employees, and deaf / hard of hearing / BSL user employees.

As an organisation we are moving from an 'awareness' stage of maturity towards 'integration', and we will continue onwards towards embedding a real, meaningful EDI culture and competence over the coming years. Our increasing diversity as an organisation is one of our great strengths. The people who work for us come from a wide range of backgrounds in terms of ethnicity, sex and gender identity; disability; age; sexual orientation and religion and belief. We are on a journey as an organisation to ensure that all our people feel valued equally, and we will ensure that everyone who works for us feel safe, with access to clear and effective help in cases where discrimination or prejudice may happen.

For us, it's vital that we create not only a diverse and equitable workplace, but also one that feels inclusive, safe, open and respectful for everyone, regardless of difference, role, background, or seniority. Although we will measure 'vital signs' to

help us understand how we're doing, we will also look to the quality of the day-to-day experience at work that our colleagues describe.

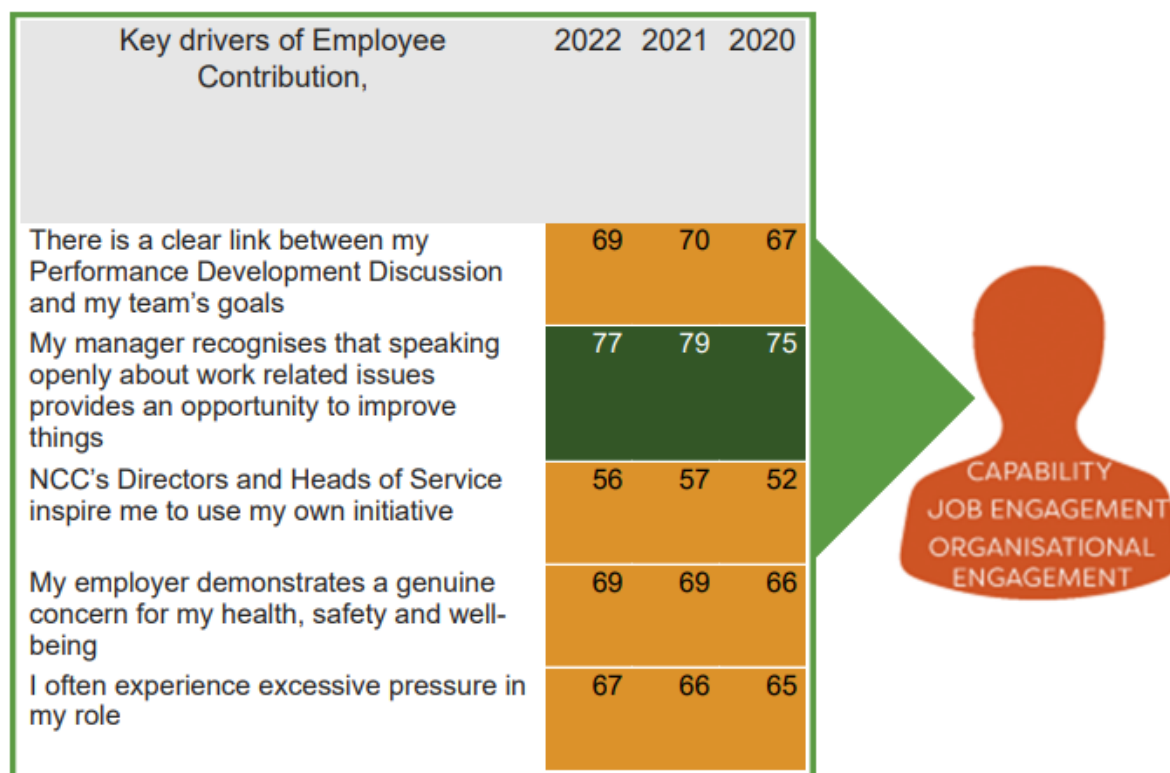
We have agreed a set of strategic objectives to guide our work over the next few years. These are:

- to respect and value difference fully across our county and within our workforce
- to attract, recruit, and value new colleagues from a diverse range of backgrounds
- to support and encourage every colleague to be the best they can be at work, and
- to provide an employment 'deal' that is fair and inclusive.

To realise our strategic objectives, we will need to go further with leadership and accountability for EDI, embedding appropriate goals – such as employment of care leavers and employment of disabled people for example - into leadership roles. We will also need to embed EDI thinking, culture and competence more fully into our people processes, and enable our managers to be a strong 'face of NCC' in this area. Our learning and development offer will be enhanced so that all colleagues understand our direction of travel and feel equipped and supported to be part of the journey. The implementation of MyOracle will support us to improve our data and insight capabilities so that we have a clear picture of how we are doing; this of course also rests upon an improvement in levels of trust that colleagues have in providing their data with confidence in their anonymity. Our 'Valuing Difference: Positive Inclusivity Through Meaningful Change' plan is under development and will be the vehicle which turns our EDI objectives into actions and noticeable difference on the ground. Through the plan we will support increasing levels of open, constructive conversation about equality, diversity and inclusion, taking learning from them to inform future actions and plans. The plan will draw on a wide evidence base of information and research from published materials and our own advisory groups and data. It will address issues relating to staff with protected characteristics, and specific priorities for departments and services according to their own challenges.

7. Our culture will be open, innovative and healthy

Our BTfN strategy puts healthy, fulfilling, and independent lives at the heart of its objectives. We want the same for our NCC colleagues and it is incumbent upon us as a public sector employer to be a role model in this area. Over the last three years we have made great strides in understanding how people feel about working at NCC, using the 'Our Voice, Our Council' staff survey. The overall picture is an improving one, compared with other UK public sector organisations, with perception of the 'balance of the deal' getting better each year so far to 2021 and then stabilising in 2022. We understand our key drivers of engagement, and these are improving or stable year on year.



Having said that, we know that mental health issues have been increasing slightly as a proportion of overall absence, and that perception of excessive job pressure needs to improve even more than it has. Culture-wise, NCC people say we are capable, trustworthy, and supportive, but rate us less highly on the 'innovative' indicator.

Looking ahead, we want to be more proactive in sustaining people's mental health at work, and their resilience and strategies in the face of job pressure. We also want to enable colleagues to innovate more easily and to know about the innovations in other parts of the organisation.

As part of our ambition to be the employer of choice in Norfolk, our culture needs to support flexible ways of working both in daily life and in opportunities to take on new roles in different parts of the organisation. We will increasingly recruit and select for values and strengths, seeking to attract and retain colleagues with the broadest of backgrounds, ideas, and routes to work.

Building on the successful embedding of the annual staff survey, we also want to explore and create additional ways of promoting conversation between colleagues and leaders. Through this we intend to create a refreshed set of meaningful values, built in a collaborative way and resonating with colleagues in all parts of the organisation. As part of our recent leadership conference the extended leadership team has created a preliminary set of values, and the next steps with these will be to validate them with colleagues and embed them into our systems, processes, and ways of working.

available to help those wishing to consider re-training or a move between services.

We will develop our employer brand in alignment with the wider NCC service delivery brand, saying what makes us special and attractive as an employer for people in all communities, especially those whom we have historically struggled to attract. In parallel we will collaborate with other organisations within the Norfolk system and more widely to present an integrated face of the public sector to prospective colleagues, strengthening our ability to reach and attract talented people. We know that awareness of Norfolk outside the county is low, and we will expand our employer brand work to include those who live in other counties.

Whilst our brand will be aspirational and positive, we must ensure that it is realistic and that it reflects the experiences of our colleagues on a day-to-day basis. An environment of high challenge, high support, and flexibility must be a consistent reality for colleagues in all parts of the organisation.

We will extend our proactive reach out into Norfolk's education establishments, ensuring that students are aware of career opportunities and routes into working within local government. In particular we will start to connect more proactively with care leavers in Norfolk, seeking to level the playing field for them and supporting them to gain employment within our own organisation where appropriate. We will also seek to connect more effectively with graduates and provide them, in collaboration with other public sector bodies in Norfolk, with a graduate scheme that offers opportunities to start a career in the Norfolk system. Our apprenticeship and early careers strategy will continue to be delivered, ensuring that we remain on course to increase the number of apprenticeships and traineeships we offer, providing a vital career start for young people and a vital 'bridge' to career change or development for those already working at NCC.

Our learning and development offers will, using the new MyOracle system, be developed over time to become integrated with the Performance Development Conversations (PDC) process, and with the BTfN and other strategies. Once the system is populated with a clear set of role profiles and a skills and strengths framework, NCC employees will be able to use it to identify potential future roles and the development required to move towards them. In parallel, we will refresh our core and digital skills offers to ensure they support the objectives of this workforce strategy and other related strategies.

9. Our workforce will use technology effectively

At NCC we are already embracing technology in many ways to help colleagues perform and thrive in their roles.

Our 'Digital Strategy and Roadmap for the 2020s' sets out the technological road ahead for our workforce. It states clearly that we must equip our colleagues with the right technology and data to enable them to do their jobs,

and that we must continue to develop their digital and analytical skills so that they can make evidence-based decisions, target services effectively, and maximise their own productivity.

Through the life of this strategy, NCC people – including disabled colleagues - will benefit from access to digital skills training, support for Bring Your Own Device (BYOD), the new MyOracle self-service Finance & HR system, support, and guidance for smarter and hybrid working, improved internal data analysis, collaborative working with Norfolk Office of Data Analytics (NODA), Robotic Process Automation (RPA), the development of Power Apps, and the NHS & Care integration digital programme.

This strategic work means that NCC people will have the right kit and equipment to do their jobs, new ways of working and support for collaborative and creative activities, systems that support provision of better service in more flexible ways, and the skills to use them. In addition, colleagues will start to use automated internal processes that are online, self-serve and available always, use data more effectively to help inform the decisions they make, experience repetitive tasks being automated to free up time for more valuable work, and see improved working with our partner organisations via data that can be accessed across organisations.

10. We will use insight and evidence to monitor our progress

It is important that we know how we are doing at creating a high performing, thriving workforce, so that we can improve and develop over time. We will use a range of insights to help us decide what to keep doing and what to change.

Our corporate ‘vital signs’ workforce indicators will be refreshed to reflect the aims of the workforce strategy, ensuring that we monitor and support progress at organisational, directorate and service levels.

The implementation of the new MyOracle system through 2022 will provide managers and leaders with quick and easy access to a broad range of people data, enabling them to understand their team successes and challenges in real time and make decisions accordingly. This will free up time to spend on higher value managerial and leadership activities.

The ‘Our Voice, Our Council’ staff survey will continue to provide us with an annual snapshot of how people feel about working with NCC, and this robust data will continue to be used to shape the provision of support, development, and other improvement activities.

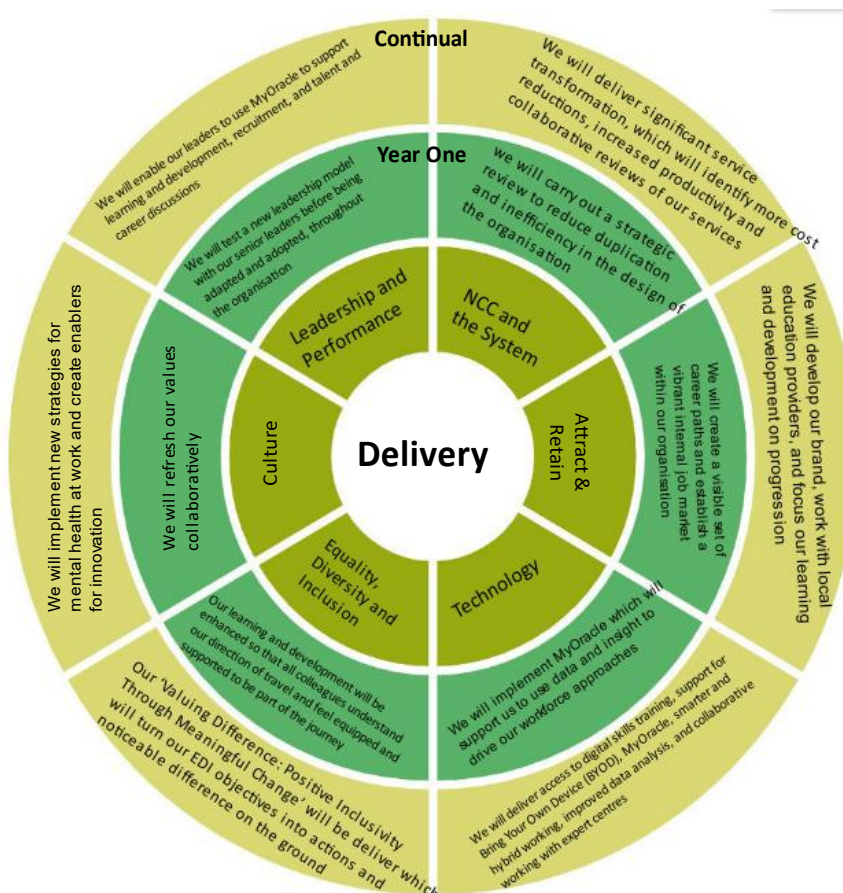
Our new ‘Engaging Leadership’ model will be explored to learn more about individual 360 instruments, so that managers and leaders can gain insight into their personal effectiveness and impact.

Our Human Resources department performance measures will be refreshed to align with the workforce strategy aims and updated to ensure that we are measuring outcomes and impact rather than activity.

11. Implementing the Strategy

The diagram below provides preliminary thinking on the stages of implementation that may be required. Further planning will be needed alongside other strategies and initiatives, to ensure that the organisation is able to make sense of and embed strategic workforce change in conjunction with other changes. Thought will also need to be given to the resources required to implement the strategy, both from the leadership and managerial community, our wider staff communities, and from the Human Resources function. The Human Resources function has responsibility and expertise in this area and will be instrumental in planning and implementing the strategy with the sponsorship of the Executive Directors.

The HR function is itself on a journey of improvement and modernisation and the strategy will guide HR leaders as they prioritise work and develop their teams. In short the strategy will help HR professionals to enable leaders, managers and staff to perform, have fulfilling careers, and a positive employee experience.



12. Stakeholders

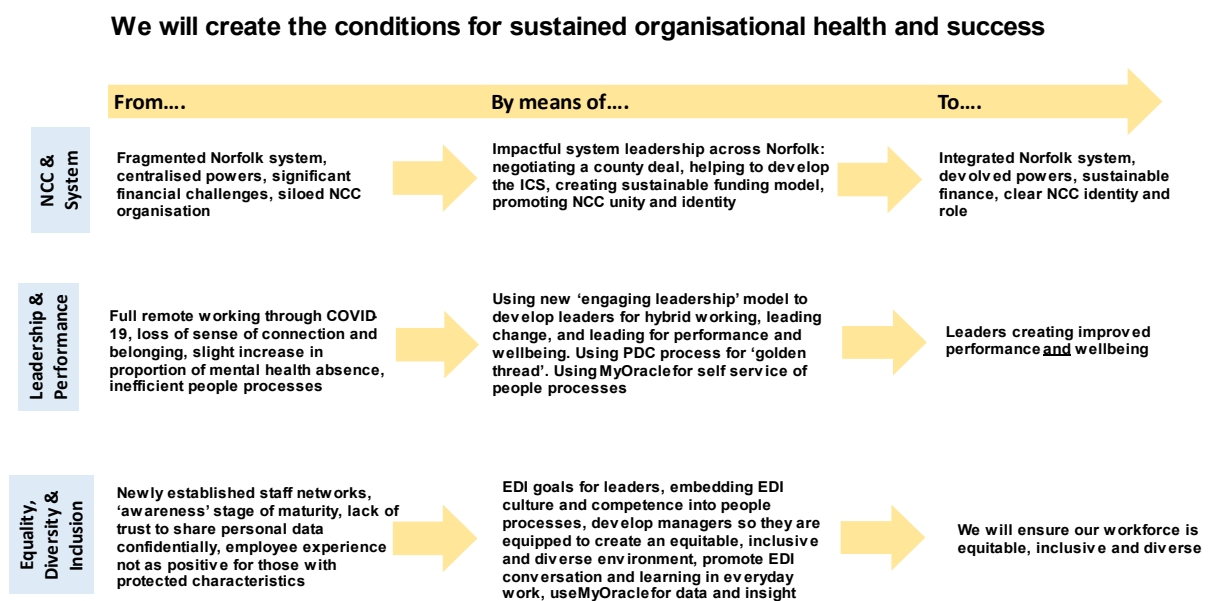
This workforce strategy is owned collectively by the Executive Directors of NCC. A key part of the ED collective leadership role is to set strategy which enables performance and organisational health. EDs will collectively sponsor, resource, govern, and measure the success of the strategy

Members, whilst not owners of the strategy, are key influencers and offer guidance which connects the workforce strategy with the delivery of the Together, for Norfolk strategy.

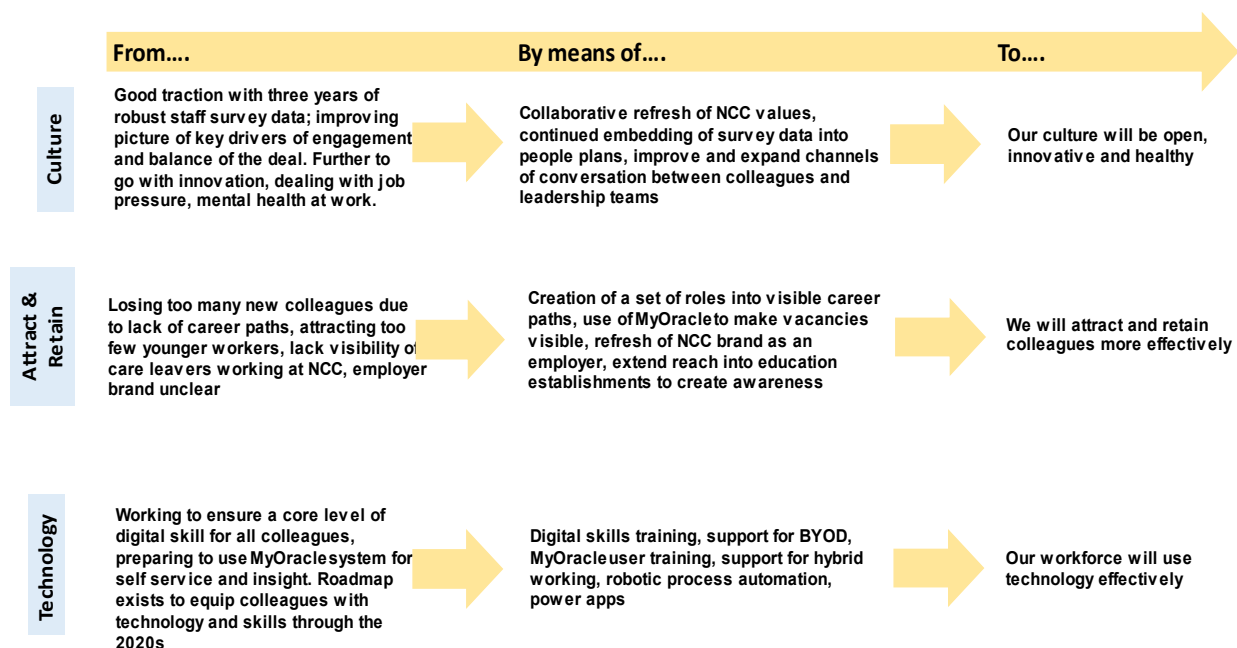
Leaders and managers in the organisation are stakeholders of this strategy as they are the 'face of NCC' to their team members, and as such are the embodiment of this strategy daily. Our Senior Leadership Team (SLT) will play a leadership role in driving the implementation of the strategy within their directorate / service, with the support of their HR Business Partner.

Every current NCC colleague is a stakeholder of this strategy and as such will be invited to read it and discuss with their manager. Our representative bodies are key contact points for input and insight into the real experiences of NCC colleagues, and so they too are stakeholders of this strategy.

Although it is important that this strategy is not an 'HR product', nevertheless our Human Resources colleagues will be instrumental in its implementation. The function will use the strategy as an over-arching guide to influence its own form, structure, and goals.



We will create the conditions for sustained organisational health and success



Corporate Select Committee

Item No. 9

Decision making report title:	Emerging Equality Diversity & Inclusion (EDI) Objectives for 2023-2026
Date of meeting:	16 January 2023
Responsible Cabinet Member:	Councillor Margaret Dewsbury – Cabinet Member for Communities and Partnerships
Responsible Director:	Tom McCabe – Executive Director, Community and Environmental Services

Introduction from Cabinet Member

Norfolk County Council aims for Norfolk to be one of the highest performing counties in the country - creating jobs and opportunities for the people of Norfolk and cherishing our environment, countryside and heritage.

Above all – we want to empower our residents to be in control of their lives and influence decision making in Norfolk, to enable equality of opportunity for all.

Our current EDI Plan is due to expire, and work is underway to develop a new set of EDI objectives for 2023 to 2026. We must think carefully about what will deliver the best results for all with our limited budget, so every three years we prioritise common-sense actions to improve equality and inclusion across our services, workforce and communities.

Over recent years, we have delivered many improvements on EDI, including:

- We are quadruple award-winning for our work to promote equality, diversity and inclusion. This includes nominations from the Municipal Journal; Blue Badge awards; British Council Office awards; Asian Fire Service Association Awards, Local Government Chronicle awards and the [BBAA Leonard Cheshire awards](#).
- Our progress to lay sound building blocks in Norfolk Fire and Rescue Service on EDI was commended by His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) as 'innovative practice'.
- Dr Margaret Flynn, the author of the Safeguarding Adults Review for Joanna, Jon and Ben, said that our approach to addressing Recommendation M in the report (tackling racism) was 'illuminating in terms of its reach, its evidence-based focus and piloting ways of thinking about dealing with racism'.

However, there is so much more to do – for example:

- Racism affects many of our ethnic minority residents and employees, and young Black and Gypsy, Roma and Traveller children in Norfolk experience the poorest lifelong outcomes (also seen in the rest of the UK).
- Many disabled people continue to experience substantial barriers to physical and digital environments – which require a high level of technical skill to resolve.
- Promoting inclusion for our LGBTQ+ communities is an important priority.

One of Norfolk's great strengths is our diversity – and the latest [Census results for 2021](#) indicate that diversity is increasing. Our aim is that over the next three years, we will really make a difference in Norfolk – dismantling barriers to equality and using our considerable influence to continue to improve life in Norfolk for all.

Executive summary

This report summarises progress over the last three years to deliver against the County Council's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Objectives for 2020 to 2023. Overall, progress has been good. All critical activities are due to be delivered.

The existing objectives are due to expire on 31 March 2023. Work has therefore taken place to prepare a new Plan.

This report sets out the arrangements to prepare the new Plan, the challenges to address and the evidence gathered to date (which includes consultation with 250+ residents from diverse backgrounds). It summarises the draft EDI objectives to emerge so far, set out in Section 5.

Following feedback from Select Committee and the completion of public consultation, the Cabinet will decide in March 2023 the final EDI objectives for 2023 to 2026.

Actions required

- 1. To note the progress made in delivering the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Objectives 2020 to 2023, set out in Section 2.**
- 2. To consider the challenges set out in Section 3; the actions that have taken place so far to prepare new objectives, and the emerging objectives set out in Section 5.**
- 3. To advise the Cabinet of any additional actions that should take place, or any information that should be made available to Select Committee, to ensure that the final EDI objectives to be determined by the Cabinet in March 2023 are fit for purpose.**
- 4. To recommend to the Cabinet the future timing of reports on EDI to Select Committee (for example, Select Committee may wish to receive an annual progress report).**

1. The legal context

- 1.1. Local authorities have a statutory duty under the Equality Act 2010 to pay 'due regard' to the following when exercising public functions:
 - Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other prohibited conduct
 - Advance equality of opportunity
 - Foster good community relations.
- 1.2. The Act requires authorities to publish equality objectives and report annually on progress each year.

2. Progress against the Council's equality objectives 2020 to 2023

- 2.1. Overall, progress over the last three years has been good.
- 2.2. All critical activities in the current Plan are due to be delivered by 31 March 2023.
- 2.3. Some key highlights include:
 - The Council is quadruple award-nominated/winning for its work on equality, diversity and inclusion. This includes the British Council Office awards; Asian Fire Service Association Awards, Local Government Chronicle awards and the [BBAA Leonard Cheshire awards](#).
 - Our progress to lay sound building blocks in Norfolk Fire and Rescue Service on EDI was commended by His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) as 'innovative practice'.
 - Dr Margaret Flynn, the author of the independent Adult Safeguarding Review, said that our approach to addressing Recommendation M in the report (tackling racism) was 'illuminating in terms of its reach, its evidence-based focus and piloting ways of thinking about dealing with racism'.
 - We have completed a whole-Council review of equality (500 data sets) to identify strengths and where there are inequalities. This means that the Council now has a clear picture of the most significant inequalities.
- 2.4. For more details about progress please visit www.norfolk.gov.uk/equality.

3. Operational challenges to address

- 3.1. Despite progress over the last three years there are significant challenges to address. For example:
 - Our ethnic minority employees continue to report racism at work by service users and in their personal lives. Norfolk County Council agreed a Motion on 20 July 2020 to reaffirm the Council's commitment to race equality, to prioritise actions to eliminate racism and to use our influence to actively promote race equality.
 - We have listened to feedback from ethnic minority residents and employees, and it is evident there is more we can do to tackle racism. This includes reviewing our policies and procedures to ensure they are clear and easy to apply; and that managers are equipped to support employees experiencing racism. It also means always challenging unacceptable behaviour and working and communicating in ways that actively promote race equality.
 - Our social care workforce is increasingly ethnically diverse (it is more diverse than the population of Norfolk) and this will continue as we welcome more international workers to help fill vacancies in social care. This makes tackling racism even more important – it is not just about keeping people physically and psychologically safe, but also about recruitment and retention so that we can continue to provide social care services to the people of Norfolk.

- Our whole-Council review of equality highlighted embedded inequalities (also seen nationally) for young Black and Gypsy, Roma and Traveller children, for which there is yet no explanation. Children's Services have prioritised this and have agreed to conduct an analysis about why these inequalities are occurring (by examining how and why referrals to services are made, to identify if these operational decisions are following all relevant policies).
- On 23 November 2020, Full Council agreed a Motion for Disabled People. Accessibility for disabled people is complex and requires specialised skills. Everything that the Council now provides – whether customer services, computer software, websites, physical buildings, equipment, personal support or correspondence – must be accessible. Barriers experienced by people who are, for example, blind, Deaf, neurodiverse, wheelchair or cane users, who have learning disabilities or mental health issues are different. This means that at any one time, the Council is identifying and removing thousands of barriers. Often, barriers are substantial, and may impact on a disabled person's ability to live independently or access information or services. Looking ahead, working with disabled people to identify which barriers should be prioritised first will be important.
- There is a polarised national debate about the rights of trans and non-binary people. A priority is to ensure that our LGBTQ+ residents and employees feel safe, respected and valued, and that our business systems can accurately record someone's sex and gender identity.
- We still have a significant EDI transformation strategy to deliver in Fire and Rescue.
- The Adult Social Care Peer Review highlighted a range of equality issues to be addressed in relation to the delivery of adult social care.

4. How we are developing potential EDI objectives for 2023 to 2026

4.1. We have undertaken a range of actions to properly research and shape the proposed emerging objectives set out in Section 5:

- A whole-Council review (500 data sets) of how the Council works and communicates. This means that we now have a clear picture of the most significant inequalities in lifelong outcomes for service users and employees.
- Initial consultation in 2022 with 250+ residents from seldom-heard communities (LGC award-nominated).
- Interviews in 2022 with 45 Black British, Black African and Black Caribbean women.
- Consultation with Norfolk residents on potential equality priorities for 2023 to 2026. We are actively promoting the consultation to our diverse ethnic minority, faith and LGBTQ+ communities. We are holding sessions for disabled people including people who are D/deaf, Blind and who have learning disabilities to ensure an inclusive approach. We are also engaging the Norfolk Resident's Panel.

- Listening to service users and employees with protected characteristics via our many different engagement mechanisms including staff advisory groups and employee conversations.
- Literature review of relevant past consultation exercises with Norfolk residents over the last decade – for example, consultation with the chairs of Norfolk’s disability access groups, who identified top barriers to independence in Norfolk; consultation with 345 LGBT+ residents; consultation with 315 residents on religion and belief; workforce surveys.
- Independent advice from Black, Asian and race equality experts.
- A review of Children’s and Adults Safeguarding Serious Case Reviews to identify themes around race and culture.
- Engagement with key stakeholders including independent safeguarding chairs.
- Review of relevant national Governmental publications on disability, race equality, gender identity, LGBTQ+.

5. Emerging EDI objectives for 2023 to 2026

- 5.1 On the basis of the evidence gathered so far, four potential objectives are emerging:
- a) Promote race equality and eliminate racism across our workforce, services and communities.
 - b) Provide services, information and environments that can be accessed, understood and used independently and with dignity to the greatest extent possible by all disabled people.
 - c) Promote inclusion for our LGBTQ+ service users and colleagues.
 - d) Deliver our EDI transformation actions in response to external inspections, peer and safeguarding reviews (this includes our EDI plan for Norfolk Fire & Rescue Service; our EDI actions in response to Adults Peer Review 2022; and our EDI actions in response to Recommendation M (tackling racism) Safeguarding Adults Review – Joanna, Jon and Ben.)
- 5.2 The final EDI objectives for 2023 to 2026 will be determined by the Cabinet in March 2023, following the end of consultation and feedback from Select Committee.

6. Governance

- 6.1 The Cabinet Member for Communities and Partnerships chairs the EDI Performance Board. The Board monitors progress against the EDI Objectives on a quarterly basis.
- 6.2 Select Committee is asked to recommend to the Cabinet the future timing of reports on EDI to Select Committee (see Recommendation 4).

7. Evidence and reasons for decision

7.1 The evidence for the proposals is set out in Section 3.

8. Financial and resource implications

8.1 The objectives detailed in this report can be met within existing budgets and resources.

9. Other implications

9.1 **Human rights implications** – no human rights issues identified.

9.2 Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA)

The proposals in this report will enable the Council to comply with the Equality Act 2010 including the public sector equality duty. They will also ensure the Council continues to take full account of equality, diversity and inclusion when planning and commissioning services and, where necessary, put actions in place to promote equality and address barriers faced by people with protected characteristics.

9.3 **Health and safety implications** – none identified.

9.4 **Sustainability implications** – none identified.

10. Risk implications/assessment

10.1 The Council has monitored potential risks for failure to comply with statutory equality duties. This risk is regularly reviewed by departmental managers.

11. Background papers

11.1 None.

Officer contact

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

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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.

CORPORATE SELECT COMMITTEE – FORWARD WORKPLAN 2023

Corporate Select Committee	16 January 2023	13 March 2023	15 May 2023
	<p>Part A –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Smarter working progress report • Work force Strategy • EDI Objectives 23-26 <p>Part B – Committee forward plan</p>	<p>Part A –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communications Strategy • Commercialisation Update (Mar or later in 2023) • Policy Framework Review • Modern Slavery Policy • Update on Constitutional Changes <p>Part B – Committee forward plan</p>	<p>Part A –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commercialisation Update (possible) <p>Part B – Committee forward plan</p>