

Corporate Select Committee

Date: **Monday 13 July 2020**
Time: **10am**
Venue: **Virtual Teams Meeting**

Pursuant to The Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority Police and Crime Panel Meetings) (England and Wales) Regulations 2020, the 13 July Corporate Select Committee meeting of Norfolk County Council will be held using video conferencing.

To view the meeting online, please follow this link to the County Council Committees You Tube page:

https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCdyUrFjYNPfq5psa-LFIJA/featured?disable_polymer=1

Membership:

Cllr K Vincent (Chairman)	Cllr I Mackie
Cllr P Carpenter	Cllr B Long
Cllr E Colman (V.Ch)	Cllr R Oliver
Cllr N Dixon	Cllr S Squire
Cllr C Foulger	CllrJ Timewell
Cllr T Jermy	Cllr J Ward
Cllr C Jones	

Agenda

1 To receive apologies and details of any substitute members attending

2 Minutes

To receive the minutes of the previous meeting held on 9 March 2020 **Page 5**

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 Wednesday 8 July**. For guidance on submitting a public question, view the Constitution at www.norfolk.gov.uk/what-we-do-and-how-we-

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 on Wednesday 8 July 2020**.

7 Corporate Response to Covid19 **Page 9**

Report by the Executive Director of Strategy and Governance

8 Business Transformation (Smarter Working) Programme – Covid-19 Pandemic Response Impact **Page 21**

Report by the Executive Director of Strategy and Governance

9 Human Resources and Finance System Transformation Project – Update **Page 27**

Report by the Executive Director of Strategy and Governance and Executive Director of Finance and Commercial Services

10 Compliments and Complaints **Page 36**

Report by the Executive Director of Strategy and Governance

11 Review of Council Constitution **Page 50**

Report by the Executive Director of Strategy and Governance

12 Corporate Select Committee Forward Plan **Page 54**

Note by the Executive Director of Strategy and Governance

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Date Agenda Published: 3 July 2020



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Corporate Select Committee

**Minutes of the Meeting Held on 9 March 2020 at
10 am in Edwards Room, County Hall, Norwich**

Present:

Cllr Karen Vincent (Chair)

Cllr Penny Carpenter
Cllr Ed Colman
Cllr Nigel Dixon
Cllr Colin Foulger
Cllr Terry Jermy
Cllr Chris Jones

Cllr Ian Mackie
Cllr Brian Long
Cllr Sandra Squire
Cllr John Ward

1 Apologies for Absence

- 1.1 Apologies for absence were received from Cllr R Oliver and Cllr J Timewell.

2 Minutes

- 2.1 The minutes of the meeting held on 27 January 2020 were agreed as an accurate record and signed by the Chairman.
- 2.2 It was noted that the Environmental Working Group would be asked to explore what further savings might accrue to the Council from the conversion of more street lights to LED lighting (mentioned at minute 9.4) and to report to the Cabinet on this matter at the earliest opportunity.
- 2.3 The Committee made appointments to the Strategic Asset Management Framework Task and Finish Group (mentioned at minute 8.4) (Cllr Dixon, Cllr Jermy, Cllr Mackie, Cllr Timewell and Cllr Vincent) and agreed on terms of reference for the Group from the Executive Director of Finance and Commercial Services. The Group was expected to report recommendations on the draft Strategic Asset Management Framework to the Committee on 16 July 2020 and to the Cabinet on 7 October 2020. The proposed framework would be presented to Council for adoption on 25 November 2020.

3 Declarations of Interest

- 3.1 There were no declarations of interest.

4 Items of Urgent Business

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 There were no local Member questions.

7 Corporate Select Committee Work Programme

7.1 The annexed report (7) by the Executive Director of Strategy and Governance was received.

7.2 It was noted that to create strategic oversight and drive the appropriate development of strategy and policies, the Corporate Select Committee would continue to take a thematic approach to the work programme, around three key themes: People, Transformation and Assets. The forward plan for this thematic approach would be considered at item 10.

7.3 The Committee RESOLVED

To endorse the thematic approach of the Committee's work programme.

8 Talking People Priorities (NCC Workforce attraction and retention)

8.1 The Committee received a detailed presentation and report (8) by the Executive Director of Strategy and Governance regarding three key talking people priorities:

1. Understanding Our Voice, Our Council Staff Survey and what our "Employment Deal" means for performance, recruitment and retention.
2. Norfolk PLC: Attracting to Norfolk and Norfolk CC to live and work.
3. Understanding the people aspects of smarter working and how this supports a more efficient and modern organisation, as well as attraction and retention.

8.2 The presentation can be found on the Committee pages website.

8.3 The Committee discussed Norfolk's good performance (in the top quartile) relative to that of other Local Authorities, Norfolk's staff retention and remuneration initiatives and a suggestion to support recruitment activity in which senior managers were visible role models to support staff recruitment campaigns.

8.4 The Committee also discussed ways to engage more closely with schools, colleges and other training providers on the opportunities that were available for students to find employment in the social care field and in other areas of the County Council's work where there were recruitment difficulties.

8.5 The following detailed questions were asked of Sarah Shirtcliff, the Director for

People:

1. Did Norfolk support welfare funds? The answer was that Norfolk provided a scheme run by Wherry Dragon which was a financial co-operative, run by and for members in which employees could both save and borrow safely to cover financial difficulty and financial planning.
2. Was the change in “mean values” fully attributable to the Female Managing Director leaving? The Director for People confirmed that the difference was calculated last year when it was known that the postholder was leaving and it did materially impact the mean broadly as stated in the report.
3. Was there any evidence that public sector employees were more likely to be related to other public sector employees? The Director of People points out (as an addition after the meeting) that The Office of National Statistics indicates 5.4m working in public sector, 1 in 6, with half in high-skilled roles, and 300 occupations. There is no specific data on statistical weighting toward family members, however it’s a reasonable judgement that increased awareness of public sector by one family member and shared values could support an increased likelihood that family members may choose a public sector career. This will be useful insight to explore as part of Norfolk PLC.

8.6 The Committee **RESOLVED**

To endorse the following objectives for developing “Norfolk PLC”:

- **Shape a Norfolk-wide collective strategic narrative about Norfolk as a place which is compelling, builds confidence in a good future here and is reputationally sustainable. NCC’s role would be to act as a convenor to engage with key players to identify appetite to partner joined up working.**
- **Describe the NCC employee proposition “the deal” and employer brand which attracts the people we need to come and live and build careers in Norfolk.**
- **Attract candidates with the key capabilities essential to the economic growth and social mobility agenda of Norfolk.**
- **Ensure a fantastic candidate and employee experience to match our narrative.**
- **Support recruitment activity in which senior managers are visible role models to support staff recruitment campaigns.**
- **Engage more closely with schools, colleges and other training providers on the opportunities that are available for students to find employment in the social care field and in other areas of the County Council’s work where there are recruitment difficulties.**

8.7 The Committee also **RESOLVED**

- **To establish a cross-party member group (with a membership wider than the Committee) to work together to build our employer brand and place marketing first for NCC and then engage across Norfolk. The Group was asked to report back to this Committee in the first instance**

and to examine what lessons could be learnt from the experiences of the #love West Norfolk campaign by the joint public sector to promote West Norfolk as a place to live, work and enjoy.

- To explore opportunities to promote smarter working further, in particular as an effective attraction tool, particularly to a younger population and to have the Council take steps to help Councillors to embrace smarter working and make greater use of technology in how they work.

9 Gender Pay Gap Report 2019 linked to NCC objectives for Workforce Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

9.1 The annexed report (9) by the Executive Director of Strategy and Governance was received.

9.2 The Committee reviewed the Gender Pay Gap Report, and specific proposed actions for 2020 that were set out in the report. The Committee also considered the findings and key issues that were mentioned in the report as part of the Council's wider reflections and learning about enhancing the Council's ability to recruit and retain employees by a focus on our equality, diversity and inclusion objectives.

9.3 The Committee RESOLVED

- To endorse the areas of focus and specific proposed actions for 2020 that were set out in the report.
- To endorse the findings and key issues mentioned in the report as part of the Council's wider reflections and learning about enhancing the Council's ability to recruit and retain employees by a focus on our equality, diversity and inclusion objectives.

10 Corporate Select Committee Forward Work Plan

10.1 The annexed report (10) by the Executive Director of Strategy and Governance was received.

10.2 The Committee RESOLVED

- To endorse the areas of focus for the Corporate Select Committee set out in the report.
- To agree that the work programme includes an update in Autumn 2020 on what steps are being taken to support and manage absence from work.

The meeting concluded at 12.20 pm

Chair

Corporate Select Committee

Item No. 7

Report title:	Corporate response to Covid-19
Date of meeting:	13 July 2020
Responsible Cabinet Member:	Cllr Andrew Proctor (Cabinet Member for Governance and Strategy)
Responsible Director:	Fiona McDiarmid, Executive Director for Strategy & Governance

Introduction from Cabinet Members

The response to Covid-19 in Norfolk has been a huge community and partnership effort. Over the last few weeks, everyone across Norfolk has worked together to adjust to the new 'normal', to support friends, colleagues and neighbours and to play their part in keeping themselves and others safe and well.

We want to place on record our thanks to all of the staff, contractors, volunteers and communities who have worked hard to keep people safe and protected and will continue to do so. Thank you.

We are proud that residents in Norfolk have responded so well to the massive changes which has helped the Council do its work. We still have challenges to face but we are confident that, continuing to work together, we are well placed to face them.

Executive Summary

This report provides the Corporate Select Committee with a summary of how the County Council services reporting to this committee have responded to the Covid-19 crisis. The report summarises the work that Norfolk County Council is undertaking in response to the Covid-19 pandemic.

Note that the contents of the report are based on circumstances that are changing frequently and therefore some areas may become superseded by new information on an ongoing basis.

Actions required

- 1. To formally thank all staff involved in the significant effort to keep people safe and protected.**
- 2. To acknowledge the work that has been carried out by NCC central services during the COVID-19 pandemic.**
- 3. Identify any priority areas for review to consider changes or additions to programmes, policies and strategies to ensure they continue to be shaped**

effectively in these areas, and add these to the Committee's Forward Work Programme

1. Background and Purpose

- 1.1. On 31 December 2019, the World Health Organisation (WHO) was informed of a cluster of cases of pneumonia of unknown cause detected in Wuhan City, China. The cause is now identified as a Coronavirus, one of the family of viruses which caused the SARS (Serious Acute Respiratory Syndrome) outbreak in 2002-2003 across the world. The virus was subsequently named Covid-19.
- 1.2. In response, the UK government announced a four phase strategy to deal with the spread of the virus. These are:
 - Contain: detect early cases, follow up close contacts, and prevent the disease taking hold in this country for as long as is reasonably possible;
 - Delay: slow the spread in this country, when the virus does take hold, lower the peak impact and push it away from the winter season either by a moderate delay strategy or a harder strategy to suppress the transmission; (We are now in that suppression phase.)
 - Research: better understand the virus and the actions that will lessen its effect on the UK population; innovate responses including diagnostics, drugs and vaccines; use the evidence to inform the development of the most effective models of care;
 - Mitigate: provide the best care possible for people who become ill, support hospitals to maintain essential services and ensure ongoing support for people ill in the community to minimise the overall impact of the disease on society, public services and on the economy.
- 1.3. We are currently in the Delay phase, as part of which, on 16 March 2020, the UK government announced significant changes to the social distancing and other measures asked of people, especially those with symptoms or who are more vulnerable. From 20 March, the country has been in "lockdown" with all but essential movement allowed, with some lockdown restrictions eased during June.

2. Norfolk County Council mobilisation and response

- 2.1. Planning for a pandemic was started well before Covid19 was discovered. In September 2019 Norfolk tested, under exercise, a Flu Pandemic Plan, enabling the Norfolk Resilience Forum to draw up emergency plans for pandemic flu, and for other system functions such as the management of mass deaths.
- 2.2. Norfolk County Council's Public Health played the lead role in establishing the emergency planning response prior to the first cases in the UK. The flu pandemic plan and excess deaths plan were reviewed in early February 2020 as the Covid19 epidemic developed in Asia. Emergency planners, along with community NHS providers and Public Health stood up and chaired the

Strategic Coordinating Group (SCG) and Tactical Coordination Group (TCG) by 12 February to support implementation of the national strategy that initially focussed on containment. Support cells to address mortality pathways, epidemiological modelling, and communications were established at this stage also.

- 2.3. Subsequently, across Norfolk, enhanced case identification with community testing (led by the NHS and in line with Public Health England guidance), isolation and contact tracing was implemented. At this stage the general public were asked to take measures such as hand washing, reporting symptoms linked to key risks such as travel, and change travel plans. These principles of basic communicable disease control remain our key messages and the bastion of management of control of infection spread.
- 2.4. In the wake of the crisis and lockdown announcements, the council rapidly redeployed its resources and took steps to minimise the risk of spread of the disease arising from its activities.
- 2.5. A three-phase approach was established, as follows:
 - **Phase 1 – Response** – focussed on delivery in response to the crisis
 - **Phase 2 – Normalise** – focussed on identifying and addressing the immediate issues and challenges that have arisen from Phase 1, as well as doing the detailed thinking, planning and preparations for Recovery (Phase 3). This phase is a stepping stone, or period of guided transition, to the ‘new normal’
 - **Phase 3 – Recovery** – focussed on the long-term recovery and regeneration of our economy and society. It will require the need for significant collaboration and joint working
- 2.6. On 17 March, staff able to do so were instructed to work from home. Our internal command and control structure of Gold and Silver was established to dovetail with multi-agency command and control. Activities were re-prioritised to reflect the new reality. A number of commissioned services were put onto a different footing to reflect the changed circumstances – with a different operating model or a change to emergency-only provision, whilst many were stood down.
- 2.7. Alongside the organisational pivot, Public Health activities were intensified, including:
 - Providing advice on infection control and management to staff
 - Media messaging on reducing the risk of infection, reassuring the public and seeking to mitigate the impact of social control measures
 - Information and analysis – modelling the likely impact of an epidemic on the population of Norfolk started about 10 March. This early start means we are now ahead of the curve in terms of epidemiological data and analysis available to plan service capacity. There is ongoing work to

model likely impacts; and also monitoring and surveillance of current data to measure the current impact.

- Providing mutual aid to Public Health England for infection control

2.8. With the transition from the containment to a delay phase of the strategy, the council's Public Health staff have established a 7-day rota system providing public health technical advice, interpreting scientific evidence and legal regulations, supporting commissioning and business continuity actions to Norfolk County Council (NCC) Gold & Silver command. This included advising the resilience forum, SCG and TCG, the NHS incident response and Infection Control Groups.

3. Departmental responses

3.1. Human Resources

- The Human Resources team mobilised rapidly to support the organisation in understanding and responding to a range of new government legislation and guidance such as health and safety, staff testing and working safely, school closures, furlough and dealing with caring responsibilities.
- New people policies were rapidly promulgated, to provide guidance to colleagues and managers on flexible working, managing remote teams, as well as new leave and bereavement support arrangements. Regular dialogue and well-trusted relationships with the union body has facilitated rapid change in our policy arrangements.
- A new "skills bank" was developed to enable the effective redeployment of colleagues to critical support roles across the organisation and workforce planning for step-down facilities.
- Our HR system has been significantly enhanced to include a dashboard for daily tracking of absence, giving us a good understanding of our employees' availability and capacity. Daily briefings to all managers have ensured that up to date, critical information reaches managers and staff in a timely manner.
- A proactive Manager Outreach service has ensured that we ensure managers are well-supported and guided in a difficult dynamic along with critical incident support should this be required.

3.2. Strategy and Intelligence

- Early in the epidemic Intelligence & Analytics colleagues started work to develop an epidemiological model with Public Health to predict how many cases were likely to occur in Norfolk and the level of increased need for health and social care services. The excellent work undertaken by analysts to develop the model and refine it with epidemiologists from University East Anglia and Norfolk and Norwich University Hospital, has put Norfolk SCG in a strong position to inform planning.
- A range of dashboards have been developed by the Intelligence & Analytics team to track the number of cases of Covid19 in Norfolk, as well as the

numbers of deaths in hospital and care settings, drawing on a range of sources and joining up systems.

- A multi-disciplinary expert team from Strategy & Governance, Public Health and the Leader's Office have been working throughout to coordinate and update information and briefings for County Council elected members, the Norfolk MPs, and key stakeholders across the whole public service and voluntary sector system in Norfolk, as well as provide advice and assistance to constituents making contact via their MPs.

3.3. Communications

- A revised internal communications approach was adopted including clear, directional updates for all managers to support their role in managing new working arrangements and enabling their teams to keep safe and connected.
- Communications and Public Health lead officers have regularly responded to media requests, including Q&A on BBC Radio Norfolk with Dr. Louise Smith Director of Public Health and other members of her team. Other work includes interviews for the EDP and other media. We have provided public health advice, and psychology expertise to the communications team to produce a series of communications products:
- Basic messaging on hand washing, and social distancing, and to provide the public with up to date information, advice and guidance on the pandemic.
- Spearheaded a localised campaign, complementing national advice, and using behaviour change techniques to encourage Norfolk residents to practice good hand hygiene, stay home and maintain social distancing.
- Working with the Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP), we have led a campaign to ensure that local businesses are supporting national messages and are playing their key role in ensuring key public messages are reaching our communities.

3.4. Technology

- Soft Telephony (based on MS Teams) was rapidly rolled out to all staff who did not already have it so that they could make and receive external calls using their laptops. Specialist software for Contact Centre staff was also deployed to enable the contact centre staff to work from home.
- In addition to being part of the Local Resilience Forum work to proactively contact over 41,000 people on the shielding list, the Customer Services teams handled over 12,500 inbound calls related to Covid-19 – providing information, advice and support to help people access food and other essentials.
- Voice and video conferencing technologies were enhanced to facilitate collaborative working across local and national public sector partners as well as residents and businesses.

- Over 6500 employees are able to securely access NCC systems remotely 24 hours a day, 7 days a week and have the tools they need to continue to support the organisation and the public.
- Digital inbound and outbound post handling facilities were quickly established as well as digital signature capabilities.
- The IMT team set up and lead the Cyber Security Cell for the Norfolk Resilience Forum, which was a UK first.
- New configurations were set up and tested for Teams Live Events to be used to continue democratic meetings in public virtually, starting in May with Cabinet. We were also able to use technology to transition our Adult Learning courses online (only 6% of UK adult learning providers transitioned 100% of skills courses online)
- In partnership with Human Resources, a scheme was set up to help staff access any additional equipment required to support remote working.
- Thousands of mobile phones and SIMS were replaced and hundreds of staff enabled to set up Bring Your Own Device technology, despite challenges of lockdown. This was supported by a new drive-through service to allow staff to stay safe and socially distanced while collecting IT equipment.
- Old corporate laptops re-imaged as Chromebooks were distributed to disadvantaged children through Schools IT team, to support continued learning throughout the lockdown. Similar equipment was distributed to charitable groups and public sector partners to help with their remote access challenges.
- To enhance security and prevent breaches, new and enhanced cyber security measures were implemented.
- E-learning and training guidance, produced concurrently, have enabled thousands of colleagues to make best use of the new systems, which have been robust throughout this period.
- The Norfolk County Council Corporate web site took a key role in providing trusted information and advice for residents – there were 107,000 unique pages views for Covid information in April alone, and views for rubbish and recycling increased by 419%.

3.5. Corporate Property

- Since March 2020, all NCC colleagues have been working from home except for where essential services require colleagues to be on the premises (i.e. customer contact centre).
- The team have supported colleagues across NCC in the response to Covid, from the initial safe closure of buildings, identifying and developing assets to support the response, keeping our core estate running, and now looking as to how the estate can safely reopen as we look at returning to normal. During this period the team have also continued to deliver a high volume of normal property projects including disposals, managing our tenants and the key financial 'year-end' activities
- The team have utilised a number of their skills and experience to help in response to Covid, including:
 - Procuring and setting up a temporary mortuary centre at 'Scottow

- Supporting the delivery, fit out and facilities management of 'step-down' facilities
- Developing and building logistics centres – to collate orders and requests for food and PPE
- Sourcing and delivering food – including surplus stock for food banks across the County
- Ensuring core (open) NCC buildings remain safely open for essential staff who cannot work from home .

3.6.Provision of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

- The provision of PPE has been a contentious issue nationally. At NCC, corporate services such as Procurement and Health and Safety, working closely with frontline departments and partners, have worked tirelessly to provide our staff and the care market, where needed, with PPE in accordance with Public Health England (PHE) guidance. This has been achieved despite a global shortage of personal protective equipment (PPE), through a combination of not undertaking non-essential visits and sourcing essential PPE.
- Guidance has continued to develop and shape over the period, requiring a pacey and dynamic response to guide employees appropriately, remove anxiety and give clarity.
- The council has been able to source hand sanitiser locally, including through working with the University of East Anglia (UEA) to produce sanitiser to the World Health Organisation specification, and more recently working with local distilleries.
- Recognising that masks would be a particular issue, the council joined an aggregated procurement with ESPO and placed an initial order on 20 March. The council has since sourced masks from a variety of providers and has been able at all times to provide them to staff.
- A donation of 5000 FFP2 masks from a local business has been allocated to the Fire and Rescue service.
- Recognising the broader system-wide requirements for masks, the council has ordered large quantities from a variety of sources. This includes importing 300,000 masks via a local agent, and working with Essex County Council to source a further million masks from China, both for Norfolk and Essex's own requirements.
- The council has resourced the Norfolk Resilience Forum's efforts to distribute equipment to all organisations suffering from an immediate shortage. In addition to distributing PPE sourced from central government, the NRF has also distributed equipment sourced by the County Council – in particular hand sanitiser which the government has not been able to provide.
- Over the Easter bank holiday weekend alone, over 500,000 PPE items and 800 litres of hand sanitiser, were distributed by an NCC team on behalf of the Norfolk Resilience Forum to primary care and social care organisations with the most urgent needs.

- All this has been achieved through the extraordinary efforts of the sourcing and logistics teams who have been able to obtain necessary equipment in the face of quite exceptional circumstances.

4. Impact of COVID19 on our work programme

4.1. People (including health and safety)

- 4.1.1.** The work of HR significantly altered during this period with all colleagues immediately working from home. HR delivers “business as usual services, supports services with change programmes and leads a pan-NCC people programme of work. All have been impacted, be it delivered differently, re-prioritised, put on hold, and significant new activity was taken on to manage the impact of the pandemic on our workforce and third parties. We have had to make changes to roles of key HR managers within the team due to long-term illness and caring challenges.
- 4.1.2.** Whilst the HR and Finance Replacement System was delayed, continued work by colleagues was progressed behind the scenes on defining career families, data and process activity as well as assessing any impact on requirements.
- 4.1.3.** The continued development of our skills, management and leadership programmes have not fully delivered to plan – whilst we re-prioritised other work including a focus on on-line virtual training offers to support leading change and leading remotely. We sadly cancelled our first extended senior leadership development day planned for April, and we plan to make this a virtual opportunity.
- 4.1.4.** Projects which we continued to prioritise included delivery of the new Mynet of which the people and learning sections comprise the majority of content. This we considered essential as a tool to support communication during the crisis.
- 4.1.5.** We had launched our annual Our voice Our Council staff survey prior to lockdown, and we decided to prioritise this as important insight and an engagement tool. Whilst response rates are down it remains a critical piece of insight.
- 4.1.6.** With a focus on redeployment and volunteers, we have focused on delivery of critical recruitment (largely social care) and have not delivered yet our planned changes to implement an integrated NCC careers site and bring in-house our career micro-sites for social work. We are dependent on web resource which has faced other priorities. This work is potentially 3 months behind our schedule. Further improvements to our recruitment process and activity are rescheduled as we adapted to delivering a recruitment process virtually. Linked to this we have not been able to progress the work discussed at this committee in February on Norfolk PLC.

4.1.7. Finally, our health, safety and well-being team workload has largely focused on covid activity during this period. We have identified as a corporate risk that the capacity of this team appropriate for a “business as usual” time has been insufficient which extraordinary demand in NCC, Fire, Schools and care sector. We need to step back and assess the needs for the service and impact on the usual book of work.

4.2. Technology

4.2.1. The pandemic has caused a number of IT projects to be reprioritised but has had little impact on the budget. The only notable exception has been Schools IT income due to reduced demand for support from schools during lockdown. The spare capacity from the Schools IT team was moved onto the IMT service desk and helped cope with the increased volume of calls from staff as they were supported to work effectively from home.

4.2.2. While some projects like the ERP Replacement and Counter Fraud Hub were paused or slowed, other projects were massively accelerated including Teams and CCAAS soft telephony rollout, digitising inbound and outbound mail and introducing digital signatures.

4.2.3. The Vulnerability hub was a brand-new system that was commissioned to support county wide, multi-agency support for vulnerable and shielded residents. This was commissioned and implemented in a matter of weeks using a low-code solution from Microsoft called PowerApps. This has allowed us to add this tool into our offer to services to accelerate future automation and legacy system replacement work.

4.2.4. IMT resources continue to be dynamically reprioritised through Silver command meetings to keep remote systems running well and support the evolving requirements for Covid-19 response. The current priority project is to develop technology to support the Test and Trace / Local Outbreak Management System.

4.3. One Public Estate and Asset Management

4.3.1. One Public Estate meetings have continued and the forum has provided a helpful way to circulate and share information across authorities. Some projects, however, have been delayed.

4.3.2. New ways of working will change the way the public sector use the estate, however the extent and nature of this change is not yet known, in the short-term most authorities will operate offices at a lower capacity (to ensure social distancing) limiting the opportunity for site rationalisation. In the medium term, there will be the opportunity to rationalise buildings, staff, and other partners onto core sites.

4.3.3. The Asset Management Plan refresh is continuing through virtual meetings and will meet the original timescales

4.4. Local Service Strategy

The partnership working throughout the Covid-19 pandemic had further strengthened relationships with colleagues at the local district councils, as well as within the wider VCSE sector.

Implementation of a joined up system, the Norfolk Vulnerability Hub, which is a contact management solution covering NCC and all the district, city and borough councils, is also helping us to better understand and meet the needs of Norfolk residents.

As we move into the “Recovery” phase it will be important to reshape and recalibrate our approach to ensure we build on the progress we have made in this area.

5. Conclusion and next steps

- 5.1. Over the past two years, NCC has moved forward with a number of transformation initiatives to change the way we work, respond to the needs of a modern working environment and be efficient in our use of property and resources.
- 5.2. The Covid-19 crisis has significantly accelerated the implementation of many of these initiatives, including the roll out of technological solutions to enable remote working, and the development of new policies which meet the needs of the current operating environment, and enable flexibility in the way we work.
- 5.3. At the same time, as highlighted in the report on Business Transformation (Agenda Item 8) a number of opportunities are emerging, which will need to be explored, as we move forward to the “normalisation” and “recovery” phases. These phases are likely to be far more complex and have the greatest impact both on the future shape and culture of the council itself. In many ways, these new ways of working have challenged previous assumptions about how we might work in a fully digital and distributed way. We want to take a planned and deliberate approach to transforming our services and ways of working, building on the learning we have from Covid-19 and previous ambitions to change.
- 5.4. Similarly the HR and Finance transformation report (Agenda Item 9) reflects the impact of the pandemic on the timetable for implementation and the potential opportunities emerging from the changes in working practices brought about by our response to Covid-19.
- 5.5. Therefore a number of next steps have been identified:
 - Analysing feedback on good practice and areas for improvement, and ensure that this is fed into our current work programmes.
 - Scoping out the opportunities identified as part of Business Transformation and develop robust plans over the next 3-6 months
 - Sustaining and enhancing the new ways of working that have been introduced and realising the benefits, capturing lessons learnt and ensuring we do not revert to previous norms, unless it is appropriate to do so.

- Keeping the COVID-19 lens on all our programmes to ensure that we are building in the required agility to respond to any further changes or national announcements made, becoming a COVID-19 resilient organisation.

6. Financial implications

- 6.1. The current crisis continues to have a significant impact on the financial position of the Council, which will be monitored by Cabinet as part of the 2021/22 budget planning process and the development of the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy.

7. Resource implications

- 7.1. **Staff:** There are no current direct implications arising from this report. We have adapted some working practices and policies and over time will reflect any minor potential furlough arrangements in line with government advice. Staff have responded well to being deployed to other work needs across NCC and the broader partnerships.
- 7.2. **Property:** There are no direct implications for property arising from this report, beyond those already identified in the report.
- 7.3. **IT:** There are no direct IT implications arising from this report, beyond those already identified in the report.

8. Other Implications

- 8.1. **Legal Implications :** none identified
- 8.2. **Human Rights implications :** none identified

9. Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA)

- 9.1. **Equality Impact Assessment:** COVID-19 has impacted on every individual and family across Norfolk, particularly on people with protected characteristics. New evidence is emerging daily about the nature and extent of this impact. In view of this, the Council is maintaining a [dynamic equality impact assessment](#).
- 9.2. This impact assessment is being used to inform decision-making during the COVID-19 crisis. It is being continually updated to inform business continuity planning. Mitigating actions are being developed wherever necessary and these are summarised in the assessment.

10. Health and Safety implications (where appropriate)

- 10.1. We continue to put in place full and up to date advice and risk mitigation responses for all our staff in light of the pandemic

10. Actions required

- 10.1. To formally thank all staff involved in the significant effort to keep people safe and protected.
- 10.2. To acknowledge the work that has been carried out by NCC central services during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- 10.3. Identify any priority areas for review to consider changes or additions to programmes, policies and strategies to ensure they continue to be shaped effectively in these areas, and add these to the Committee's Forward Work Programme.

Officer Contact

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Corporate Select Committee

Item 8

Report title:	Business Transformation (Smarter Working) Programme – Covid-19 Pandemic Response Impact
Date of meeting:	13 July 2020
Responsible Cabinet Member:	Cllr FitzPatrick (Cabinet Member for Innovation, Transformation and Performance)
Responsible Director:	Fiona McDiarmid – Executive Director, Strategy and Governance

Introduction from Cabinet Member

The Business Transformation Programme was born from the Medium-Term Financial Strategy and the allocation of a savings target that will be realised through review of non-frontline expenditure and ways of working, on the lead in to implementation of a new HR and Finance system in late 2021.

Smarter working means being more flexible about when and where we work, and how we creatively use space and technology to find new and more effective ways of doing things in a modern and business-like way.

Executive Summary

Select Committee will receive a separate report that describes the Corporate response to the Covid-19 Pandemic. The County Council and wider Norfolk Resilience Forum has a 3-phased plan in response to the Covid-19 Pandemic that moves from response, through a period of normalisation, to recovery.

This paper describes how the Covid-19 Pandemic response has impacted, in both a positive and negative manner, our Business Transformation progress and the steps that will be taken to re-shape and re-plan from the new baseline.

Select Committee will receive a detailed presentation at the meeting.

Actions required

The Select Committee are asked to:-

- 1. Acknowledge how the Covid-19 Pandemic response has impacted, in both a positive and negative manner, our Business Transformation progress, against the original objectives and consider priority areas to focus on in re-planning the programme.**

- 2. Agree that a further report be made to Select Committee, with an updated plan that takes our business transformation forward from the new baseline, in September 2020.**

1. Background and Purpose

1.1. Background

The Business Transformation Programme was born from the Medium-Term Financial Strategy and the allocation of a savings target that will be realised through review of non-frontline expenditure and ways of working, on the lead in to implementation of a new HR and Finance system in late 2021.

A programme consisting of 6 streams of initiatives that drive smarter working through incremental change : realignment of parts of our operating model and organisational structure, ways of working, rationalisation, digital leverage, process improvement, increased collaboration, process automation and commercial review.

Smarter working means being more flexible about when and where we work, and how we creatively use space and technology to find new and more effective ways of doing things in a modern and business-like way;

- Changes to ways of working, improvement of processes and making better use of technology to enable colleagues to work smarter.
- Using an enhanced travel capability will enable more options and greater efficiency when colleagues do need to travel.
- Making better use of our properties.
- Enabling Districts to better detect and prevent council tax errors and fraud.
- Digitisation of print, post, scan and record storage.
- Making the most of self service and process automation technology to make every day business transactions more efficient.
- Clarification of roles, building capability and strengthening governance for more effective commissioning and contract management.
- Ensuring payment to contracted terms and offering early payments to suppliers for a discount
- Reviewing traded services and arm's length companies, to make sure they continue to run successfully on a fair commercial basis.
- Greater collaboration and improvement of processes to secure additional inward funding through successful external funding bids.

1.2. Purpose

The purpose of this report to the Corporate Select Committee is to describe how the Covid-19 Pandemic response has impacted, in both a positive and negative manner, our Business Transformation progress and the steps that will be taken to re-shape and re-plan from the new baseline.

It is recommended that the Corporate Select Committee consider the original Business Transformation objectives, how the Covid-19 Pandemic response has

impacted progress, offer reflections and learning through the Covid-19 response and the current situation, advise concerns and recommend priority areas to focus on in re-planning the programme.

1.3. **Covid-19 Pandemic Response Impact to Business Transformation Progress**

The Covid-19 Pandemic and our response to it have had an immediate and profound impact on the way colleagues in the County Council work and the way in which services are delivered. Pre-Covid-19, our drive towards smarter working and a number of underlying capabilities was well underway, our response to it has required the acceleration of some aspects of our business transformation, some to be paused and for some aspects to be set-back. As we move from the immediate response to Covid-19, into the normalisation phase, we have a new baseline from which to continue to transform.

Changes to ways of working, improvement of processes and making better use of technology to enable colleagues to work smarter

Our response to Covid-19 has meant that almost all colleagues are now working from home, only travelling, meeting face to face and working from an office location where essential and in circumstances where it is not possible to perform the role remotely. In support of this, a range of technical and practical capabilities, policy changes, training and support have been developed, expanded and rapidly deployed.

Pre-Covid-19 implementation of the Good Work Plan legislation has resulted in a reduction in overtime and casual staff mix and corresponding expenditure.

Using an enhanced travel capability will enable more options and greater efficiency when colleagues do need to travel

Planning and preparation for colleagues to more easily access and use a range of travel options including an enhanced pool car capability have been paused while a large number of colleagues are working from home and only travelling when it is essential. This initiative will be re-shaped and re-planned, based on the 'new normal' way of working that will arise through normalisation.

Making better use of our properties and reduce the cost of external venue hire.

Planning and preparation to make better use of our operational properties and reduce external venue hire has been paused while colleagues are only meeting face to face, where essential. This initiative will be re-shaped and re-planned, based on the 'new normal' way of working that will arise through normalisation.

Re-planning will occur in line with the Asset Management Plan refresh that will be reported to Corporate Select Committee in September 2020, setting out the longer-term building policy, objectives and vision.

Enabling Districts to better detect and prevent council tax errors and fraud

Progress that was well underway, pre-Covid-19, has been paused while Districts focus on response activity and will be resumed through the normalisation phase.

Digitisation of print, post, scan and record storage

Print and scan volumes have dropped significantly as a result of the vast majority of colleagues working remotely and digitally which has also required both the acceleration of digital post (inbound and outbound) and introduction of digital signatures.

Physical record storage rationalisation and digitisation has paused while the new facility has been re-purposed to support the Norfolk Resilience Forum major incident response and while colleagues focus on critical Covid-19 response activity. The opportunity exists to expedite record digitisation and management, through normalisation, as colleagues continue to work remotely and digitally.

Making the most of self service and process automation technology to make every day business transactions more efficient

Planned for development and implementation through FY2020/21 with benefit realisation FY2021/22 onwards. Our Covid-19 response experience, specifically relating to the development and deployment of the vulnerability hub as part of community resilience, has informed an expansion of this initiative to include additional technical capabilities that drive self service and automation that in turn drive transactional business efficiency.

Clarification of roles, building capability and strengthening governance for more effective commissioning and contract management

The elements of our action plan in response to the Peer Review have been impacted, again both positively and negatively, as a result of our response to Covid-19. Through normalisation the new baseline will be established and implementation of the action plan will recommence. The action plan includes;

- Reputation and relationship management.
- Budget and performance.
- Management practice.
- Organisational effectiveness and transformation.
- Governance.
- Inclusive Growth.

Ensuring payment to contracted terms and offering early payments to suppliers for a discount

Pre-Covid-19 progress in ensuring supplier payment to contracted terms has been set-back through the central government mandate to pay suppliers early in order to secure critical supply chains.

Re-planning will account for market stability and how technology capabilities may help manage the risks associated with longer term recovery of the private sector.

Reviewing traded services and arm's length companies, to make sure they continue to run successfully on a fair commercial basis

Planning, preparation and implementation of the review of traded services and arm's length companies, to make sure they continue to run successfully on a fair commercial basis, has paused while colleagues focus on critical Covid-19 response activity. The baseline for a number of those traded services and arm's length companies will have changed as a result of Covid-19. Through normalisation the new baseline will be established and implementation will recommence.

Greater collaboration and improvement of processes to secure additional inward funding through successful external funding bids

The funding landscape has changed and the County Council's priorities have changed, in the short-term, as a result of Covid-19 and our response to it. Through normalisation, the re-plan will account for the forecast medium and longer-term priorities and funding opportunities.

2. Proposal

- 2.1. The County Council and wider Norfolk Resilience Forum has a 3-phased plan in response to the Covid-19 Pandemic that moves from response, through a period of normalisation, to recovery. The response phase commenced in February 2020, transition to normalisation commenced in June 2020 and it is anticipated that the normalisation phase will run through to September 2020.

The proposal is to re-shape and re-plan the business transformation, from the new post-Covid-19 response baseline, in line with the normalisation phase. In doing so, the re—plan will look to;

- realise the potential in the opportunities that have arisen from the challenges created by the Covid-19 Pandemic response.
- re-baseline the business transformation timescales and financial savings in line with FY21/22 budget setting.

3. Impact of the Proposal

- 3.1. A further report will be made to Select Committee, with an updated plan that takes our business transformation forward from the new baseline.

4. Financial Implications

- 4.1. The programme has a target to realise savings of £1.6m in FY20/21 and a further £4.25m in FY21/22. The re-plan will reset the savings target in line with achievement of the MTFS.

5. Resource Implications

- 5.1. **Staff, Property, IT:** The resources required to deliver the programme will be determined fully during the detailed re-planning phase, to complete September 2020. There may be a need for additional capital funding to deliver key areas of

work identified within the programme, in which case capital bids will be submitted as required.

6. Other Implications

- 6.1. **Legal Implications:** N/A
- 6.2. **Human Rights implications:** N/A
- 6.3. **Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA):** An new EqIA will be undertaken to re-assess the implications of the programme, to complete September 2020.

7. Actions required

- 7.1. **The Select Committee are asked to:-**
 - 1. **Acknowledge how the Covid-19 Pandemic response has impacted, in both a positive and negative manner, our Business Transformation progress, against the original objectives and consider priority areas to focus on in re-planning the programme.**
 - 2. **Agree that a further report be made to Select Committee, with an updated plan that takes our business transformation forward from the new baseline, in September 2020.**

Background Papers

[Business Transformation \(Smarter Working\) Programme report to Corporate Select Committee 14 November 2019 \(item 10\).](#)

Officer Contact

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Report to Corporate Select Committee

Item No 9.

Report title:	Human Resources and Finance System Transformation Project – Update
Date of meeting:	13 July 2020
Responsible Cabinet Member	Cllr Tom Fitzpatrick Cabinet Member for Innovation, Transformation and Performance
Responsible Director:	Fiona McDiarmid, Executive Director, Strategy and Governance Simon George, Executive Director, Finance and Commercial Services

Executive Summary/Introduction from Cabinet Member

In May 2019 Cabinet considered the business case developed to assess the options for replacing the County Council's core and peripheral Human Resources (HR) and Finance systems with a view to transforming service delivery and to realise savings. By replacing the systems and transforming processes, it is estimated that from 2022/23 (post implementation) net 10-year savings of £20m could be realised, with further potential savings of up to an additional £11m over that 10-year period being enabled as part of wider business transformation programmes. The business case concluded that of the options, a cloud based integrated Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) system was the best fit to the Council's present and future requirements.

Cabinet also asked the Corporate Select Committee to oversee the programme reporting any issues to Cabinet. Corporate Select Committee have received reports in May and November 2019 and Member workshops were held in October 2019 and February 2020 to engage Members in the scope of the programme, the technology available and the opportunities presented to transform service delivery and realise savings.

In February 2020 Cabinet also approved that the decision to award the contract be delegated to the Executive Director of Strategy and Governance, as Programme Sponsor, in consultation with the Executive Director of Finance and Commercial Services, the Leader of the Council and the Cabinet Member for Innovation, Transformation and Performance. The contract for the system was awarded to Oracle and that for the Systems Implementer to Oracle Consulting Services (OCS).

This report is to provide an update to Corporate Select Committee on the actions that have been taken since the last report in November 2019 and to ask for support in assessing the impact of Covid-19 on the benefits and business adoption challenges presented through implementation.

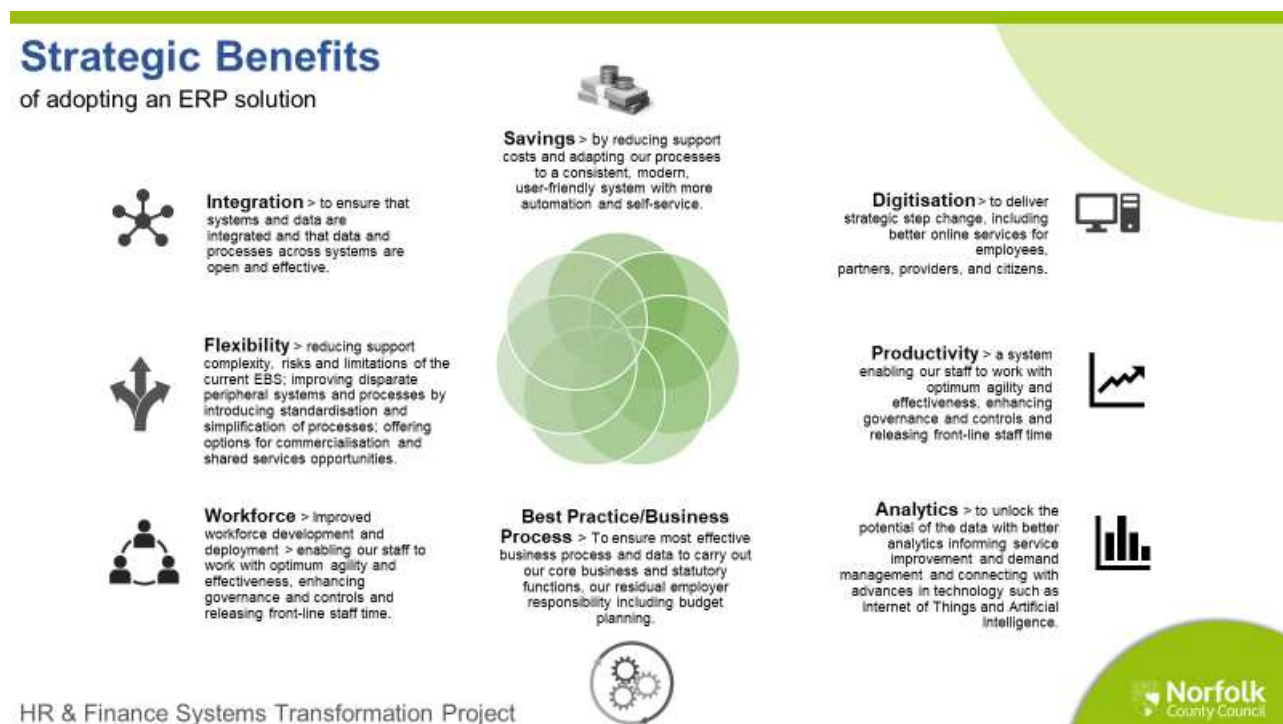
Actions Required

Select Committee is asked to consider the progress made to date, to offer any insight to areas where Covid-19 may have impacted on the initial programme objectives and planned outcomes and to specify any further areas of assurance required.

1. Background and Purpose

On 20 May 2019, following consideration of the submitted detailed business case, Cabinet agreed that the procurement process for the replacement HR and Finance Systems could commence. The business case, built on eight strategic benefits and realising savings estimated to be between £20m and £31m, supported the procurement of an integrated system for HR and Finance with a single database (an Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) system). Cabinet also agreed the associated funding for the project and the proposed governance arrangements but asked that Corporate Select Committee oversee the programme and report any issues to Cabinet. The purpose of this report is to advise Corporate Select Committee of the progress made to date, including the award of the contract for the new system and the System Implementer, to consider the impact of Covid-19 on the project both during the emergency response and as we move forward, and to detail next steps.

As a reminder, the project was based on realising these benefits:



In our report to Corporate Select Committee in November 2019, we described the next steps for the programme as being:

- Readiness for evaluation of tenders (evaluation 3 – 20 December).
- Preparation for system demonstrations – 6 - 31 January 2020 (to confirm evaluation decisions).
- Business readiness planning.
- Impact assessment on current governance arrangements.

Depending on the route taken for contract award (direct award or negotiation), the contract award was planned for either end February or end March 2020. However, this assumed that the business case continued to be valid once actual costs were received from bidders. A project go live date of 1 October 2021 was planned.

This report will advise of progress to date.

2. Summary Progress to Date

2.1 The procurement process was completed to plan. This included:

- Evaluation of supplier bids against the detailed Statement of Requirements and the ability to support our strategic benefits.
- Negotiation with suppliers.
- Review of original Business Case approved by Cabinet.
- Evaluation of the Final Tender responses.
- Set contract award date for 31 March 2020.

2.2 In accordance with the Cabinet decision, the contract award decision was considered by the Executive Director of Strategy and Governance following consultation with the Executive Director of Finance and Commercial Services, the Leader of the Council and the Cabinet Member for Innovation, Transformation and Performance. A review of the initial business case was

undertaken to support the decision-making process. The review of the Business Case said:

- The solution offered brings functionality that will allow us to standardise, rationalise and improve processes and services as anticipated.
- The solution brings a step change in analytics capability that will drive evidence-based business transformation and benefits realisation. This was an optional component with costs allowed for in the Business Case contingency.
- The solution brings technical compliance, future proofing, flexibility, constant updates and access to innovation for future benefits.
- The approach is likely to use up all funds set aside, including contingency.
- We have seen nothing material to make us question our business case savings and benefits assumptions.
- Back office savings will be achieved initially with further savings once service departments have adopted the programme and are using the functionality in their service delivery.

2.3 The business case review also considered the option to “Do nothing”. This was felt not viable because:

- Very limited benefits can be achieved with legacy systems.
- Legacy systems need to be replaced anyway in the near future.
- The market is ready, the solution is right.
- Delay costs money.

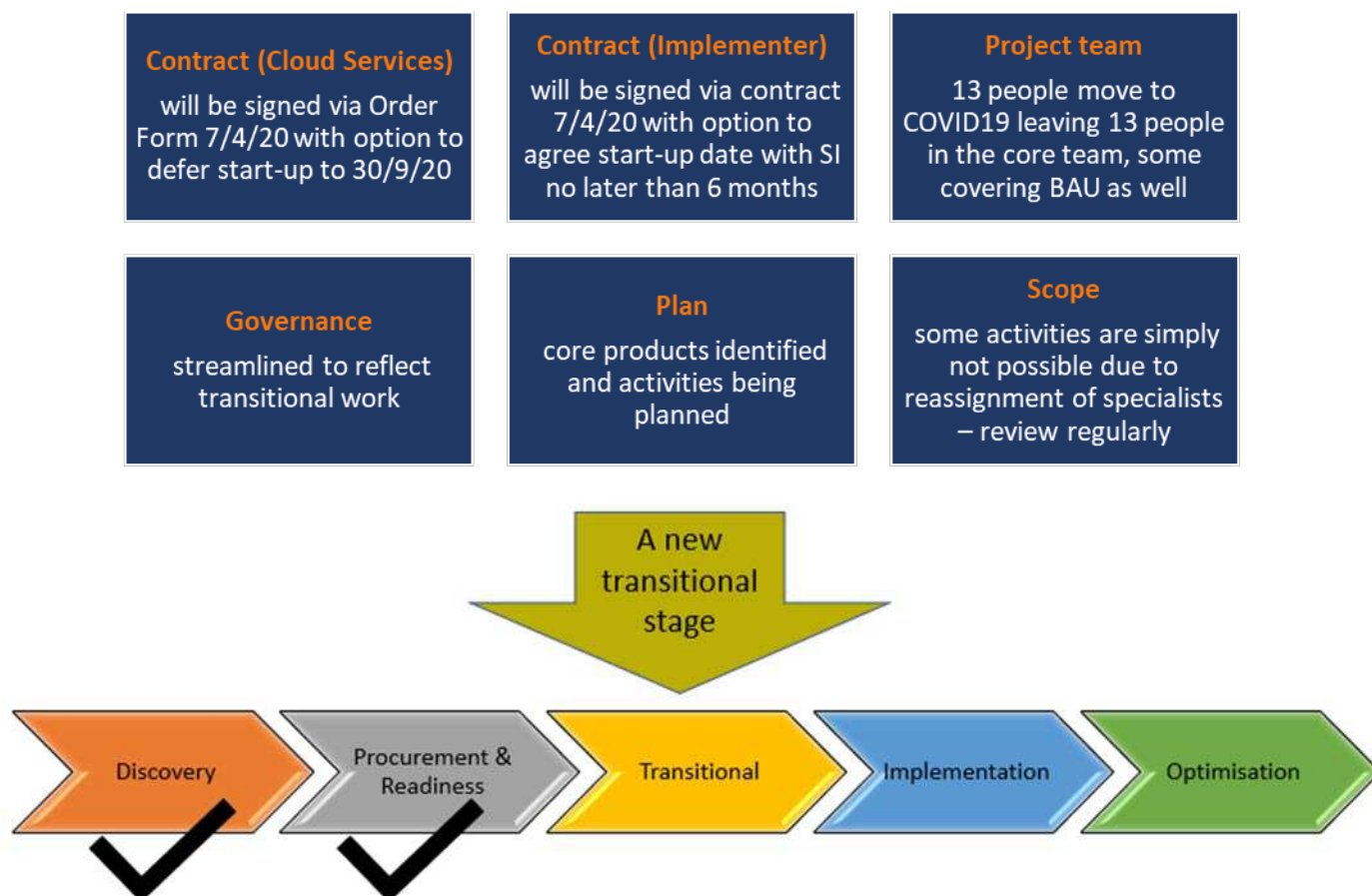
2.4 The decision to award also considered the context at the time of it being taken as it coincided with the move to lockdown in response to Covid-19. Points considered were:

- the current Covid-19 outbreak has impacted the ability of all parties (system supplier, systems implementers and NCC) to deploy resources as originally planned.
- Inevitably the go-live date of October 2021 will be missed.
- Project team members are likely to be deployed to more critical areas of work (this had already started to occur).
- The current Oracle on premise system goes out of primary support in December 2021 – there is a possibility that support will be extended but this is not guaranteed.
- Oracle and Oracle Consulting Services were both content to sign a contract as planned, in order to secure current prices, but to agree a deferral to the start of implementation for up to a 6 month period. To not do so would require a repeat of much of the procurement process when the programme restarts with all of the associated costs.

2.5 Having considered all of the factors the Executive Director approved and signed the decision to award of the System Implementer (SI) contract to Oracle Consulting Services (OCS) implementing an Oracle SaaS system (Appendix A details functionality in scope) with the start of implementation being deferred for up to 6 months.

3. Next Steps

3.1 Having signed the contract, there has been positive work with OCS to plan the programme reflecting the impact of Covid-19 on resources.



To guide the transition phase we have agreed some operating principles based on:

VISION / OUTCOMES FOR THE TRANSITIONAL STAGE

1. To continue project progress and to maximise our readiness to start the Implementation Stage.
2. To understand how we can be ready for the System Implementer coming on-site and to ensure we are all clear on what everyone is working on to a combined point
3. To continue preparation by:
 - **investigating** subject areas/decisions before SI commences work
 - **preparing our people** for the key design decisions they have to make and in understanding the scale of the change
 - **making key decisions** and refining scope before commencement with clear stakeholder definition and engagement

- 3.2 Governance arrangements are also being adjusted to reflect the new phase of work and to incorporate OCS senior personnel into the governance structures. Revised governance arrangements are shown below:



- 3.3 Work is now underway to understand the impact of Covid-19 on moving from Transition to Implementation. There are practical arrangements being made to mitigate the impact of key personnel remaining engaged on Covid-19 activities. Also, we are reviewing the impact Covid-19 has had on the ways in which Norfolk County Council is working currently and the effect this may have on the programme. Consideration is being given both to functional requirements (what the system is intended to do) and to the business adoption challenges (how we are going to use the system) presented by new ways of working introduced as the workforce has responded to remote working for much of our service delivery.
- 3.4 In terms of functionality, the view is that the transactional requirements remain; the organisation will still need to process invoices, make payments to suppliers and employees etc. But the importance of flexible and responsive systems and services, the need to be able to adapt quickly and safely to new processes and the reliance on managing complex datasets and using these to offer insight and analysis across systems, has been emphasised. Equally, the organisation has demonstrated that it is able to operate in a much more on-line way that previously with rapid deployment of often tactical solutions to replace what were previously paper based systems. Our benefits assumed a business environment where there would be this much greater use of technical solutions, but we anticipated some challenges in moving to that environment. Some of these challenges have been addressed in a very direct way as a result of responding to the new normal driven by Covid-19.
- 3.5 Members are asked to assist in our assessment of the impact of C-19 on this programme by offering insight on both systems and the ways of working based on their experience and observations.

4. Financial Implications

The original cost estimates provided to Cabinet in May 2019 have been updated to reflect the outcome of the procurement process and it was these updated figures considered as part of the business case review:

	Business Case	Revised estimate
Oracle Software	1,250,000	2,112,632
System Implementer	2,900,000	4,400,000
Project Team	4,951,074	4,200,000
Business Change	950,000	950,000
Other Costs	503,595	503,595
Contingency	2,689,925	1,078,367
TOTAL	13,244,594	13,244,594

The impact of C-19 on the running costs of the programme are being assessed. Approximately half of the programme team have moved for some or all of their time to C-19 response.

5. Resource Implications

- 5.1 **Staff:** The Programme team has been impacted by C-19 response activity and whilst we are now seeing a planned return of some, others are still required to support emergency response activities. The programme is also impacted by the availability of the wider teams needed to support implementation. The programme will not move to implementation until resource levels are able to sustain this.
- 5.2 **Property:** N/A
- 5.3 **IT:** Strong relationships exist between the project and IMT and the Head of IMT is a Programme Board member

6. Other Implications

- 6.1 **Legal Implications:** Legal advice has been obtained to support the procurement activities using both in-house capability and external expertise to ensure the contract terms and conditions are robust and provide the maximum amount of assurance for NCC.
- 6.2 **Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA)**

A high-level EqIA has been prepared. The detailed EqIA will be completed as we move to implementation.

6.3 Any Other Implications:

Officers have considered all the implications which Members should be aware of. Apart from those listed in the report (above), there are no other implications to take into account.

7. Risk Implications/Assessment

- 7.1 Corporate Select Committee required the project to be added to the Corporate Risk Register. This has been done (risk reference RM027 - Risk of failure of new Human Resources and Finance system implementation). Programme risks are scrutinised through the Programme governance structures. The corporate risk RM027 continues to be managed and closely monitored.
- 7.2 The current Covid-19 outbreak has impacted the ability of all parties (system supplier, systems implementers and NCC) to deploy resources as originally planned. Inevitably the go-live date of October 2021 will be missed although actions are being taken to minimise the delay.

8. Actions Required

- 8.1 Select Committee is asked to note the work completed to date, the next steps as described in paragraph 3, to offer any insight as requested and to indicate any areas of assurance required for the next meeting.

Background Papers

Cabinet Report – 20 May 2019
Corporate Select Committee report – 28 May 2019
Corporate Select Committee – 14 November 2019
Cabinet Report - 3 February 2020

Officer Contact

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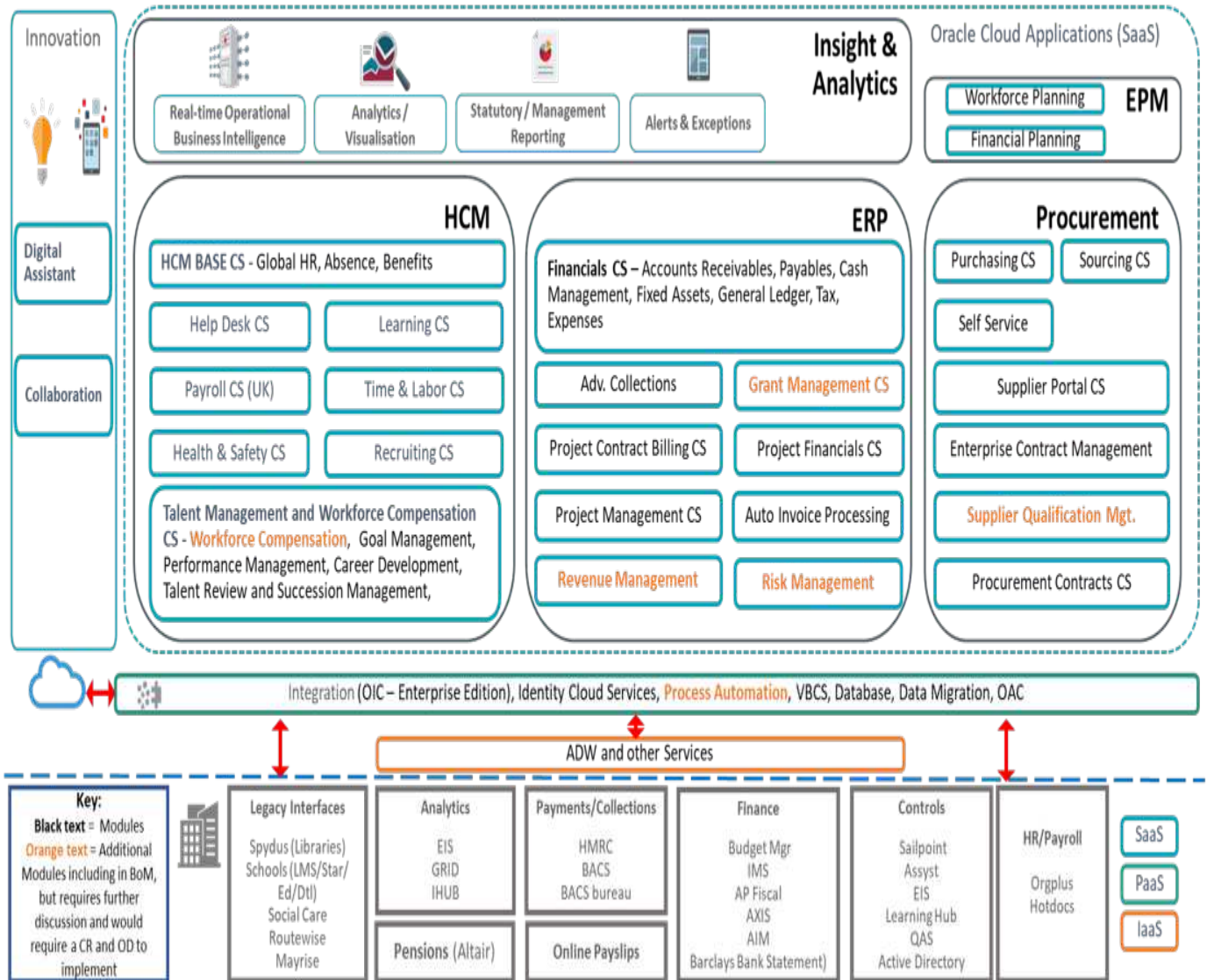
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Functionality in Scope



Report title:	Compliments and Complaints
Date of meeting:	13 July 2020
Responsible Cabinet Member:	Cllr Andrew Proctor, Cabinet Member for Strategy and Governance
Responsible Director:	Fiona McDiarmid, Executive Director Strategy and Governance
<p>Executive Summary</p> <p>This report considers representations, comprising formal complaints and enquiries made by Members of Parliament, received by Norfolk County Council's Compliments and Complaints Team between 1 April 2019 and 31 March 2020.</p> <p>During the year 3,053 representations were received, a reduction of 4.5% compared to the previous year, with responses being issued on average 1.2 days more quickly, an improvement of 9.2%.</p> <p>Reductions have been observed in both Children's Services and CES, with increases in Adults Social Services and Finance, the latter largely associated with changes in the way contributions for some adult care services are calculated.</p> <p>The percentage of all representations concerned with delays increased by 4% to make up 11.9% of the total, with dissatisfaction or change to a council policy being the root cause of 14.9%, an increase of 1.1%.</p> <p>Coronavirus saw an initial peak of representations at the end of March, which subsequently reduced, with staff being redeployed to support the wider authority's response.</p> <p>Actions required</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To consider the analysis of the representations received during 2019/20 as set out in parts 2 to 7 and 9 of the report. 2. To consider the information concerning the approach of the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman set out in part 8 of the report. 3. To consider the current position, the impact of Coronavirus and the factors detailed in part 10 of the report. 	

1. Background and Purpose

1.1. This report sets out data on formal compliments, complaints and representations made by members of the public and Members of Parliament and received by Norfolk County Council's Compliments and Complaints Team between 1 April 2019 and 31 March 2020, providing comparison against the previous year. It identifies the key policy and operational issues which have had the biggest impact on complaint volumes during

the period. It goes on to provide details of the impact of the Coronavirus pandemic and how resources have been redeployed to support the authority's wider response.

1.2 The Council has an established and centralised Compliments and Complaints Team, now part of the newly formed Information Governance Service within the Insight and Analytics Directorate of the Strategy and Governance Department. The Team is responsible for the investigation and response to all formal statutory and corporate complaints and in addition, issues raised by MPs directly and on behalf of their constituents. One of the key objectives of the team is to capture and report insight and intelligence arising from these representations, enabling services to make data driven decisions and ensure the learning this provides is embedded in improved future service provision.

1.3 The team continues to focus on objectively investigating complaints and responding in ways which best meets the needs of the customer. Where the Council is found to be at fault, that is accepted, endeavours made to remedy any injustice and to do whatever we can to make sure it does not happen again – in that way the Council continues to be a listening, learning and restorative organisation.

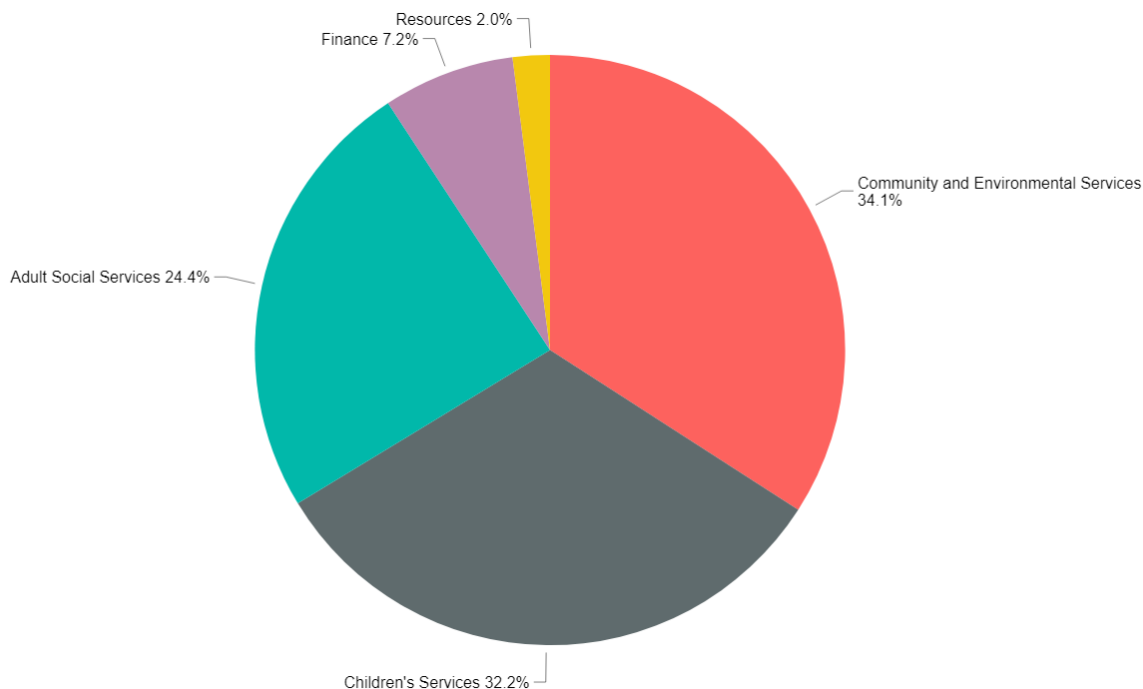
1.4 The increased emphasis on the valuable insight, recommendation and service improvement function of the service is reflected in the recent move to the Insight and Analytics Directorate. Alongside this, work is ongoing to streamline, simplify and automate processes wherever it is possible to do so. The team has improved the triaging of complaints and developed appropriate alternative forms of dispute resolution, in conjunction with departments. Together with the development of robust appeals processes, staff in the Compliments and Complaints Team have been trained to facilitate restorative conferences and undertake mediation as complementary or alternative forms of remedy and redress.

2. Compliments and Complaints 2019/20

2.1 During the period 1 April 2019 and 31 March 2020, the Compliments and Complaints Team received a total of 3,053 representations, an overall 4.5% decrease compared to the year before.

2.2 These comprised 2,169 (-3%) formal complaints and 884 (-7.8%) MP enquiries. During the previous year, the team had received 2,237 complaints and 959 MP enquiries, a total of 3,196 representations. The decrease in numbers this period has largely arisen with MP enquires, in part a as result of purdah occurring during the period, with a General Election taking place in December 2019, but also as a result of the proactive work done to engage and inform MPs through the strengthening of these key relationships and the provision of briefing information. This has meant MP's caseworkers can assist constituents directly on a range of issues, without the need to make individual enquiries of the Council.

2.3 The following chart shows the split of representations received by department



2.4 In addition to those for NCC, the team received 104 representations which related to matter for which the Council does not have responsibility. These include such issues as bin collections, private parking enforcement, social housing and antisocial behaviour. This is a reduction of 30% from the 150 the year before, indicative of the increasing effectiveness of the positive work undertaken to improve information, advice and signposting online as well as through improved triaging.

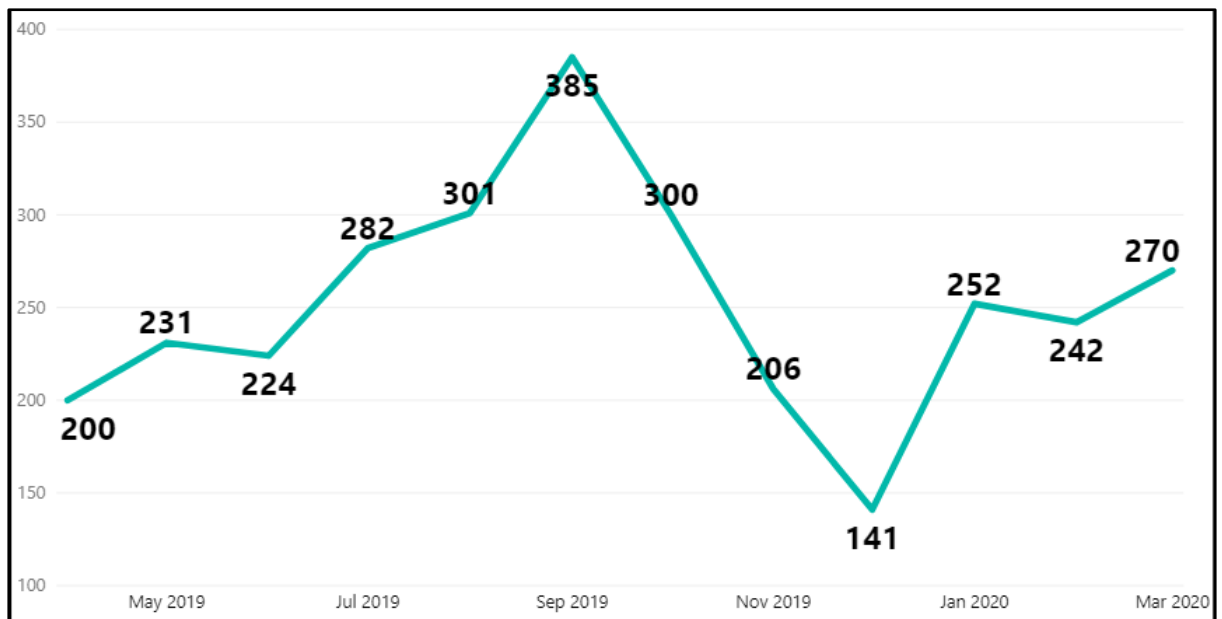
2.5 In total 202 unsolicited compliments, recognising the good work of Council staff were received.

2.6 The average time taken to respond to representations was 11.7 days, an improvement of 9.2% or 1.2 days compared to 13 days the year before.

2.7 During the year, 14.9% of all representations related to a dissatisfaction arising from a change of policy, up from 13.8% the year before. Representations regarding a delay also increased to make up 11.9% of the total, increasing from 7.8% the year before.

2.8 Representations regarding individual staff knowledge and judgement decreased from 18.3% to 13.3% of the total, as did the percentage regarding the attitude or behaviour of staff which fell to 13.5% from 14.1% the year before.

2.9 The following graph shows the numbers of complaints and MP letters received by month across the year. Significant and in the case of September, unprecedented, numbers were observed across the summer months, with a reduction going into the end of the calendar year. The peak observed in September was 30% higher than the same time the year before and resulted from a combination of factors. These included seasonal issues associated with the return to school, such as school transport and bus pass issues, additional activity in constituencies by the offices of MPs, delays with Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCP), changes to the Minimum Income Guarantee (MIG) levels and the extent to which Personal Independence Payments (PIP) are taken into account when calculating care contributions, and associated concerns regarding these re-assessment calculations, including consideration of Disability Related Expenses (DRE).



3. MP Letters

3.1 The Compliments and Complaints Team acts as a single point of contact for representations sent to the Council by Members of Parliament, both directly and on behalf of their constituents. These are investigated by Case Officers and Case Managers who draft responses for consideration by Executive Directors, the Leader and the Head of Paid Service. This process ensures these representations are dealt with efficiently and effectively, whilst capturing and reporting the valuable insight and intelligence they provide.

3.2 The team also creates briefing documents for MPs to support them in assisting their constituents directly, reducing the need to approach the Council on a case by case basis on frequent and topical issues. During the Coronavirus pandemic, the team have been providing weekly briefings for the offices of all Norfolk MPs to support them in quickly assisting constituents who are approaching them on a wide range of issues, seeking information, advice and support.

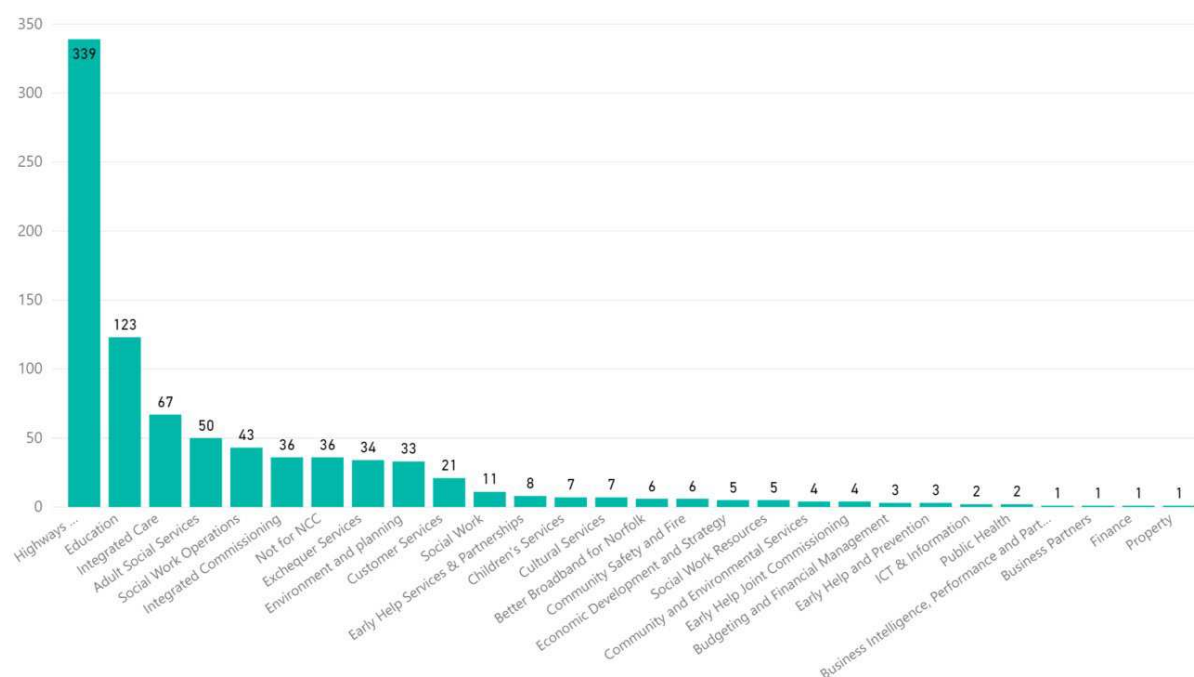
3.3 As part of a wider strategic engagement team, staff work closely with colleagues from the Communication and Consultation, Strategy, Innovation and Performance Teams, as well as the Leader's office, to proactively engage with the County's MPs and strengthen these key relationships. Following the General Election in December, joint meetings took place with the staff of new and returning MPs, to complement the 1:1 meetings between the MPs and the Leader.

3.4 During the year, 884 MP letters were received by the Compliments and Complaints Team from MPs; 7.8% fewer than the 959 received during the previous year.

3.5 339 of these MP letters (39.8 % of the total) related to the work of the Highways and Transport teams (which includes school and passenger transport). This is an increase from the 288 (29.8%) the year before and is largely attributable to the additional activity by MPs in constituencies ahead of the General Election.

3.6 A further 190 letters, or 22.3%, related to the work of the Children's Services department, down from 283, or 29.5%, the year before. Of those, 64 (33.8%) were concerned with Education, Health and Care Plans, down from 72 (25.7%) the year before. The majority of these were in relation to a delay in the provision of a Education Health and Care Plan, i.e. exceeding the 20 week statutory timescale, as well as identifying difficulties in finding suitable placements.

3.7 The following chart shows the service areas to which all of the MP letters received during the period related.



4. Children's Services

4.1 There were a total of 941 representations regarding Children's Services received during the period, a decrease of 11.5% compared with the 1063 received the previous year. These comprised 739 (-5.3%) formal complaints and 202 (-28.6%) MP letters.

4.2 The largest increase in the root cause of representations received for the department was in respect of delays, increasing by 5.9% to make up 18.1% of the total. This increase is largely attributable to delays in Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCP). The period saw challenges with capacity issues in the Educational Psychology (EP) service, with a resultant impact in terms of delays in completing EHCPs whilst this EP advice was awaited. Children's Services' Leadership Team have agreed further funding, which will increase capacity within the teams to address the issues highlighted.

4.3 The attitude and behaviour of staff accounted for a smaller percentage of all representations received this year, reducing from 17.7% to 16.1% of the total, with the majority of these relating to social care staff. This can of course be a very complex area of work and staff making enquiries of families' lives and circumstances can at times be perceived negatively.

4.4 In addition, significant work has taken place in Children's Services Social Care with managers embracing restorative approaches and taking proactive steps to respond

swiftly to issues arising at a local level, meeting more frequently with young people and families to discuss and resolve concerns before these need to escalate to complaints. This has led to a significant reduction in formal complaints of as much 29% in some areas.

4.5 The most significant area of complaint and representation however, both during this period and the last has been regarding the Inclusion Service, predominantly, delays in Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCP). The complaints reflect much of what was identified in the recent Ofsted and CQC inspection report following the joint area SEND inspection in March 2020.

4.6 The Executive Director of Children's Services has met with the Assistant Ombudsman to share details of how Norfolk Children's Services are addressing issues highlighted through complaints; something the Ombudsman specifically referred to as an excellent example of a Council's positive and constructive response to improving services in his last annual review of complaints.

4.7 The Ombudsman wrote to the Council, saying; *"We chose to highlight a small number of cases that demonstrate how a single complaint, and a council's constructive attitude to remedy injustice, can improve services for others."*

4.8 In October 2019, the Local Government & Social Care Ombudsman published a report, entitled 'Not going to plan?' on the Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) process, which highlighted that the number of complaints concerning children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) received nationally are at the highest level on record.

4.9 Across England and Wales, the Ombudsman is currently upholding almost nine out of every ten cases he investigates (87%), compared to an uphold rate of 57% for all other cases investigated. In 2018–19, the Ombudsman received 45% more complaints and conducted 80% more investigations concerning EHC plans than in 2016–17. Figures for 19-20 are not available at the time of writing.

4.10 The Compliments and Complaints team has very close links and holds regular meetings with the Children's Services' Quality and Effectiveness Team, to progress recommendations and service improvements identified through insight and intelligence work. In addition, all formal complaints which escalate beyond local resolution are shared with Children's Services' Head of Practice Development. The Compliments and Complaints Team also have a regular feature in the department's practice newsletter to ensure the learning from complaints is shared with all staff in the department.

4.11 Numerous service improvements have been implemented as a direct result of complaints the team has investigated. These have include reviews and changes to a range of policies and procedures, the holding of weekly rather than fortnightly needs assessment panel meeting to speed up processes, additional restorative approach training for managers, a new sensory assessment service being commissioned to promote more timely responses where a pupil needs sensory assessment, the direct monitoring of part time timetables, by the council, for children out of school, the setting up of webinar training sessions discussing data protection and expanded information regarding short breaks for parents and carers.

5. Adult Social Services

5.1 The number of complaints relating to Adult Social Services increased from 486 to 529 (+8.8%) compared to the previous year. The number of MP enquiries received also slightly increased from 171 to 177 (+3.5%). The department also formally logged 70 of the compliments it received, recognising its good work and positive impacts.

5.2 The increase in numbers can be largely accounted for as a result of the changes in the way contributions for some adult care services are calculated. 95 representations regarding this subject were received during the period. The Ombudsman found the Council acted without fault in its consultation and decision-making process in cases considered by his office in relation to these changes.

5.3 The Ombudsman, Michael King, was invited and attended one of Norfolk Adult Social Services' Quarterly Managers' Forums, where he spoke directly with staff at all levels of the department and saw first-hand the work the department is doing to improve the quality of social work and achieve the best possible outcomes for the many thousands of people the department supports across the County.

5.4 In September 2019, the Ombudsman published his annual review of Adult Social Care Complaints received during the year 2018-19. Nationally it saw the uphold rate for Adult Social Care complaints increase to 66%, up from 43% when figures were first recorded in 2010. In the introduction to his report the Ombudsman spoke of the challenging picture of Adult Social Care complaints, saying;

"The challenging picture we see played out in the media on an almost weekly basis is very much reflected in the types and seriousness of the complaints we receive and the faults our investigations put right. Many of the issues we see appear to be driven by attempts to ration scarce resources, and we received and upheld more complaints about fees and charging this year than in previous years. While I recognise the challenging environment both commissioners and providers are operating within, any attempts to reduce costs must also properly consider the impact on the rights and dignity of people who use services, and must comply with both the letter and the spirit of the Care Act 2014."

5.5 The Compliments and Complaints Team meets on a monthly basis with Directors in the department to review insight and intelligence arising from complaints and ensure that this key information is used to inform improvements and that learning is embedded in future service provision. In conjunction with the department, a new complaints framework has also been developed and is due to be rolled out to all staff over the coming months. This renews the department's vision, approach and ambition in the way it deals with the complaints it receives and provides further clarification of roles and responsibilities within the department. It also seeks to ensure issues are addressed as quickly and as close to the source as possible. It is anticipated that this will improve local resolution rates and reduce the number of issues which need to escalate to formal complaints.

5.6 In addition to the sharing of insight and intelligence a number of service improvements have also taken place as a result of the investigation of an individual complaint or complaints. These have included the reviews and changes to a number of policies and procedures, the production of a joint protocol for working with housing

authorities and registered social landlords to ensure home adaptations for tenants are planned and delivered in a timely way, the review of residential home records management and retention policies, the introduction of additional staff to address outstanding and delayed reviews.

6. Communities and Environmental Services (CES)

6.1 CES received a total of 1001 representations, comprised of 576 complaints and 425 MP enquiries in 2018/19, a decrease of 4% compared to the 1041 received the year before. The Compliments and Complaints Team has worked, together with the Customer Service Centre and the Digital Platforms Team, to improve both the triaging of complaints and the provision and ease of access to information.

6.2 Many of these representations, 357 (36%), were regarding Highways, with Travel and Transport 125 (12%), Casualty Reduction 113 (11%), Customer Services 96 (10%) and Waste 67 (7%) also accounting for significant proportions of the total.

6.3 Despite comprising the largest number of complaints for CES, the number of representations regarding Highways has continued to fall (by 13% compared to last year). This is largely following work done in improvements to triaging and information access, to ensure people are appropriately signposted to the correct processes when reporting issues with the Highway, rather than making complaints as a first point of contact. This makes the process much more efficient and ensures that highway defects can be dealt with in a more timely manner. For example, in the case of reporting potholes this can be done via an online highway report form rather than through the complaints process, which then gets automatically input into the back-office system for attention. Automation and improvements to updates sent to customers has also reduced the number of complaints made about a perceived lack of action or response.

6.4 Complaints relating to Travel and Transport have also decreased since last year (by 16% to 125). Half of these complaints were about School Transport, mainly regarding eligibility, however, none of these were upheld as in each case it could be shown that the policy had been correctly applied. Overall, 24% of school transport complaints were upheld, predominantly those relating to the actions of third party transport providers. Other complaints about transport include those regarding a loss of or a lack of lbus services and NCC has limited influence over these as bus companies plan routes on a commercial basis.

6.5 The number of complaints relating to Waste has also decreased, by 39%, this period compared to last year, now numbering just 67. This is largely as a result of improved understanding and appreciation of the changes to the DIY waste policy, which resulted in an initial increase in complaints following implementation. The remaining complaints are mostly in respect of staff attitude and behaviour at Recycling Centres which is being addressed through improved customer service training. There are still a small number of complaints regarding the local application of the disposal of DIY Waste policy, with 3 cases upheld last year where site staff had incorrectly applied the policy.

6.6 Representations regarding Casualty Reduction are predominantly concerned with the absence of traffic calming measures or speed limit reductions, together with perceived

lack of action for road safety following accidents or the perception of the likelihood of accidents taking place. This is an area that has seen a marked increase since last year, from 47 to 114 representations. In many cases advice is provided regarding the role of the Police, along with details of how speeding is managed in line with the Traffic Asset Management Plan, consideration for schemes based on a range of factors including accident data and details of local Parish Partnership Schemes.

6.7 The number of complaints about Customer Services remains consistent with last year. These mostly relate to the teams dealing with requests for Blue Badges and Concessionary Travel Passes and are, in the main, as a consequence of pass / badge holders being turned down for application or renewal on eligibility grounds.

7. Finance

7.1 The Finance department received 209 representations, comprised of 166 (+1.2%) complaints and 43 (-23.2%) MP enquiries, compared with 164 complaints and 56 MP enquiries the year before.

7.2 The majority (85%) related to Client Exchequer Services, which is the area responsible for the assessment and billing of contributions towards the cost of care and support provided primarily by Adult Social Services.

7.3 Many of the complaints received in relation to billing concern complex accounts with multiple charges and credits. The current system does not allow invoices to provide the detail required regarding the charges, such as dates, services and details of any credits applied. Many service users raise concerns regarding the lack of information on invoices and credit notes and the feedback from these complaints have been shared with the service to ensure the new billing system which is currently in scope, fully considers the need to provide service users with clear, helpful, informative details regarding their contributions account.

7.4 Many complaints regarding financial assessments arose following the changes to the way some contributions are calculated, as discussed in paragraph 5.2 above, and the related consideration of Disability Related Expenses (DRE) which impact the amount of assessed financial contribution a person is asked to pay towards their care and support. The numbers in relation to DREs reduced towards the end of the period following the team working in conjunction with the department on the implementation of a DRE and Financial Assessment appeal process to consider issues, preventing the need to escalate to a formal complaint process.

7.5 An area which saw an increase in complaints was the Direct Payment Support Service (DPSS) following the transfer across from Equal Lives' payroll service. The service supports service users who employ Personal Assistants as part of their Personal Budgets and via Direct Payments. The service experienced some unexpected challenges in relation to the payroll following transfer. Fortunately, they were able to provide an interim payment solution whilst issues were resolved.

7.6 Client Services hold monthly feedback improvement meetings attended by the Compliments and Complaints Team, to discuss the insight and intelligence arising from representations, improvements identified as part of the departments day to day running of their services and survey feedback. This approach ensures the learning informs service improvements and planning. Following feedback received by the service, a range of

changes have been implemented. These include the provision of regular information and updates to service users, who are also employers, in relation to employment law and their responsibilities as employers, improvements to the design and processing of timesheets, the introduction of a timesheet app, the addition of a supplementary pay run to reduce impacts on employees with late returns and increased and improved training.

7.7 There has been a resultant 52% reduction in complaints received in relation to this area since January 2020 in comparison to the same period the previous year due to innovation, effort and hard work from the services to resolve the difficulties they experienced initially. This is a significant improvement, occurring at the same time that the demand for supported direct payment accounts increased by 13.1%, with more than 113,500 transactions to those accounts being managed by the service April 2019.

7.8 It is also of note that complaints received regarding the Council's credit control operations have reduced by 50% since April 2018. With support and training from the Compliments and Complaints Team, the service has put in place a process to seek to address concerns raised by service users and their representatives locally wherever possible, reducing the need to use the formal complaints process.

8. Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO)

8.1 At the time of writing, the Ombudsman has ceased all casework and closed his service to new complaints, in response to the Coronavirus pandemic. This has been done to allow Councils to focus their resources on their response. Indeed, many of the staff in the Compliments and Complaints Team have been redeployed at different point of the pandemic to support the front-line response. It is anticipated the service will begin to reopen again at the beginning of July 2020.

8.2 In the most recently published data, the Ombudsman recorded a 97% compliance rate with his recommendations by Norfolk County Council against a national figure of 92%. This was the first time this data has been reported and so a direct comparison against the previous period is not possible.

8.3 In December, the Ombudsman produced a focus report called "Under Pressure – the impact of the changing environment on local government complaints", in which the Ombudsman *"reveals the stark reality of the huge changes councils have made in the last decade, often in response to unprecedented financial pressures, is now playing out in the complaints it investigates"*

8.4 In the report, the Ombudsman confirms his approach, explaining that whilst he understands the challenges councils are experiencing, and realises that change and restructure can explain some service failures, it cannot excuse them. He explains that his office will not make concessions for failures attributed to budget pressures and will continue to judge the council in line with relevant legislation, standards, guidance and their own policies.

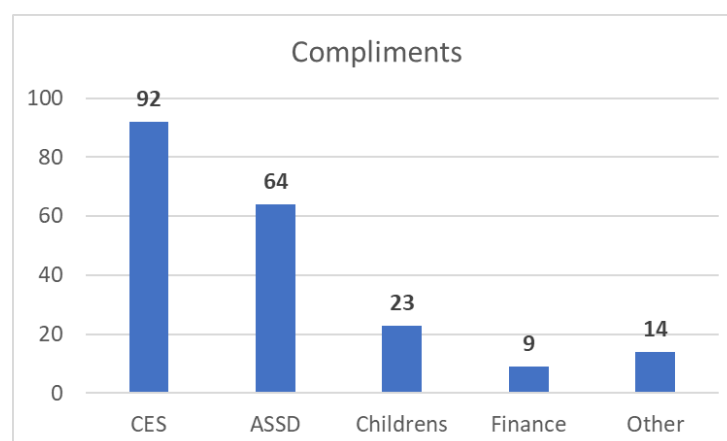
8.5 During the tenure of the current Ombudsman, Michael King, we have increasingly observed his office using powers outlined in Section 24D of the Local Government Act 1974. This allows for investigation of matters beyond those complained about. In Norfolk

we have found the increasing use of this previously rarely if ever used power, together with a new and less experienced cohort of investigators has meant that the Ombudsman's investigator's requests for information have become significantly less targeted and significantly more resource intensive in terms of officer time. The Ombudsman is also on occasion now requesting that the Council send two versions of all documents, one redacted and one not, in order that the Ombudsman can share the redacted copy with the complainant. In addition, prior to the hiatus in casework, the Council was being contacted more and more regularly by the Ombudsman's office to explain sometimes significant delays in their consideration of matters brought to their attention. It appears that in some cases, it was taking the Ombudsman 3 or more months to even allocate investigators with cases sometimes taking a year or more to be considered.

8.6 During the period the Compliments and Complaints Team arranged for all staff to undertake refresher investigation training, delivered by a senior Ombudsman investigator, which took place in November 2019. This training was attended by representatives from the Inclusion Service, Children's Services' Quality and Effectiveness team, Adult Social Services and the Information Compliance Team.

9. Compliments

9.1 The Council welcomes all feedback regarding our services and during the period received 202 formal compliments. Each compliment logged was an unsolicited expression of praise for the quality of a service provided, received from a member of the public, about the work of the Council. The numbers of compliments received for each department are shown below.



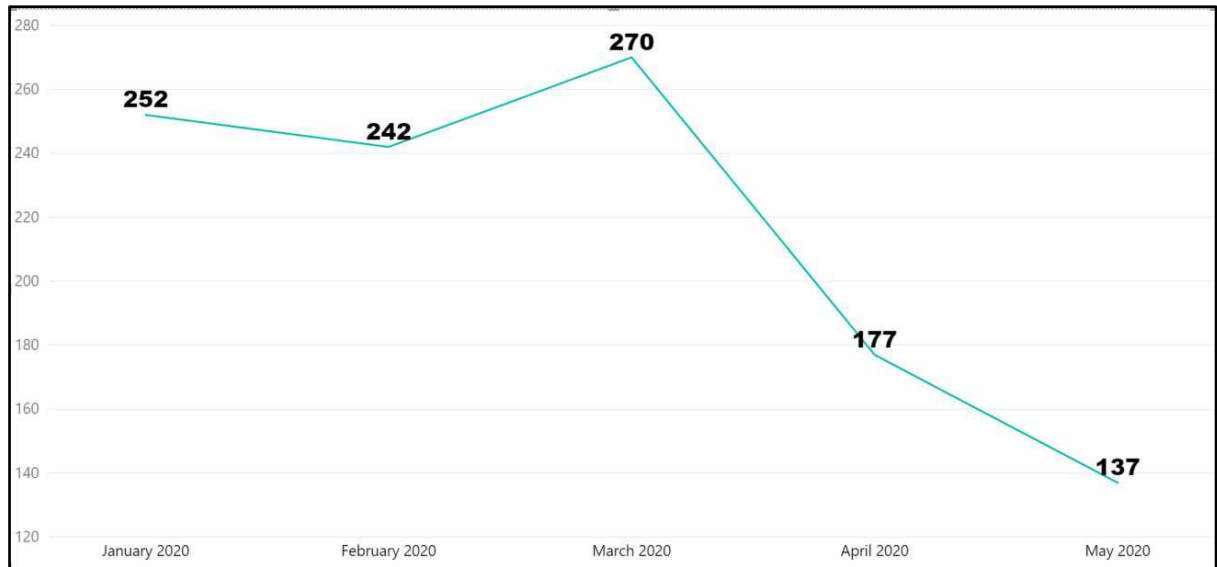
10. Impact of Coronavirus and Current Position

10.1 With the wide range of experience, knowledge and skills of its staff, and in response to the Coronavirus pandemic, the Compliments and Complaints Team redeployed resources to support critical operations. This included the sourcing of food and essential items for vulnerable people who were shielding, undertaking welfare calls, assessments, making referrals and triaging and arranging response to need. Staff have been embedded with Adult Social Care localities and the Social Care Community Engagement team to complete assessments and provide support to those people identified as being most vulnerable.

10.2 Following lockdown in late March 2020, there was initially a peak in the number of representations as shown below. This was particularly via MPs and in relation to the identification of vulnerable residents, difficulties accessing emergency food parcels, the provision of official identification for carers employed through personal budgets, difficulties accessing key worker childcare places and the availability, use and additional cost of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE). There were also offers of assistance received from individuals and businesses.

10.3 Since then the authority has seen a decline in the number of representations being received. This decrease has been seen across all service areas. This is the result of several factors including the work, as discussed above, in providing proactive briefings to Norfolk MPs, the hiatus in the work of the Ombudsman, and the reduced use of some services such as Highways, Recycling Centres, Libraries and Adult Learning. In addition, and anecdotally, a change in priorities of those who may have otherwise contacted the service as well as a degree of increased understanding and acceptance of service reductions and delays.

10.4 It is anticipated that as the situation develops and we enter a period of a new normality, there will be significant increases in demand on the service. This is expected to arise as a result of several factors, including a backlog of casework sat with the Ombudsman's office, issues around the discharges from hospitals led by the NHS in order to ensure capacity for Covid-19 patients, the impact of the ending of the Norwich City Highways Agreement and the responsibility moving across to the County Council, changes made in response to the new statutory guidance for the reallocation of road space, decisions in respect of the implementation of the second phase of the changes to the Minimum Income Guarantee, issues associated with the Norwich Western Link Road, factors of increased waiting times and delays due to work which could not continue, or continued with limited capacity, during the period of the strictest social distancing measures as well as the impact of the additional budgetary pressures as a result of Covid-19.



11. Financial Implications

11.1 None directly arising from this report.

12. Resource Implications

12.1 **Staff:** None directly arising from this report.

12.2 **Property:** None directly arising from this report

12.3 **IT:** None directly arising from this report

13. Other Implications

13.1. There are no other implications arising from this report

Officer Contact

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

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Corporate Select Committee

Item No. 11

Report title:	Review of Council Constitution
Date of meeting:	13 July 2020
Responsible Cabinet Member:	Cllr Andrew Proctor, Cabinet Member for Strategy & Governance
Responsible Director:	Fiona McDiarmid, Executive Director Strategy & Governance
<p>Introduction from Cabinet Member</p> <p>The Council adopted its Constitution in May 2019, when it changed from the Committee system to the Executive leadership model. It was always intended that the governance arrangements would be reviewed within the first year. As a result of the governance review, changes are necessary to the Constitution. This report sets out how the Constitution will be reviewed, involving all members in the process, despite the inability due to COVID-19 to hold physical meetings. The intention is that a revised Constitution will be in place in time for the AGM in 2021.</p> <p>Executive Summary</p> <p>This report sets out the timescale for review of the Constitution, and the process that it is proposed should be adopted.</p> <p>Actions required</p> <p>1. To agree the proposals and timescale for reviewing the Council's constitution, as set out in paragraphs 2.1 to 2.5 below.</p>	

1. Background and Purpose

- 1.1. The Council adopted a revised Constitution in May 2019 when it reverted to the Executive leadership model of governance. It agreed to review governance arrangements within the first year.
- 1.2. In October 2019 the Council invited the Local Government Association (LGA) to carry out a peer review. Following the peer review the LGA agreed to carry out the proposed governance review, on behalf of the Council, and this was completed in January 2020. A review of the Democratic Services function was

then carried out by the Association of Democratic Services Officers (ADSO), building on the earlier LGA reports.

- 1.3. The various reports prepared recommended that certain elements of the Constitution should be reviewed. In addition, there are sections of the Constitution that need to be amended for clarity. The sections of the constitution/ issues highlighted in the various reports include:
- Approach to 'Pink Paper' (exempt) items on the agenda of council forums
 - Ability of the public and local elected members to ask about any matter at a meeting of a Select Committee
 - Practice of any councillor being able to substitute for another on any council forum other than those where there is a statutory requirement to have undertaken the relevant training
 - Roll call of elected members upon the commencement of Full Council
 - Other issues arising from this action plan (eg establishing a body/Scrutiny Sub group to focus specifically on children and young people)

It also identified that any review would need to consider issues that have arisen since the last review of the Constitution, including any potential conflicts of interest in working practices

- 1.4. The Monitoring Officer prepared an outline plan to review the Constitution, involving a series of workshops with members. This option was preferable to a traditional Constitution Working Group, as it would allow more members to contribute, on a flexible basis and being involved only in the areas in which they had a particular interest. The proposal was constitutionally sound as the Corporate Select Committee retains responsibility to review the Constitution under Article 6.6(3) of the Constitution. Any decisions on changes to the Constitution need to be referred to Full Council under Article 4.2(1) unless they are minor changes or corrections that have been delegated to the Monitoring Officer.
- 1.5. In mid-March 2020 the country went into lockdown as a result of COVID-19. The situation is likely to continue until at least September 2020, and it has therefore not been possible to hold the series of workshops proposed, as physical meetings. Alternative proposals are therefore being proposed to the Corporate Select Committee for agreement.

2. Proposals

It is proposed that the review of the Constitution will be carried out in the following way:

- 2.1. The Monitoring Officer will review the Constitution and identify any areas that need to be changed to avoid confusion or contradiction within separate sections. Track changed versions will be provided for review. They will be circulated by e mail and uploaded onto Teams to give members the opportunity to comment.

- 2.2. The Monitoring Officer will identify any areas in the Constitution which require some discussion with members to ascertain their views on potential amendments. These will be circulated by e mails and uploaded onto Teams. Members will have the opportunity to comment by message, e mail or telephone call with the Monitoring Officer. The Monitoring Officer will also arrange a series of Teams meetings (virtual) over the summer, which any member will have the opportunity to join, to discuss specific sections of the Constitution which will be identified in the invitation. Informal discussions will also take place with group leaders to ascertain their view or views from their groups.
- 2.3. The Monitoring Officer will collate a revised draft constitution highlighting any areas for further discussion and will add this to the agenda of the Corporate Select Committee meeting on 09/11/2020 to allow proposals to be debated. It is intended that the draft will be circulated well in advance of the agenda being issued, to give members sufficient time to read the draft before the meeting.
- 2.4. The final draft of the Constitution will be brought back to the Corporate Select Committee meeting on 15/03/2021 with a recommendation that the Committee endorses the draft for approval by Council.
- 2.5. The amended version of the Constitution will then be added to the agenda of the Council meeting on 19/04/2021 with a recommendation that Council adopts it with effect from 01/05/2021.

3. Impact of the Proposal

- 3.1. The proposal will allow a thorough review of the Constitution, to ensure it enables the Council to meet its objectives.

4. Financial Implications

- 4.1. None (aside from the cost of officer time)

5. Resource Implications

- 5.1. **Staff:** the project will use a substantial amount of time of the Monitoring Officer, and officers in her teams, but can be managed within existing resources.

- 5.2. **Property: None**

- 5.3. **IT: None**

6. Other Implications

- 6.1. **Legal Implications:** the Council is obliged to have an up-to-date Constitution, and this project will allow it to continue to meet this obligation

6.2. **Human Rights implications:** None

6.3. **Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) (this must be included):** None

6.4. **Any other implications:** None

7. **Actions required**

7.1. 1. As set out in the recommendations.

Officer Contact

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CORPORATE SELECT COMMITTEE – FORWARD WORKPLAN 2020/21

Item 12

Corporate Select Committee	14 September 2020 Theme: Assets & Transformation	9 November 2020 Theme: People	25 January 2021 Theme: Transformation
Corporate	<p>Part A -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Asset Management Plan • Energy efficiency • Digital Norfolk Strategy – progress report <p>Part B -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2021/22 Budget planning – high level proposals • Staff Survey results and next steps • Performance Framework – vital signs update <p>Committee forward plan</p>	<p>Part A -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HR & Finance system replacement – implementation planning • NCC Recruitment update and consideration of Norfolk PLC recruitment • Customer Service Strategy • Local Service Strategy <p>Part B –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review of the NCC Constitution <p>Committee forward plan</p>	<p>Part A -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Business Transformation and Smarter Working • HR & Finance system replacement – implementation planning <p>Part B -</p> <p>Committee forward plan</p>