

Cabinet

Date: **Wednesday 10 January 2024**

Time: **10 am**

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

Membership

Cllr Kay Mason Billig

Cllr Andrew Jamieson

Cllr Bill Borrett

Cllr Penny Carpenter

Cllr Margaret Dewsbury

Cllr Fabian Eagle

Cllr Jane James

Cllr Graham Plant

Cllr Alison Thomas

Cllr Eric Vardy

Role

Chair. Leader and Cabinet Member for Strategy and Governance

Vice-Chair. Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance

Cabinet Member for Public Health and Wellbeing

Cabinet Member for Children's Services

Cabinet Member for Communities and Partnerships

Cabinet Member for Economic Growth

Cabinet Member for Corporate Services and Innovation

Cabinet Member for Highways, Infrastructure and Transport

Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care

Cabinet Member for Environment and Waste

Advice for members of the public:

This meeting will be held in public and in person.

It will be live streamed on YouTube and members of the public may watch remotely by clicking on the following link. [Click to watch Norfolk County Council YouTube](#)

We also welcome attendance in person, but public seating is limited, so if you wish to attend please indicate in advance by emailing committees@norfolk.gov.uk

Current practice for respiratory infections requests that we still ask everyone attending to maintain good hand and respiratory hygiene and, at times of high prevalence and in busy areas, please consider wearing a face covering.

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

A g e n d a

1 To receive any apologies.

2 Minutes

To confirm the minutes from the Cabinet Meeting held on 4 December 2023

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3 Members to Declare any Interests

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

5 Updates from the Chairman/Cabinet Members

6 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 on Thursday 4 January 2024. [Click here to view guidance on submitting a public question.](#)

Any public questions received by the deadline and the responses will be published on the website from 9.30am on the day of the meeting and can be viewed by clicking this link once uploaded: [Click here to view public questions and responses](#)

7 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 Thursday 4 January 2024.

8 Improvements to Norfolk Fire Stations

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Report by the Chief Fire Officer and Interim Executive Director of Community and Environmental Services

9 School Sufficiency Plan 2024

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Report by the Interim Executive Director of Children's Services

10 Short Breaks Strategy 2023-2026

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Report by the Executive Director of Children's Services

11 Admission Arrangements for the School Year 2025/26

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Report by the Executive Director of Children's Services

12 Risk Management Report

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Report by the Director of Strategic Finance

13 Corporately Significant Vital Signs

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Report by the Executive Director of Strategy and Transformation

14 Health, Safety and Wellbeing mid year report

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Report by the Executive Director of Strategy and Transformation

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

To note the delegated decisions made since the last Cabinet meeting.

Delegated decisions by the Cabinet Member for Corporate Services and Innovation

- [Freehold Acquisition of School House, Sedgeford, PE36 5NQ](#)
- [Land north of Farman Way, Blofield - Removal of restrictive title](#)
- [Compulsory Purchase Order of unregistered land for the improvement of A1047 Dereham Road, Costessey](#)

Delegated decisions by the Cabinet Member for Children's Services

- [National Wraparound Childcare Programme Funding 2023/2026](#)
- [Grant Agreement between Norfolk County Council and the Governing Board of the Aylsham Learning Federation](#)
- [Norfolk's Start for Life and family hubs programme](#)

Delegated decision by the Cabinet Member for Highways, Infrastructure and Transport

- [Norwich - Dereham Road - Traffic Regulation Orders](#)

Delegated decision by the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care

- [Procurement for statutory advocacy](#)

Tom McCabe
Chief Executive
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County Hall
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Date Agenda Published: 2 January 2024



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Cabinet
Minutes of the Meeting held on 04 December 2023 2023
in the Council Chamber, County Hall, at 10:12am

Present:

Cllr Kay Mason Billig	Chair. Leader and Cabinet Member for Strategy and Governance
Cllr Andrew Jamieson	Vice Chair. Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance
Cllr Bill Borrett	Cabinet Member for Public Health and Wellbeing
Cllr Penny Carpenter	Cabinet Member for Children's Services
Cllr Margaret Dewsbury	Cabinet Member for Communities and Partnerships
Cllr Fabian Eagle	Cabinet Member for Economic Growth
Cllr Graham Plant	Cabinet Member for Highways, Infrastructure and Transport
Cllr Alison Thomas	Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care
Cllr Eric Vardy	Cabinet Member for Environment and Waste

Deputy Cabinet Members Present

Cllr Greg Peck	Deputy Cabinet Member for Finance
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Executive Directors Present:

Harvey Bullen	Director of Strategic Finance
Debbie Bartlett	Interim Executive Director of Adult Social Services
Grahame Bygrave	Interim Executive Director of Community and Environmental Services
Paul Cracknell	Executive Director of Transformation and Strategy
Kat Hulatt	Assistant Director of Governance
Tom McCabe	Chief Executive
Sara Tough	Executive Director of Children's Services`

The meeting started late due to technical difficulties which also affected live-streaming at the start of the meeting.

1 Apologies for Absence

- 1.1 Apologies were received from the Cabinet Member for Corporate Services and Innovation and the Deputy Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care

2 Minutes from the meeting held on 06 November 2023

- 2.1 Cabinet agreed the minutes of the meeting held on 06 November 2023 as an accurate record.

3 Declaration of Interests

- 3.1 No interests were declared.

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

4.1 No matters were referred.

5 Update from the Chair/Cabinet Members

5.1 No updates were given.

6. Public Question Time

6.1.1 Richard Hawker asked a supplementary question:

- Mr Hawker noted that the response to his question stated that if the Norwich Western Link were built then were built that 40% of HGVs who still use the B1535 would continue to use it, which was 130 lorries continuing to use the B1535. Assuming this estimate was correct, which had been calculated with no surveys, Mr Hawker felt that the current properties on the B1535 would gain little benefit from the Norwich Western Link as Norfolk County Council would allow businesses in the area to expand and increase lorry movements. He therefore asked how the Norwich Western Link could be claimed to be taking HGVs off of unsuitable roads.

6.1.2 The Cabinet Member for Highways, Infrastructure and Transport replied that the response to Mr Hawker's first question explained that there would be 330 HGVs using the road per day with 60% of these being re-routed to use the Norwich Western Link. Necessary deliveries and other journeys would continue to be required by the communities in this area and he understood that the remaining 40% were of this type. The mitigation in place set out in the report would include an HGV ban except for access on B1535 so that as much HGV traffic as possible would be re-routed.

7 Local Member Questions/Issues

7.1 None were received.

8. Consideration of a County Deal for Norfolk

8.1.1 Cabinet received the report summarising the key elements of the Deal (including further enhancements to the Deal negotiated during 2023) and setting out the options for taking forward the Deal for Norfolk.

8.1.2 The Chair introduced the report to Cabinet:

- The previous Leader of the Council, Cllr Andrew Proctor, had signed an in-principal County Deal. This report set out four options for Cabinet to choose from to recommend to Council.
 - Option 1: would accept the in-principal deal which was signed by Cllr Proctor. This would lead to an election of the Directly Elected leader in 2024.
 - Option 2: would delay the election of a Directly Elected Leader to 2025 in line with the Norfolk County Council election.
 - Option 3: would ask Council to go back to Government and re-negotiate for a level 2 deal.
 - Option 4: that the Council did not want to engage with a County Deal at this time.
- Since her time in the role of Leader, the Chair had been engaging with the

Department for Levelling up, Housing and Communities to see if the deal could be strengthened. This had resulted in the addition of the option to delay the election to 2025, which would save the Council money by not putting on an extra election and provide extra time to inform the public of the changes the deal would bring.

- Some changes seen in the last seven months were funding for the Queen Elizabeth Hospital in King's Lynn, funding awarded for the Norwich Western Link and the development of the Operations & Maintenance Campus in Great Yarmouth.
- Michael Gove MP had committed that if Norfolk and Suffolk signed up to a level 3 deal they could move straight to a level 4 deal. This would give the Directly Elected Leader a "seat at the table" with the other 10 devolved areas such as Manchester, giving the County access to money which would make a difference for the people of Norfolk.
- The business community and residents were not worried about the prospect of a Directly Elected Leader; someone elected by the people of Norfolk would have the responsibility to put their mandate in place. The Council would be able to strengthen its constitution and governance to ensure the leader will do what they say they will and what the Council expects.
- The Directly Elected Leader would be responsible for Adult Social Services, Childrens Services as well as understanding the statutory duties of the County Council.
- The level 2 devolution deal would only offer additional money in the form of the adult education budget of £12m. This would ensure that the council had control of the budget to get skills in place for jobs needed by the County, but there was nothing else in the deal.
- The Mayoral deal needed all districts to sign up, however, not all districts in Norfolk were prepared to do so. Since declining the deal in 2016, Norfolk County Council had missed out on millions of pounds of funding.
- Some district councils had asked about a County Combined Authority. This type of deal required unitary and upper tier authorities to combine; since Norfolk County Council was the only upper tier authority in Norfolk this was not an option.
- Letters had been received from stakeholders including the University of East Anglia, Federation of Small Businesses, the Health Service and local Colleges voicing their support for the level 3 deal as they could see the benefits it would bring.

8.2.1 The Chair **proposed** that Cabinet agree **recommendation option 2** set out in the report. She felt that holding the election in 2025 would give time for further consultation, allow the Council to get its constitution right, allow time for further scrutiny, give time to communicate the change to the general public and time to look for brownfield sites to develop with the incoming money. The Chair felt the people of Norfolk would not forgive the Council if they didn't take the deal, and not taking it would put the Council at the back of the queue of influence in Westminster.

8.2.2 The Vice Chair **seconded** the Chair's proposal to agree **recommendation option 2**:

- The additional powers negotiated as part of recommendation option 2 were significant and it would be beneficial for the election to be in line with Norfolk County Council local elections.

- It would also be important to make people aware of the relevance of devolution to the county and to themselves. The election of the Directly Elected Leader would assist in this.
- Moving forward with recommendation option 2 would allow an immediate move to level 4 to allow the Council to deal with Government on the same terms as other devolved councils such as Manchester and Teeside. 95% of taxes were raised in Westminster; with all funding decisions held centrally it was difficult to deliver services without having to run a chain of prescribed funding bids and this would allow the council to move away from this.
- The County Deal would allow the Council to make decisions in the best interest of the people of Norfolk.

- 8.3 The Cabinet Member for Highways, Infrastructure and Transport noted that recommendation option 2 would provide substantial powers for Norfolk, allow the council to meet the objectives of Better Together for Norfolk, bring more money into the county, and give direct access to ministers via the Directly Elected Leader. It was important to ensure Norfolk claimed its fair share of investment so it could invest in housing, transport and infrastructure. As one of the first rural devolution deals it also gave money for building on brownfield land, alongside funding for the Operations & Maintenance Campus in Great Yarmouth, the Nar Ouse regeneration project, building more affordable homes, devolution of the adult education budget, funding to plan roads, revenue funding to accelerate review of transport plans and quantify carbon reduction, among others. The Cabinet Member for Highways, Infrastructure and Transport therefore felt this was a deal for the people of Norfolk.
- 8.4 The Cabinet Member for Environment and Waste noted that the County Deal was about providing a better service for the residents of Norfolk and supported the Chair's proposal. The new investment fund would drive growth, and take forward priorities to give the opportunity to lever additional private funding. There would also be funding to build new homes on brownfield sites. There would be many benefits to communities in Norfolk.
- 8.5 The Cabinet Member for Economic Growth supported the Chair's proposal; this would give Norfolk an opportunity to support levelling up. Norfolk was a gross contributor to the country's GDP and had a self-sustaining economy, for example, producing its own power, developing new technologies and growing its own food, and this gave the opportunity to support the development of all types of business in Norfolk.
- 8.6 The Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care welcomed the Chair's steer on the option which she felt was best; having an election in 2025, at the same time of Norfolk County Council election, would encourage people to think about what they want from a Directly Elected Leader as they also thought about what they want from their local councillor. She noted that senior officers took lots of time drawing up business cases to seek funding for projects; with the funding already available they could focus on providing services for residents.
- 8.7 The Cabinet Member for Communities and Partnerships agreed with the proposal for recommendation option 2; having both elections at the same time would be clearer for the public. It would also save on costs for the Council. Devolution of the adult education budget would be welcome to allow the Council

to plan ahead for the skills needed in Norfolk rather than going with the themes dictated by Government.

- 8.8 The Cabinet Member for Public Health and Prevention noted that Council had voted in favour of the principal of the County Deal. He supported the proposal for recommendation option 2 to line up the election for the Directly Elected Leader with 2025 elections. He believed there were risks involved, such as governance weaknesses in the format proposed by Government however the Head of Legal Services had said she did not feel this is the case and he was therefore happy to support the proposal.
- 8.9 The Chair felt it would be important to get the message out to the public to help them understand the role of the Leader of the Council in the run up to the elections. Business leaders were clear that they wanted the Council to do this and it was important to listen to them. The Chair stated that any government at Westminster must be careful to honour the agreement, or it would send the wrong message to residents.
- 8.10 The Cabinet, recognising that the change in governance would be a matter for the Full Council, **RESOLVED** to **RECOMMEND** to Council:

Recommendation option 2

- a) recognise the work carried out during 2023 to consult with the public, inform Members and prepare plans in relation to the 'in-principle' County Deal brought to Council in January this year.
- b) commend the work undertaken by the Leader and Officers to secure additional benefits for the Norfolk County Deal and resolves that the Deal should be accepted.
- c) resolve that the election for the Directly Elected Leader should be held alongside the county council elections in May 2025 to enable the widest possible engagement with the electorate.
- d) agree that the resolution adopting the new governance arrangements must be passed by the Full Council Meeting on 23 July 2024 to facilitate that election date.
- e) agree on that same date to resolve to change the title by which the elected mayor of the authority is to be known to the alternative title of Elected Leader as the Council agrees that this better represents the role and expectations of an individual regarding the proper leadership of the County.

8.11 **Evidence and Reasons for Decision**

N/A

8.12 **Alternative Options**

Please see section 7 of the report

9. Norwich Western Link Update

- 9.1.1 Cabinet received the report providing an update on the Norwich Western Link project.

- 9.1.2 The Cabinet Member for Highways, Infrastructure and Transport introduced the report to Cabinet:
- There had been good news since the last report on the Norwich Western Link, as the Department for Transport had confirmed their agreement of the outline business case.
 - Improving infrastructure was important to people in the county to improve traffic issues and help support housing growth.
 - The Council would have discussions with the Department for Transport in the coming weeks and months with a view for them to increase their funding contribution. The additional funding contribution would be welcomed as it would decrease the local funding requirement to get the road built.
 - The report set out the next steps in the project. Following an update on the business case officers were updating the planning documents ready for its submission in 2024.
 - The report set out the draft carbon emissions for the project; the project was now forecast to produce positive carbon emissions. This was due to revised Transport Analysis Guidance from the Department for Transport which would apply to all road projects. Work was underway to reduce carbon emissions with wider transport interventions such as by replacing diesel buses with electric ones and supporting people to change to sustainable transport where possible.
 - It was important to invest in infrastructure improvement for all journeys to tackle traffic problems and help communities cope with housing and job growth, reduce congestion, improve air quality and remove traffic from local road networks.
 - The Norwich Western Link was a priority infrastructure project for the county and along with help from the Government, the Cabinet Member for Highways, Infrastructure and Transport was looking forward to moving the project forward to achieve benefits for the people of Norfolk.
 - The Cabinet Member for Highways, Infrastructure and Transport moved the recommendations as set out in the report.
- 9.2 The Vice Chair was pleased with the Government's commitment to the project; the Department for Transport would grant £24.8m in the current financial year so that payments made so far by Norfolk County Council would be repaid. Indications were that the Department for Transport may fund up to 100%. In this case, the total contribution from the Council would be around £22.9m, which is less than originally planned. The length of time that the Department for Transport took to make its decision unfortunately caused the costs to increase however the Vice Chair was pleased that they had agreed to commit to the project.
- 9.3 The Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care welcomed the opportunity for Government to increase its funding commitment so that the people of Norfolk could receive the road and relieve residents of rat running with a reduced impact on taxpayers.
- 9.4 The Cabinet Member for Environment and Waste supported the report. There had been a 26% increase in sales of electric vehicles recently and he pointed out the importance of thinking of the impact of the road when the project became live in the future. Residents had said they were pleased that blue light services would have a quicker route.

- 9.5 The Cabinet Member for Communities and Partnerships felt this would be welcomed by the people in her division; people in Lower Easton and nearby areas suffered from long tailbacks in peak times and this would benefit them.
- 9.6 The Cabinet Member for Highways, Infrastructure and Transport noted that the council had campaigned hard for this and other infrastructure schemes to be taken forward so it was important for the county to benefit from this investment from Government.
- 9.7 The Chair was aware of the environmental concerns but pointed out that the council had a robust climate strategy in place. Through this strategy many initiatives were being implemented to reduce the council's impact on the climate. However, roads still needed to be built for the county's future prosperity.
- 9.8 Cabinet **RESOLVED**:
1. To **approve** the continued delivery of the Norwich Western Link project.
 2. To delegate to the Interim Executive Director of Community and Environmental Services (CES), in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Highways, Infrastructure and Transport, the authority to agree the finalised planning application and submit it to the Local Planning Authority.
 3. To recommend to Council, at its January 2024 meeting, an increased budget of £273.9m (compared with the £251.0m included in the OBC Addendum, that was reported to Cabinet on 4 July 2022), and an increase to the local contribution of £22.9m, as set out in Section 6 of the report.
 4. Following the resolution of recommendation 3 above to delegate to the Interim Executive Director of Community and Environmental Services (CES), in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Highways, Infrastructure and Transport, the authority to approve the Statement of Reasons, which describes the purpose and effect of the Side Roads Order and Compulsory Purchase Order together with the justifications for making them.
 5. Following the resolution of recommendations 2, 3 and 4 above, authorise the making, publication and submission, for confirmation by the Secretary of State, of the necessary Side Roads Order required for the project.
 6. Following the resolution of recommendations 2, 3 and 4 above, authorise the making, publication and submission, for confirmation by the Secretary of State, of the necessary Compulsory Purchase Order required to acquire the land for the project.
 7. To delegate to the Interim Executive Director of Community and Environmental Services (CES), the authority to take all appropriate actions necessary to complete a Public Inquiry should this result from the planning application or the making of draft Orders.
- 9.9 **Evidence and Reasons for Decision**
- Please see section 4 of the report.
- 9.10 **Alternative Options**
- Please see section 5 of the report.

10. West Winch Housing Access Road – Project update and funding

- 10.1.1 Cabinet received the report providing a project update, seeking approvals as set out in the report, giving an update on project funding and requesting temporary forward funding approval by Cabinet to progress the project through the planning process and procurement until the Outline Business Case approval in Spring 2024.
- 10.1.2 The Cabinet Member for Highways, Infrastructure and Transport introduced the report to Cabinet:
- This project was a significant project for King's Lynn and West Norfolk. It would improve the quality of life for people by reducing traffic in the village, improving bus services for local people, and making significant improvements to the A10 by improving reliability and journey times.
 - The Council was working on the project with the Borough Council for King's Lynn and West Norfolk.
 - The Outline Business Case was submitted to the Department for Transport in September 2023. If the Department for Transport approved this then most of the cost would be provided by them, with the local contribution future funded by Homes England from future housing developments.
 - This report sought to delegate funding to include sustainable design measures and allow the planning application to be submitted in the coming weeks.
 - The recommendations referred to the side road orders, procurement processes, land acquisition, and ongoing work with National Grid Gas and Homes England.
 - Residents wanted the road to be built as soon as possible.
 - The Cabinet Member for Highways, Infrastructure and Transport moved the recommendations as set out in the report.
- 10.2 The Vice Chair was pleased to see this project coming forward. There were no financial implications for Norfolk County Council who did not have to commit funding to the project due to the work of Homes England. He thanked Homes England for working with Norfolk County Council to allow the scheme to be forward funded. There was a potential that Norfolk County Council would need to underwrite the project for the Borough Council; if so this would be repaid as the site was delivered. The Vice Chair noted that this was an example of a well thought out scheme being delivered in the County.
- 10.3 The Chair noted that this will help the Borough Council of King's Lynn and West Norfolk to meet their housing requirement and reduce congestion on the A10 with the link road being built before the houses were built.
- 10.4 Cabinet **RESOLVED**:
1. To note the details presented in this report and approve the continued delivery of the West Winch Housing Access Road (WWHAR) project and confirm the financial update within the Capital Programme.
 2. To delegate to the Interim Executive Director of Community and Environmental Services (CES), in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Highways, Infrastructure & Transport, the authority to agree the finalised planning application and submit it to the Local Planning Authority.
 3. To delegate to the Interim Executive Director of Community and

Environmental Services (CES), in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Highways, Infrastructure & Transport, the authority to agree and enter advanced agreements with National Grid Gas to divert two major high pressure gas mains.

4. To delegate to the Director of Procurement & Sustainability authority to undertake the necessary procurement processes including the determination of the minimum standards and selection criteria; to shortlist bidders; to negotiate where the procurement procedure so permits; and to terminate award procedures if necessary. The Director of Procurement & Sustainability shall act in accordance with the Council's Contract Standing Orders and Public Contract Regulations 2015 and in consultation, as appropriate, with the Interim Executive Director of Community and Environmental Services and the responsible Cabinet Member. Note that a further report will be presented to Cabinet to seek delegated approval to award contracts.
5. To approve the £84.47m scheme cost within the capital programme and note the funding sources (see section 6.3 of the report for more details).
6. To agree to a further temporary increase of the Council's contribution by £2.75m until this is reimbursed when DfT (and Homes England) funding is approved. It will be utilised to incur costs associated to the gas main diversion and design work (as set out in section 6.4 of the report).
7. To agree to enter the Homes England funding agreement (providing £14.65m towards the WWHAR local contribution) and for finalisation of the details to be delegated to the Director of Strategic Finance and the Director of Property.
8. Agreement to underwrite Borough Council of King's Lynn and West Norfolk (BCKLWN) land purchase, as detailed in the confidential section and defer the County Council's capital receipt as part of the collaboration agreement (see section 2.10.6 of the report for more details).
9. To authorise the making of a Side Roads Order ("SRO") under sections 14 and 125 of and in accordance with Schedule 1 of the Highways Act 1980 to enable the improvement and stopping up of existing highways, to construct new highways and to stop up and provide replacement private means of access where necessary which are essential for the construction of the WWHAR.
10. To delegate authority to the Interim Executive Director of Community and Environmental Services to consider and make decisions on activities listed in section 2.4.5 of the report.
11. To authorise the Interim Executive Director of Communities and Environmental Services to use the Council's powers under Section 203 of the Housing and Planning Act 2016 to override any existing rights and covenants on land that would be infringed by or impede the construction, operation or maintenance of the WWHAR.
12. To authorise the Interim Executive Director of Community and Environmental Services to continue to take all appropriate actions necessary for the purpose of negotiating the terms and conditions for the acquisition by agreement of the land and new rights over land which are needed to allow the construction, operation and ongoing maintenance of the WWHAR.

10.5 Evidence and Reasons for Decision

Please see section 4 of the report.

10.6 **Alternative Options**

Please see section 5 of the report.

11. **NCC Apprenticeship Strategy 2023-2025**

- 11.1.1 Cabinet received the report setting out the Apprenticeship Strategy 2023-25 and the associated operational delivery plan which outlined how the council intended to meet our responsibilities to support the delivery of apprenticeships locally, both as an employer and as a strategic leader.
- 11.1.2 The Cabinet Member for Economic Growth introduced the report to Cabinet:
- This strategy had been revised for 2023-25 and was a collaborative strategy across all departments.
 - The Cabinet Member for Economic Growth thanked officers for their work.
 - The strategy would support business and people in Norfolk to provide the county with a well educated and flexible workforce for all ages.
 - Funding given to companies with a payroll over £3m who did not use it would be returned to the Government.
 - An Apprenticeship Levy was available and used to help smaller businesses provide apprenticeships.
 - The Cabinet Member for Economic Growth moved the recommendation as set out in the report
- 11.2 The Cabinet Member for Highways, Infrastructure and Transport supported the updated strategy and noted the hard work of all the officers involved.
- 11.3 The Cabinet Member for Public Health and Prevention supported the strategy, noting the importance of apprenticeships. Information on why people did not complete their apprenticeships could help the department to identify ways to improve them and improve the completion rate.
- 11.4 The Chair agreed it was important to provide skills for young people in Norfolk and for businesses.
- 11.5 Cabinet **RESOLVED** to endorse the proposed Norfolk County Council (NCC) Apprenticeship Strategy (and Operational Delivery Plan) – updated for 2023-2025.
- 11.6 **Evidence and Reasons for Decision**

The NCC Apprenticeship Strategy is an evidence-based strategy which will continue to create a positive and dynamic focus towards the growth of apprenticeships and therefore broader workforce skills in Norfolk. It takes reference from national, local and district level strategic priorities alongside a wide range of national local evidence, as detailed in the PESTLE analysis in the appendices of the report.

The three directorates have successfully worked together collaboratively to deliver against the previous 2020-2023 version of the strategy; realising a number of achievements (articulated in the paper) which has increased impact for individuals, businesses across Norfolk, and delivering strong return on investment for the local economy.

11.7 **Alternative Options**

Not applicable.

12. **Better Care Fund 2023/24**

12.1.1 Cabinet received the report setting out the Better Care Fund plan for 2023-24 and asking Cabinet to delegate completion and execution of the Better Care Fund (BCF) section 75 agreement (“the s75”) to the Interim Executive Director Adult Social Services.

12.1.2 The Cabinet Member for Public Health and Prevention introduced the report to Cabinet:

- Norfolk had been successful in achieving funding from the Minister to use for easing winter pressures.
- The Better Care Fund was used for projects to allow people to live independently and was managed under the Health and Wellbeing Board who set the broad strategic themes with health partners, district councils and other Integrated Care Strategy partners.
- Norfolk was a good example of good practice and joint working between partners.
- The Better Care Fund £136,938,008 of funding for projects in Norfolk and had been taken to the Health and Wellbeing Board earlier in the year.
- The Cabinet Member for Public Health and Prevention moved the recommendations as set out in the report.

12.2 The Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care welcomed the report which showed how well Norfolk County Council worked in partnership with health partners. The Health and Wellbeing Board was a good place to see partnership working in action. The Better Care Fund was allocated from central government and it was important to show that the funding devolved to organisations achieved the required objectives. Schemes to support with discharge and to help people remain independent in their own homes. were in place through the Better Care Fund.

12.3 The Chair agreed that the district councils did a very good job in helping people to remain independent in their own homes via providing support and funding for equipment and supported the report.

12.4 Cabinet **RESOLVED** to:

1. Endorse the BCF plan
2. Delegate the authority to complete and execute the Better Care Fund (BCF) section 75 (s75) agreement to the Interim Executive Director Adult Social Services

12.5 **Evidence and Reasons for Decision**

The Health and Wellbeing Board has a responsibility to sign-off the Better Care Fund plans and this was completed at the last meeting on the 26th of September. We are not ready to complete the section 75 prior to the 31st of October and whilst the national team would not encourage a delay and are unlikely to escalate, it does mean that the funding arrangements are not fully

agreed until we have the section 75 in place.

12.6 Alternative Options

An alternative option would be to bring the draft BCF s75 to a later Cabinet meeting to be agreed. Delay will mean the funding arrangements with the NHS, are not fully agreed.

13. Summary Annual Review of NCC Residential Children's Homes

13.1.1 Cabinet received the report giving a summary review of the service's progress and performance for the year September 2022 to August 2023 and seeking annual approval of each Norfolk residential children's home's Statement of Purpose.

13.1.2 The Cabinet Member for Children's Services introduced the report to Cabinet:

- Each residential children's home in Norfolk was required to have a statement of purpose, including detail on the aims and objective and how the standards would be met, which were set out on page A11 of the report.
- In Norfolk there were 5 children's homes, 1 home for children with disabilities, 3 residential short-breaks children's homes, 4 supported flats housing Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children, 2 New Roads Hubs and 10 Supported Accommodation houses.
- The council recognised that needs were greater than before and had prepared business plans to strengthen its internal offer through applying to the Department for Education on behalf of the Eastern Region to be a national Regional Care Cooperative pathfinder; this would allow the service to find quality support and placements for children and reduce costs.
- The New Roads service had been running for 3 years, providing residential care and outreach for young people in care. This service had prevented 290 young people coming into care and saved £22m in avoided costs. Feedback from young people and their families was included on page 18 of the supplementary agenda. This feedback was powerful, and the Cabinet Member for Children's Services felt that staff should be proud of what had been achieved.
- A crisis response team had been set up to prevent breakdowns and reduce the amount of young people needing to come into care. They had worked with 420 young people in the last year.
- Accommodating children was always the last resort. Staff worked hard under challenging circumstances and the Cabinet Member for Children's Services thanked them for their dedication and support.
- The Cabinet Member for Children's Services moved the recommendation as set out in the report.

13.2 The Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care acknowledged the work staff did to support the most vulnerable children, those on the edge of care and leaving care who needed help, guidance and a safe care to live. She thanked staff, the Cabinet Member for Children's Services and the Executive Director of Children's Services for their work.

13.3 The Chair noted that this service needed to change to suit the needs of the children being looked after; it was important that residential care met the needs

of children and was modern and fit for purpose. She thanked the staff who worked in challenging circumstances in these homes.

- 13.4 Cabinet **RESOLVED** to recommend the approval of the Statements of Purpose for all the Local Authority children's homes to Full Council to comply with the Care Standards Act 2000.

13.5 **Evidence and Reasons for Decision**

N/A

13.5 **Alternative Options**

N/A

14 Youth Justice Plan 2023/24

- 14.1.1 Cabinet received the report setting out the Youth Justice Plan for 2023-24.

- 14.1.2 The Cabinet Member for Children's Services introduced the report to Cabinet:
- The Council had a statutory duty to submit a Youth Justice Plan after consultation with partners. The plan had been signed off by the Youth Justice Board in June 2023.
 - The Youth Justice Plan showed how behaviour should be preventable and how it could be reduced.
 - This plan was a required component of the Norfolk County Council policy framework and would be heard at Scrutiny Committee on 13 December 2023 and Full Council on 30 January 2024.
 - Norfolk was the fifth largest county in the country and had one of the largest youth justice services. The service had been critical in reducing youth custody.
 - The Youth Justice Plan had been prepared by the service manager and chair of the Youth Justice Board.
 - The introduction of the plan set out that the child is always first, the importance of not losing sight of children and the impact of offending on young people and families.
 - The report had a section on education, which noted that Norfolk Youth Justice Service was awarded the Youth Justice Service Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Quality Mark for its work in securing better outcomes for children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities in the youth justice system.
 - The Cabinet Member for Children's Services felt that the report was valuable and well-presented and asked that all County Councillors received a copy of it.
 - The Cabinet Member for Children's Services moved the recommendations as set out in the report.

- 14.2 The Chair thanked the staff in this service for the work they did and congratulated them on their achievement on their outstanding recognition.

- 14.3 Cabinet **RESOLVED** to:
1. Endorse the Norfolk Youth Justice Plan 2023/24 and recommend to Full Council for inclusion on the policy framework.

2. Approve a governance route for approval of the Norfolk Youth Justice Plan 2023/24 as set out in paragraph 2.3 of the report.

14.4 **Evidence and Reasons for Decision**

It is a statutory obligation for Norfolk Youth Justice Service to develop and submit a Youth Justice Plan. The priorities set out in the plan are drawn from emerging themes, feedback, and data. Priorities are agreed by our multi- agency Youth Justice Board.

14.5 **Alternative Options**

Should the Youth Justice Plan not be agreed our eligibility for the Youth Justice Grant would be at risk and service delivery impacted. See financial implications below. It would also significantly impair the ability of Children's Services and partner agencies to act effectively in the best interests of children in Norfolk.

15 **CES (Community and Environmental Services) Compliance and Enforcement Policy – Annual Review**

- 15.1.1 Cabinet received the report setting out the annual review of the Community and Environmental Services Compliance and Enforcement Policy, setting out a framework for a number of services within the Community and Environmental Services directorate to ensure that we work in an equitable, practical, and consistent manner when undertaking regulatory activities and law enforcement.
- 15.1.2 The Cabinet Member for Communities and Partnerships introduced the report to Cabinet:
 - This report set out regulatory guidance for many services in one policy which were required to be published.
 - Key steps for encouraging compliance were, “engage, explain and encourage and, when necessary, enforce”. The Policy had been updated to reflect recent changes in legislation.
 - The Cabinet Member for Communities and Partnerships moved the recommendations as set out in the report.
- 15.2 The Cabinet Member for Environment and Waste noted the regulations required to enforce were often changing. The Cabinet Member pointed out the information in the report which indicated the changes in the environmental protection act which made “it an offence for any person in the course of a business to sell, supply or offer for sale single-use plastic plates, bowls, trays, containers, cutlery, and balloon sticks.”
- 15.3 The Chair noted that this was valuable work, regulating laws in place and keeping people safe.
- 15.4 Cabinet **RESOLVED:**
 1. To approve the revised CES Compliance and Enforcement Policy at Appendix A of the report, including its annex documents.
 2. To agree to delegate the functions of the Executive for the purposes of the Environmental Protection (Plastic Plates etc. and Polystyrene Containers etc.) (England) Regulations 2023 to the Head of Trading Standards to be read in accordance with B (8) – specific delegations to the Executive Director

15.5 Evidence and Reasons for Decision

Please see section 4 of the report.

15.6 Alternative Options

A CES wide Compliance and Enforcement Policy is considered to be the most effective way to demonstrate how CES intends to fulfil its regulatory/legal responsibilities. An alternative option would be for each service area within CES to produce its own policy. However as described in section 4.1 of the report there is a need for consistency in overall approach. The format of the draft Policy provides for additional (detailed) protocols where necessary or appropriate.

16 Disposal, acquisition and exploitation of property

- 16.1.1 Cabinet received the report setting out proposals aimed at supporting Norfolk County Council priorities by exploiting properties surplus to operational requirements, pro-actively releasing property assets with latent value where the operational needs can be met from elsewhere and strategically acquiring property to drive economic growth and wellbeing in the County.
- 16.1.2 The Deputy Cabinet Member for Finance introduced the report to Cabinet:
- There were 4 items for disposal set out in the report:
 - **Parish Council Allotments, Ashill:** this site was owned by county farms and Ashill Parish Council wanted to acquire it. This had been agreed by the council
 - **Ipswich Road Centre, Norwich:** This site had been used by Independence Matters but was vacated in June 2023 due to a sinkhole. The service and service users had been relocated to another site and the site was proposed to be declared as surplus to requirements.
 - **Additional Land at St Peter's Farm, Marshland St James:** this site was on county farms land. It was of no use as farm land and was proposed to be declared as surplus to requirements as part of consolidation of the County Farms estate.
 - **The Marl Pit Land at Wells Road Fakenham, NR21 9HP (Former Fakenham High & Sixth Form Site):** This site was proposed to be sold to Fakenham cricket club. If developed in the future, the council would benefit from this.
- 16.2 The Cabinet Member for Economic Growth, as local member for Ashill, agreed the proposal for the sale of the allotments in Ashill to the Parish Council made sense.
- 16.3 The Cabinet Member for Public Health and Prevention felt it was important that the council was innovative with its use of land to deliver services in the best way possible.
- 16.4 The Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care confirmed that Independence Matters stopped using the site on Ipswich Road as it was not safe; they were now using

more appropriate facilities and the move was done in a sensitive way.

16.5 The Chair agreed with the disposals set out.

16.6 Cabinet **RESOLVED:**

1. To formally declare Parish Council Allotments, Ashill (3001/100) surplus to Council requirements and:
 - (i) Instruct the Director of Property to dispose of the property to the Parish Council, or
 - (ii) In the event of no satisfactory agreement instruct the Director of Property to dispose of the property on the open market.In the event of a disposal receipt exceeding delegated limits the Director of Property in consultation with the Director of Strategic Finance and Cabinet Member for Corporate Services and Innovation is authorised to accept the most advantageous offer.
2. To formally declare land and buildings at Ipswich Road Centre, Norwich (4105/017) surplus to Council requirements and instruct the Director of Property to dispose of the property on the best terms possible through a freehold disposal. In the event of a disposal receipt exceeding delegated limits the Director of Property in consultation with the Director of Strategic Finance and Cabinet Member for Corporate Services and Innovation is authorised to accept the most advantageous offer.
3. To formally declare Additional Land at St Peter's Farm, Marshland St James (2049/108) surplus to Council requirements and instruct the Director of Property to dispose of the property. In the event of a disposal receipt exceeding delegated limits the Director of Property in consultation with the Director of Strategic Finance and Cabinet Member for Corporate Services and Innovation is authorised to accept the most advantageous offer.
4. To approve the disposal of The Marl Pit Land at Wells Road Fakenham NR21 9HP (Former Fakenham High & Sixth Form Site) (1029/028A) (edged purple on plan) to Fakenham Sports Charity Ltd (company number 03151414 / charity number 1056908) and instruct the Director of Property to oversee the completion of the sale on the agreed terms.

16.7 **Evidence and Reasons for Decision**

Declaring the sites and land holdings surplus to County Council use means that the Corporate Property Team can consider options for the disposal and exploitation of these sites.

16.8 **Alternative Options**

Declaring sites and land holdings surplus is a result of the sites no longer being required for service delivery. The alternative would be to retain resulting in incurring holding costs for an asset that is not contributing to service delivery.

17 **Business Rates Pool – Annual Report 2022-23 and Pooling Decision 2024-25**

17.1.1 Cabinet received the report setting out an overview of the 2022-23 Pool including the amount of funding retained by each pool authority, as well as providing an update on the potential for a 2024-25 Pool.

- 17.1.2 The Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance introduced the report to Cabinet:
- This report set out an annual update on the business rates pool which the County Council took part in with all District Councils in Norfolk. The report gave details of the expected outcome of pooling in the current year 2023-24 and the intentions for 2024-25.
 - Business Rates Pooling allowed authorities to retain growth in business rates which would otherwise be paid to the Government. This had helped the Council and district councils to retain additional resources which would otherwise have been lost.
 - If the county deal didn't go ahead, without LEP (Local Enterprise Partnership) funding this would be the only resource available to the council to develop economic growth in the county.
 - Under the terms of the pooling arrangements, in previous years, the fund retained had been allocated to projects delivering economic growth and development by the Norfolk Leaders Group via bids from local authorities. Since 2022-23, the arrangements for pooling had been updated to allow all districts to retain some of the pool funds so they could make allocations from their own budgets.
 - £1.5m had been allocated in the 2023-24 Norfolk County Council budget as part of its budget setting process to the Norfolk Investment Framework. The details of projects funded through this were detailed in the report.
 - Decisions about the use of the gain from 2023-24 pooling would be made as part of the setting of the 2024-25 budget.
 - The outturn for the 2022-23 pool showed an increase in the level of benefit with budget assumption. The total retained levy for 2022-23 was £8.572m. Of this, the County Council's share was £3.81m, an additional income of £1.210m. The proposed use of this additional amount is set out in paragraph 3.3 of the report.
 - There was an option to continue to pool in 2024-25. District council forecasts indicated this would be beneficial to the county and would be forecast to retain £7.211 in Norfolk. All partners have continued to pool on the same basis as previous years; all district and Norfolk County Council had indicated to Government their intention to continue to pool.
 - The Vice Chair moved the recommendations as set out in the report.
- 17.2 The Cabinet Member for Public Health and Prevention highlighted the shared purpose across the county in agreeing to pool across and welcomed the report.
- 17.3 The Cabinet Member for Economic Growth discussed the Go Digital campaign, funded by the Business Rates pool, which had been successful and won national awards. It was an oversubscribed scheme.
- 17.4 the Cabinet Member for Highways, Infrastructure and Transport highlighted the money being used for infrastructure framework projects shown on page 513 of the report including Seaweed in East Anglia, Net Zero East RENEW: a feasibility study into the re-diversion of rainwater, surface and drainage water and the Clean Hydrogen Strategy, among others.
- 17.4 The Chair was pleased that all district councils had agreed to join the pool and hoped this was a good basis on how all partners could work together under a county deal. She had visited London recently to talk with the Minister about

Hydrogen in Norfolk and how the Clean Hydrogen Strategy could be taken forward.

17.5 Cabinet **RESOLVED** to:

1. Note the performance of the Norfolk Business Rates Pool and endorse the decisions taken by the Pool in respect of the allocation of 2022-23 Pool resources (section 2 of the report);
2. Endorse the use of Norfolk County Council's share of the 2022-23 retained levy (as shown in Table 2 and section 3 of the report);
3. Approve the use of Norfolk County Council's share of one-off Business Rates Pool funds in excess of the level originally budgeted (currently forecast as £1.210m) to address current year overspend pressures and make a contribution to the Go Digital funding programme (section 3.3); and
4. Agree that the County Council participate in pooling for 2024-25 in line with the expression of interest submitted for the 2024-25 Norfolk Business Rates Pool (set out in section 4 of the report).

17.6 **Evidence and Reasons for Decision**

Not included

17.7 **Alternative Options**

Not included

18 Mid-Year Treasury Management Monitoring Report 2023-24

18.1.1 Cabinet received the report giving details of the 2023-24 treasury activities and highlights compliance with policy and strategy previously approved in relation to treasury management.

18.1.2 The Vice Chair introduced the report to Cabinet:

- The Treasury Management Panel accepted the mid-year report on the 2 November 2023, and it was now presented to Cabinet for ratification
- The aim of the report was to ensure the Council were on track to deliver what was set out to full council: that the council maintain cash, borrowing and investment according to prudential indicators as set out in the paper and to ensure treasury management had been carried out in line with the treasury management code and its principles of security, liquidity and yield.
- Over the first 6 months of the financial year, out of the £65m of new borrowing budgeted for in 2023-24 the Council had borrowed £0
- While maintaining a £65m borrowing forecast, delivery and funding sources of the capital programme were being closely monitored to minimise borrowing while interest rates were high.
- In accordance with fiscal policy, a watch had been maintained over the cash levels. As of September 2023, cash balances were at £269.78m. These cash balances had secured significant income in the form of interest receivable. The average interest generated by cash investments for 4.69%.
- If the council borrowed £65m then cash balances would be around £260m at the end of the financial year.

- At £872.397m the Council's total borrowing was £102.721m lower at mid-year than forecast in April 2023. There had been no additional borrowing and £23.055m had been repaid.
- The Council remained under prudential borrowing limits, and this was forecast to be the case at the end of the financial year.
- The Vice Chair moved the recommendations as set out in the report

18.2 Cabinet **RESOLVED** to endorse and recommend to County Council the Mid-Year Treasury Management Monitoring Report 2023-24.

18.3 **Evidence and Reasons for Decision**

One annex is attached to this report, giving details of treasury management activities and outcomes, including:

1. Investment activities
2. Borrowing strategy and outcomes
3. Capital Plan and non-treasury investments
4. Prudential indicators

18.4 **Alternative Options**

In order to achieve treasury management in accordance with the Council's treasury management strategy, no viable alternative options have been identified to the recommendation in this report.

19 **Finance Monitoring Report 2023-24 P7: October 2023**

19.1.1 Cabinet received the report setting out summary of the forecast financial position for the 2023-24 Revenue and Capital Budgets, General Balances, and the Council's Reserves at 31 March 2024, together with related financial information.

19.1.2 The Vice Chair introduced the report to Cabinet:

- The council had lobbied the government for additional funding and hoped for additional support when provisional settlement was announced in December 2023. A lack of further funding support would have a material impact for the current year and 2024-25 financial planning.
- Table 1 in the report summarised the 2023-24 financial position and showed why the forecast had worsened since period 6. Warnings of further cost pressures in home to school transport and child care placement cost forecasts meant that further overspending in Children's Services could not be ruled out. Adult Social Services was now coming under pressure, particularly in learning disabilities.
- Pressures would need to be covered by use of departmental reserves as they had in Adult Social Services and Children's Services, impacting on the 2024-25 budget and one-off savings would be needed to support the budget position.
- Recurring pressures emerging in 2023-24 would require additional budget growth to reduce the budget overspend.
- The funding announcement in the Autumn Statement did not show additional resources for local government in 2024-25 and the financial context continued to be challenging. Other measures were announced in the Autumn Statement such as an increase in the national living wage and an increased forecast for inflation. These would increase cost pressures

on the budget, impacting on the cost of commissioned services such as adults' and children's social services and the 2024-25 NJC pay award which would need to be set at a level above the April 2025 living wage pay award

- it was possible that funding for delivery of the household support fund may not be available from April next year.
- Assumptions in the Medium Term Financial Statement for 2024-25 would need to be reviewed; previous modelling showed close to a balanced position but recent announcements and wider government announcements had resulted in movement to the overall position. There was no certainty around increased funding from Government.
- Revenue annexe 1 in the report showed over and underspends. Interest received was £4m higher than forecast with interest paid £2.25m less than forecast.
- The Vice Chair moved the recommendations and gave detail on the information contained in them:
- The funding for the West Winch Housing Access Road had been covered in item 10 on the agenda; the council was not expected to cover the cost of this but would support the District Council if needed
- The cost to the council was forecast to be £22.882m but the council was committed to fund the scheme in full if required.
- Funding for the Long Stratton Bypass had been provisionally agreed by the Department for Transport
- The next tranche of funding had been received from the Department for Transport for the bus service improvement plan.
- £232m of the Capital programme was funded externally as shown in the report
- A £2m overspend was now being forecast in Adult Social Services and £9m overspend in Children's Services.
- The recommendations in the Norwich Western Link update report, at item 9 on the agenda, were due to be considered by Full Council in January 2024. The associated recommendation within recommendation 1 of this report would also need to be considered by Council in January 2024, however, this would be too late for the changes to be incorporated into the capital programme and budget setting for 2024-25.
- Therefore the Vice Chair **proposed** an additional recommendation, to allow for the changes to be incorporated into the capital programme and budget setting, 1a: For planning and monitoring purposes, to incorporate the changes under recommendation 1 into the 2023-24 monitoring position and proposed 2024-25 Capital Programme, subject to any changes as a result of any call-in and Council's ultimate decision making on 30 January 2024.

- 19.2 The Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care noted the key themes discussed at a recent conference about the pressure of home to school transport and social care, including pressure of private providers when re-commissioning care after providers withdraw from the market. The pressures experienced in Norfolk were also being experienced across the country.
- 19.3 The Cabinet Member for Public Health and Prevention noted that overspends in Adult Social Services were due to the increase in demand caused by demographic changes across the country such as people living longer. He felt that this position could be better understood.

- 19.4 The Cabinet Member for Highways, Infrastructure and Transport noted that revenue from government was not increasing in line with the need being seen in the county and the country.
- 19.5 The Chair voiced her disappointment in the autumn statement regarding the settlement for local government. She hoped that there would be a settlement in the provisional funding statement. The council and Local Government Alliance would continue to lobby government on this matter. The budget of the Council was increased each year but did not keep up with the demand on services. The county deal funding would not be for this purpose as it was for investment. It was therefore important to press government for a fairer funding settlement.
- 19.6 Cabinet **RESOLVED:**
1. To recommend to the Council the increase of **£126.541m** to the capital programme to address capital funding requirements funded mostly from various external sources as set out in detail in capital Appendix 3 to the report, paragraph 1.4 as follows:
 - £73.300m increase to the West Winch Bypass project, mainly funded through a £74.202m increase in Department of Transport and Homes England funding reflecting the Outline Business Case submission and a £1.05m reduction in NCC Borrowing required to fund this project. The latest forecast is disclosed in a paper elsewhere on the agenda.
 - £22.882m increase in the Norwich Western Link project following the approval of the Outline Business Case and to reflect the latest forecast reported elsewhere on the agenda.
 - £11.646m increase in the Long Stratton Bypass project mainly funded through an increase in the Department of Transport grant of £17.717m and a £4.979m reduction in the GNGB supported borrowing required for the project as reported to Cabinet on 6th November.
 - £18.483m increase in Department for Transport funding for Countywide BSIP schemes
 - £0.155m increase in external contributions to various Children's Services schemes
 - £0.07m increase in NCC Borrowing to support the Planning and Advisory Scheme
 - £0.006m net increase in various other schemes
 - 1a. For planning and monitoring purposes, to incorporate the changes under recommendation 1 into the 2023-24 monitoring position and proposed 2024-25 Capital Programme, subject to any changes as a result of any call-in and Council's ultimate decision making on 30 January 2024.
 2. To note the revised current and future 2023-28 capital programme as set out in Appendix 3 of the report including the significant reprofiling undertaken to date.
 3. To delegate to the Director of Procurement and the Director of Property to undertake the necessary procurement and tender processes to deliver this revised capital programme in accordance with the delegated authority awarded on 6 March 2023 in the Authority to enact Capital Programme paper - [Document.ashx \(cmis.uk.com\)](https://cmis.uk.com).
 4. To recognise the period 7 general fund revenue forecast of a **£3.052m overspend (0.62% of net budget)**, noting also that Executive Directors will

take measures to reduce or eliminate potential over-spends where these occur within services;

5. To recognise the period 7 forecast of 97% savings delivery in 2023-24, noting also that Executive Directors will continue to take measures to mitigate potential savings shortfalls through alternative savings or underspends;
6. To note the forecast General Balances at 31 March 2024 of **£25.410m**.
7. To approve the appointment of directors to Norfolk County Council owned companies and joint ventures as set out in section 2.2 of the report, as required by the Council's Financial Regulations.

19.7 Evidence and Reasons for Decision

Please see section 4 of the report

19.8 Alternative Options

To deliver a balanced budget, no viable alternative options have been identified to the recommendations in this report. In terms of financing the proposed capital expenditure, no further grant or revenue funding has been identified to fund the expenditure, apart from the funding noted in Appendix 3 of the report.

20 Reports of the Cabinet Member and Executive Director Delegated Decisions made since the last Cabinet meeting

- 20.1 These would be included in the next Cabinet agenda for noting.

21 Exclusion of the Public

- 21.1 Cabinet agreed to exclude the public for discussion of item 22.

22 West Winch Housing Access Road – Project update and funding: Exempt appendices A and B

- 22.1 Cabinet discussed and noted the exempt appendices.

The meeting ended at 12:15

Chair of Cabinet

Cabinet
4 December 2023
Public & Local Member Questions

	Public Question Time
6.1	<p>Question from John Martin Will the leader please specify exactly what sums the Council has incurred by way of legal expenses as a direct consequence of the court proceedings issued by Dr Andrew Boswell</p> <p>Response from the Leader and Cabinet Member for Strategy and Governance Dr Boswell has challenged government on the Development Consent Order for National Highways' A47 schemes. These are not county council schemes. The county council has not incurred any legal costs as a consequence.</p>
6.2	<p>Question from Rupert Read The Paris Agreement (2015), signed by the UK, commits to making all possible efforts to limiting the average global temperature to 1.5 degrees higher than pre-industrial levels. Just 8 years later, a majority of scientists think that this Paris 1.5 degrees target will soon be breached. How does the Leader reconcile building (construction emissions estimate: 130,000 tonnes of CO2) and operating (additional emissions each year from operation) an NWL with the UK's international obligations, and does she think our children and their children will look kindly on Norfolk County Council's seeming complete indifference to their fate?</p> <p>Response from the Leader and Cabinet Member for Strategy and Governance Meeting the national net zero targets will take co-ordinated action across the public and private sectors as we transition from our current ways of life to a way of life that is consistent with net zero.</p> <p>The County Council has taken important steps towards meeting the net zero challenge by adopting its Environmental Policy and by adopting Local Transport Plan 4 (LTP4) and its Implementation Plan. LTP4 sets out how the council intends to continue to support the people of Norfolk in travelling to, from and around the County safely and efficiently for work, leisure and business whilst having regard to setting a trajectory of emissions that is consistent with achieving net zero targets. The unavoidable emissions arising from the Norwich Western Link scheme must be seen in this wider context of the other planned measures intended to support travel and reduce emissions in the County.</p> <p>Supplementary question from Rupert Read The Leader's division (in which I reside) includes a significant area of low-lying land to the south of the River Yare including the Coldham Hall pub which reports using canoes for deliveries due to worsening flooding (EDP last week). How will the Leader explain her cabinet's decision to increase climate-deadly carbon emissions with an NWL, risking global climate treaties, to the residents affected by flooding in her division?</p> <p>Response from the Leader and Cabinet Member for Strategy and Governance A Flood Risk Assessment will form part of the Environmental Statement for the Norwich Western Link scheme. The purpose of this is to assess the potential impacts of the scheme on flood risk and support and define the drainage design to mitigate the potential flood risk impacts of the scheme, including over a range of future climate change scenarios. The</p>

	<p>Flood Risk Assessment is expected to conclude, based on the assessment carried out to date as part of preparing it in draft, the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -That within the River Wensum floodplain there is likely to be little to no change to the flood extent in this area and the flood hazard for the area remains unchanged. -A review of the flood risk receptors that could be impacted by the local increase in water levels confirms that, in all events up to the 1 in 100 year annual probability flood event plus 44% climate change allowance, only grazing farmland is affected. -There is no anticipated increased risk to property or infrastructure. -There is no anticipated change to flood risk downstream of the proposed scheme.
6.3	<p>Question from Iain Robinson</p> <p>The proposed Norwich Western Link road runs through the middle of multiple areas of woodland included in a proposed Special Site of Scientific Interest, currently in the pipelines with Natural England, which is aimed at designating the home woodlands of the nationally significant Barbastelle bat colonies in this area, and is based on survey evidence more thorough and detailed than the council's own. Why hasn't the project team put this project on hold until an evidence-based decision has been made by Natural England?</p> <p>Response from the Cabinet Member for Highways, Infrastructure and Transport</p> <p>The Norwich Western Link (NWL) scheme is a large-scale infrastructure project requiring years of continued planning, design, stakeholder engagement and surveys. The NWL project team has had consistent engagement with Natural England (and other key stakeholders) throughout the development of the project to ensure a clear understanding and awareness of Natural England's perspective of the information provided to them, as well as to gain visibility and to discuss how the NWL scheme relates to other significant projects, including the proposal for a SSSI.</p> <p>Currently the timeframes associated with the designation of the area in question as an SSSI are not fixed, nor does the inclusion of the area on Natural England's designation programme indicate a commitment to designate. As such, it would not be possible, nor desirable to postpone progress of the NWL scheme pending a decision on the area designation. Equally, the Environmental Statement has valued Barbastelle Bats as being nationally important. This would remain unchanged regardless of the SSSI designation.</p> <p>The effect of the NWL scheme upon local bat populations has been assessed and will be reported within the Environmental Statement and other key documents to be submitted as part of the formal planning application, in due course. The nature conservation value of the population has been evaluated on the basis of thorough baseline survey information in line with relevant national guidelines.</p> <p>Regarding the surveys undertaken by both the NWL project team and others, the following wording is included in the cabinet report at section 9.2: 'As a result of data collected by the Wensum Valley Barbastelles Research Project (a research project collaboration between Norfolk Wildlife Trust, the University of East Anglia and Wild Wings Ecology) Norfolk Wildlife Trust have advised the project team of a possible bat maternity roost in the vicinity of the NWL scheme. Without access to the data used to support this advice the NWL project team</p>

is unable to verify it. The project team has requested access to the data on a number of occasions but has not been able to obtain it to date. The NWL specialist bat experts have carried out their own extensive bat surveys over several years, which have provided a good understanding of the presence of protected bat species in the area around the proposed route. The project has taken account of this in its design and mitigation measures that have been developed for the planning application.'

Further, and as reflected in the cabinet report, the NWL project team has continued to pursue engagement with the Norfolk Wildlife Trust, on their multi-year research project into the local Barbastelle colonies being undertaken by an independent ecologist who we understand is currently seconded to them. Multiple discussions have taken place to facilitate the sharing of this data however this has not yet been provided. Equally, the survey effort undertaken in support of the NWL scheme is commensurate to the scale of the scheme, and the survey data captured has, and will continue, to allow us to appropriately and considerately develop the necessary environmental information and assessment, inform the ecological and environmental mitigation associated with the scheme, and drive thorough due consideration of the ecological requirements within the design development.

Supplementary question from Iain Robinson

According to the Cabinet Papers, the Norwich Western Link will increase carbon emissions by 5475 tonnes (tCO₂e) a year for sixty years, as well as embody carbon emissions from the construction phase (130,000 tCO₂e). Please can the councillors explain how the building of this road can align with net zero targets?

Response from the Cabinet Member for Highways, Infrastructure and Transport

Meeting the national net zero targets will take co-ordinated action across the public and private sectors as we transition from our current ways of life to a way of life that is consistent with net zero.

The County Council has taken important steps towards meeting the net zero challenge by adopting its Environmental Policy and by adopting Local Transport Plan 4 (LTP4) and its Implementation Plan. LTP4 sets out how the council intends to continue to support the people of Norfolk in travelling to, from and around the County safely and efficiently for work, leisure and business whilst having regard to setting a trajectory of emissions that is consistent with achieving net zero targets. The unavoidable emissions arising from the Norwich Western Link scheme must be seen in this wider context of the other planned measures intended to support travel and reduce emissions in the County.

6.4 Question from David Pett

How can the council be confident that there will be no contamination of the local water supply because of pollutant run-off from the road, especially considering increased flood risk and the need for flood mitigation work within the Wensum SAC area?

Response from the Cabinet Member for Highways, Infrastructure and Transport

The proposed Norwich Western Link (NWL) scheme includes a surface water drainage scheme and strategy which will capture run-off from the road and includes infiltration basins that will, after appropriate treatment, discharge this run-off to the ground safely. There will be no discharges into the River Wensum.

The Road Drainage and the Water Environment chapter of the Environmental Statement will assess the potential risk of pollutants migrating towards River Wensum and appropriate mitigation will be recommended.

A Flood Risk Assessment will form part of the Environmental Statement. The purpose of which is to assess the potential impacts of the scheme on flood risk, and support and define the road drainage design to mitigate the potential flood risk impacts of the NWL. The Flood Risk Assessment is expected to conclude, based on the assessment carried out to date as part of preparing it in draft, the following:

-That within the River Wensum floodplain there is likely to be little to no change to the flood extent in this area and the flood hazard for the area remains unchanged.

-A review of the flood risk receptors that could be impacted by the local increase in water levels confirms that, in all events up to the 1 in 100 year annual probability flood event plus 44% climate change allowance, only grazing farmland is affected.

-There is no anticipated increased risk to property or infrastructure.

-There is no anticipated change to flood risk downstream of the Proposed Scheme.

A Habitat Regulation Assessment will support the planning application to assess the impact of the proposed scheme on the Wensum SAC. The results of this assessment are expected to conclude there would be no adverse effects on the integrity of the Wensum SAC with mitigation in place.

6.5 **Question from Andrew Boswell**

The Climate Change Committee (CCC) 2023 Progress Report to parliament identified very serious shortfalls in delivery, economy wide, of the Carbon Budget Delivery Plan (CBDP). For the Industry sector relating to construction of the scheme, CCC identified a 114 million tonnes emission reduction shortfall for the 5th carbon budget (including the planned final construction year 2028). In the Surface Transport sector relating to the operation of the scheme, CCC identified 228 million tonnes of emission reduction shortfall for the 6th carbon budget (years 5 to 9 of scheme operation). How does the Cabinet reconcile adding new, unbudgeted carbon emissions against these severe risks to delivery of national carbon budgets?

Response from the Cabinet Member for Highways, Infrastructure and Transport

Meeting the national net zero targets will take co-ordinated action across the public and private sectors as we transition from our current ways of life to a way of life that is consistent with net zero.

The County Council has taken important steps towards meeting the net zero challenge by adopting its Environmental Policy and by adopting Local Transport Plan 4 (LTP4) and its Implementation Plan. LTP4 sets out how the council intends to continue to support the people of Norfolk in travelling to, from and around the County safely and efficiently for work, leisure and business whilst having regard to setting a trajectory of emissions that is consistent with achieving net zero targets. The unavoidable emissions arising from the Norwich Western Link scheme must be seen in this wider context of the other planned measures intended to support travel and reduce emissions in the County.

It is accepted that to create a transport network fit for purpose, some new emissions will need to be emitted. The Norwich Western Link (NWL) is an important component of wider transport infrastructure that is being delivered as part of the Transport for Norwich (TfN) Strategy and wider Local Transport Plan 4 (LTP4). The Council will need to balance the impact of the NWL with the wider decarbonisation action plan, to achieve a sustainable transport network, aligned to carbon targets.

Supplementary question from Andrew Boswell

The EIA Scoping report does not refer to the Carbon Budget Order 2021, nor the Carbon Budget Delivery Plan (CBDP) which lays out how the Government intends to meet UK carbon budgets and international climate obligations until 2037. What assessment of the greenhouse gas emissions from the scheme will be made against the CBDP, the 4th, 5th and 6th carbon budgets, and the 2030 and 2035 Nationally Determined Contributions under the Paris agreement?

Response from the Cabinet Member for Highways, Infrastructure and Transport

The Environmental Statement that will be submitted with the planning application for the Norwich Western Link (NWL) scheme will assess the carbon impact of the scheme against carbon targets and cumulative emissions up to 2050, in accordance with current national assessment guidance.

The Environment Statement will provide a breakdown of the carbon impact of the scheme against each carbon budget period, aligned to the Nationally Determined Contributions under the Paris Agreement.

6.6 Question from Dr Matt Tomlinson

With reference to paragraph 3.12.6, please provide the Council's enumerations of the operational carbon emissions from the scheme in the Do-Something and Do-Minimum traffic model cases at the Opening Year (2029), Design Year (2044) and 60-year year (2088) including the data for both before and after applying the Common Analytical Scenario (CAS) forecast.

Response from the Cabinet Member for Highways, Infrastructure and Transport

At the moment there has only been a Core Scenario modelled for the Opening Year (2029) and Design Year (2044). These results are summarised on the following table, which highlights the operational carbon emissions from the scheme:

Scenario	2029 (operational year)	2044 (future year)	Average per year (2029-2088)	Total (2029-2088)
Baseline ('Do Minimum')	536,647	338,645	365,045	21,902,709
Do Something	543,634	343,241	369,961	22,197,631
Difference	6,987	4,597	4,915	294,922
% change	1.30%	1.40%	1.30%	1.30%

A sensitivity assessment is being undertaken assuming accelerated levels of electric vehicle uptake when compared against Transport Analysis Guidance (TAG). Relevant findings will be included the Environmental Statement submitted with the planning application for the Norwich Western Link scheme.

	<p>Supplementary question from Dr Matt Tomlinson With reference to paragraph 3.12.4, please provide the increase in operational carbon dioxide in the Opening Year (2029) and the Design Year (2044).</p> <p>Response from the Cabinet Member for Highways, Infrastructure and Transport Below is the Greenhouse Gas information for the Opening Year (2029) and the Design Year (2044) based on the current draft of the Environmental Statement. The finalised assessment will be published with the Environmental Statement accompanying the planning application for the Norwich Western Link scheme, once submitted.</p> <p>Baseline Scenario 2029 (Operational Year) - 536,647 2044 (Future year) - 338,645</p> <p>Do Something Scenario 2029 (Operational Year) - 543,634 2044 (Future year) - 343,241</p>
6.7	<p>Question from Sondra Billings In the light of the vandalism of historic buildings in Norwich recently, how much does the council anticipate spending for security at the Wensum Lodge site when it is closed from 22/12/23 onwards?</p> <p>Response from the Cabinet Member for Corporate Services and Innovation The County Council has not undertaken any forecasting as to the cost of security at Wensum Lodge.</p> <p>Supplementary question from Sondra Billings Has a security contract been awarded and at what costing to whom?</p> <p>Response from the Cabinet Member for Corporate Services and Innovation Norse Group provide all security services for the County Council.</p>
6.8	<p>Question from James Mendelssohn The Music House, a Grade I listed building, is currently leased from Norwich City Council on a full repairing lease but it is currently in a poor state of repair. How much has been set aside to renovate the building before handing it back to Norwich City Council and has a heritage building maintenance contract already been awarded?</p> <p>Response from the Cabinet Member for Corporate Services and Innovation? We do not consider the Music House to be in a poor state. The County Council has not yet started discussions with the City Council to yield up the lease. When the landlord conducts their condition and dilapidations surveys this will provide a baseline for any dilapidation costs.</p>
6.9	<p>Question from Bryan Robinson the main implications of the proposed NWL as reported in the Addendum to the OBC have significantly changed in these cabinet papers. The costs have risen by £22m; the operational greenhouse gas emissions have changed from reducing to increasing; the</p>

carbon emissions associated with the construction have increased and the value for money is now medium (optimistically) rather than high. Why were these dramatic changes not reported to the Department for Transport before its decision on the OBC rather than continue to mislead both it and the public with bad out-of-date information?

Response from the Cabinet Member for Highways, Infrastructure and Transport

The Council has progressed the Outline Business Case in full compliance with the Department for Transport's guidance. In relation to greenhouse gas emissions, the information provided to the Department for Transport complied with the guidance that prevailed at the time it was submitted. There have been changes to this guidance, the nature of which, and consequences of, are reported at section 3.12 of the Cabinet Report.

In relation to the estimate of the costs of the scheme, section 6 of the Cabinet Report outlines the reasons for the changes to the scheme's cost estimate. The delay to the OBC decision is a significant factor in the changes to the costs estimate for the scheme. In accordance with the established processes for the funding of large local major road scheme, the Department for Transport will have the opportunity to consider the Full Business Case for the scheme once submitted, which will not occur until planning permission has been granted for the scheme and the associated statutory orders have been confirmed.

Supplementary question from Bryan Robinson

Applications for planning permission must be valid and in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. What are the material considerations which will enable the Council to submit a valid planning application for the NWL to its own planning department?

Response from the Cabinet Member for Highways, Infrastructure and Transport

Paragraph 44 of the National Planning Policy Framework advises planning authorities to publish on their website a list of their information requirements for valid applications for planning permission.

These lists were updated on 5 June 2023, for applications to be made under regulation 3 of the Town and Planning General Regulations 1992 (as would be the case for the Norwich Western Link).

The relevant list can be found here <https://www.norfolk.gov.uk/-/media/norfolk/downloads/rubbish-recycling-planning/planning/minerals-and-waste-regulations-3-local-list.pdf>

6.10 Question from Richard Hawker

The report states that "local communities . . are suffering. . from rat-running on small roads . . not designed (for) volumes or size of vehicles now using them"
These unsuitable roads include the B1535 and its offshoots of Heath Road and Stone Road. How many HGVs movements on these roads could NOT transfer to NWL, e.g. farms and firms within the 'valley' area, and what percentage of total HGV traffic on the B1535 does this represent?

Response from the Cabinet Member for Highways, Infrastructure and Transport

There is no surveyed information of the specific numbers of HGV's accessing each and every individual farm and operating company within the "valley" area. In accordance with

	<p>industry guidance the transport modelling which informs the planning application has been derived from a variety of link counts and turning movements at key junctions, rather than at every access along each route.</p> <p>The 2029 Do Minimum (DM) forecast modelling (i.e., the future opening year situation without the Norwich Western Link (NWL) scheme in place) is expected to show that there are predicted to be approximately 330 HGVs using the B1535 route per day, of which about 60% is expected to be re-routed to use the proposed Norwich Western Link route, therefore about 40% of HGVs would remain on their existing routes as they have local origins and destinations between A1067 and A47.</p> <p>With the proposed traffic mitigation in place there is also proposed to be an HGV ban (except for access) on the B1535 Wood Lane, so that as much HGV traffic as possible is re-routed to use the new road.</p>
6.11	<p>Question from Victoria Flute</p> <p>The Norwich Western Link is expected to improve the local economy. The NDR was expected to do the same, and a ‘five-year-after’ report was promised to show what effect the road had had on the economy, but it is not yet available. If the report is to have any value, it must be to give an indication as to the accuracy of forecasting the effect of a new road in this area. Why is the report not part of the application for the Norwich Western Link?</p> <p>Response from the Cabinet Member for Highways, Infrastructure and Transport</p> <p>The NDR is part of the 2019 base year transport model and the forecast year transport models that have been used in the assessment of the Norwich Western Link (NWL). Within the Outline Business Case for the NWL an assessment of the wider economic benefits was undertaken which quantified, in monetary terms, the level of benefits that the NWL would be predicted to deliver. As five years have not elapsed the five-year after report is still under preparation and will be published in due course.</p> <p>Supplementary question from Victoria Flute</p> <p>How does the Norwich Western Link support Levelling Up? Specifically for those who are medically or financially unable to drive.</p> <p>Response from the Cabinet Member for Highways, Infrastructure and Transport</p> <p>The Cabinet Report sets out that a Sustainable Transport Strategy has been developed alongside the main Norwich Western Link (NWL) proposals which includes a complementary package of wider interventions to support walking, cycling and public transport use. There would also be reductions in traffic on existing roads, making them more suitable for walking and cycling as a result of traffic diverting to the NWL.</p>
6.12	<p>Question from Julie Rolle</p> <p>Traffic: The time between closure of the Easton roundabout and opening of NWL may be 3 years, assuming no delays. The proposed alternative route for the 4500 vehicles per day using Lower Easton is the tiny Weston Road and Taverham Road. This will overwhelm those roads and area. Other routes would be through Weston Longville, Ringland or further afield. How does NCC propose to solve this problem; presumably this issue must be a known one, or is the plan that these areas just have to endure this for three years and if so, has this been made clear to those impacted and mitigation put in place?</p>

Response from the Cabinet Member for Highways, Infrastructure and Transport

The planning application will be accompanied by a Construction Traffic Management Plan (CTMP) that will consider the appropriate means of managing and mitigating the adverse effect of construction traffic. It is anticipated that this would be developed in detail after the grant of planning permission, if planning permission is granted, to manage the traffic conditions that prevail during construction.

For example, if both the Norwich Western Link (NWL) and the A47 schemes are being constructed at the same time it is anticipated that the CTMP's for both projects would be coordinated as much as possible and network management plans adopted that aim to minimise any impacts on minor roads and focus traffic onto the more appropriate routes.

The NWL project team are also currently working with the local parishes to determine additional mitigation measures to support sustainable access during construction. A traffic monitoring scheme will also be in place during construction with advisory variable message signs (VMS) on the surrounding highway network to advise of any delays and appropriate route options.

Supplementary question from Julie Rolle

Safety: On p72 of the report, one advantage of the NWL is stated as 'reducing personal injury accidents'. Please can the council publish statistics of such accidents which have occurred on the roads from which NWL would take traffic (viz. Ringland Lane, Weston Longville, etc.) so that a proper assessment can be made.

Response from the Cabinet Member for Highways, Infrastructure and Transport

The Council holds statistics of fatal, serious and slight accidents which can be supplied for local roads. The Transport Assessment will include a review of Personal injury Accident data within a 5km radius of the proposed scheme route. There is signage in place on the A1067 between Attlebridge and Lenwade noting a high casualty route which includes the Marl Hill Road junction with A1067 and also B1535 Weston Hall Road junction with A1067 and Porter's Lane. Both of these junctions are expected to benefit from significantly reduced turning movements as a result of the proposed scheme. Hence there would be a reduced risk of collisions in these locations as a result of the scheme.

Together with the A47 dualling scheme, there would also be a much safer road layout at the A47 junctions with B1535 Wood Lane and at Taverham Road. The Easton Roundabout will be removed and the Honingham Roundabout at Norwich Road will be bypassed by the new A47. The A1074 would also have reduced flow in comparison with the Do Minimum situation, so the Longwater Interchange and Longwater Lane junctions with Dereham Road will also have reduced risk of accidents.

6.13 Question from Rob Bellman

As a landowner whos beautiful lush woodland, that supports both considerable flora and forna, will be destroyed to build a very short stretch of infrastructure, that doesn't make sense, by any metric, other than to support mass new house building, which is currently on hold due to current water pollution levels, I am seriously concerned that this project already has, and will continue to come up against legal challenges, while costs spiral beyond affordable levels.

Would the cabinet please explain why they are not looking at more viable, effective, lower-impact, sustainable and affordable transport solutions for Norfolk.

Response from the Cabinet Member for Highways, Infrastructure and Transport

No legal challenges have been brought against the Norwich Western Link to date, and the project is not required to directly enable any housing development, although as we have stated before, this council believes that continuing to invest in our infrastructure to help our transport networks cope with housing and employment growth is crucial, and the Norwich Western Link is expected to support this growth.

In developing the project to this point, the project team looked at a wide range of options - including non-road options - that would tackle the traffic issues being experienced to the west of Norwich, and that would meet the project objectives that were developed with representatives of local communities in the area. The Norwich Western Link was found to be the best solution, and this remains the case.

It's also important to remember that public transport requires good infrastructure just like any other mode of travel. Bus operators need to be able to run efficient, reliable services to attract and retain passengers and make routes commercially viable, and getting stuck in queuing and slow-moving traffic significantly hinders this.

We want to support people to shift their journeys from using a car to more sustainable forms of transport, such as walking, cycling and public transport where appropriate. This will generally be more achievable over relatively short distances and in and between larger centres of population, or where there is a concentration of public amenities or employment. Once constructed the Norwich Western Link will improve non-car sustainable transport options by reducing levels of inappropriate traffic on local roads, making them more attractive for walking and cycling. It will also be supported by a wider package of complementary sustainable transport measures to take advantage of these reduced levels of traffic.

We have been investing in improvements to facilities for public transport users and walkers and cyclists for several years now, particularly in our towns and larger villages and in and around Norwich through our multi-million Transport for Norwich project (www.norfolk.gov.uk/tfn). We have, among other things, improved pedestrian and cycle access to railway stations in Norwich and Great Yarmouth, there have been upgrades to bus facilities in Norwich, Thetford, North Walsham and Cringleford, and we've created an off-road pedestrian and cycle path linking Norwich to the fast-growing populations in Hethersett and Wymondham, and extended our very popular Beryl bike/e-bike/e-scooter hire scheme from Norwich into those areas.

So there isn't a 'one size fits all' approach to transport and we need to continue to invest in a wide range of transport infrastructure in Norfolk to support all kinds of journeys.

Cabinet
4 December 2023
Public & Local Member Questions

	Member Question Time
7.1	<p>Question from Cllr Ben Price So far, the reported cost of the NWL has risen by nearly 80% since the strategic outline business case was first put forward. Further rises above the currently-predicted £273m can therefore be expected. With any further rise, the county council will have to foot the bill, in addition to paying for the current potential shortfall of £60m. Can the cabinet member please confirm whether an upper limit is being placed on the additional funding the council can commit to the NWL and what that limit is?</p> <p>Response from the Cabinet Member for Highways, Infrastructure and Transport The Government's announcement about the potential to increase their contribution will hopefully mean the local contribution required for the Norwich Western Link will actually be slightly less than anticipated when we submitted the Outline Business Case. We're expecting more details on this from the Department for Transport in the coming weeks and we'll be making the case to bring even more national investment into Norfolk as part of the project.</p> <p>The revised budget for the project takes account of anticipated inflation costs over the life of the project and includes a budget for risk of more than £26m, which would help to deal with any additional costs.</p> <p>In the time we have been developing the project we have experienced a pandemic and the ongoing war in Ukraine which has affected global supply chains, both of which have affected costs for all major infrastructure projects worldwide. So, while further cost increases can never be ruled out, and it would be irresponsible to do so, we are confident that this is a considered and rigorously-set budget.</p> <p>In terms future decision-making on potential different scenarios, we will continue to be led by the evidence and the importance of continuing to invest in Norfolk's infrastructure. Key to this is that we know a lot of people and businesses in Norfolk are being badly affected by traffic congestion to the west of Norwich every day, and the Norwich Western Link remains the best solution to these problems. Furthermore, this project will bring in over £200m of national investment into Norfolk, that will benefit the local economy and help our transport networks to cope with projected housing and employment in and around Norwich.</p> <p>Question from Cllr Ben Price How can the Council ensure that there will be no contamination of the local water supply from potential run-off material such as hydrocarbons, fuel additives, metal, tyre wear, de-icer, and gritting, from the NWL, considering the significant increase in flood risk and the need for flood mitigation work in the area affected by the River Wensum SAC?</p> <p>Response from the Cabinet Member for Environment and Waste The proposed Norwich Western Link (NWL) scheme includes a surface water drainage scheme and strategy which will capture run-off from the road and includes infiltration</p>

	<p>basins that will, after appropriate treatment, discharge this run-off to the ground safely. There will be no discharges into the River Wensum.</p> <p>The Road Drainage and the Water Environment chapter of the Environmental Statement will assess the potential risk of pollutants migrating towards River Wensum and appropriate mitigation will be recommended.</p> <p>A Flood Risk Assessment will form part of the Environmental Statement. The purpose of which is to assess the potential impacts of the scheme on flood risk, and support and define the road drainage design to mitigate the potential flood risk impacts of the NWL. The Flood Risk Assessment is expected to conclude, based on the assessment carried out to date as part of preparing it in draft, the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -That within the River Wensum floodplain there is likely to be little to no change to the flood extent in this area and the flood hazard for the area remains unchanged. -A review of the flood risk receptors that could be impacted by the local increase in water levels confirms that, in all events up to the 1 in 100 year annual probability flood event plus 44% climate change allowance, only grazing farmland is affected. -There is no anticipated increased risk to property or infrastructure. -There is no anticipated change to flood risk downstream of the Proposed Scheme. <p>A Habitat Regulation Assessment will support the planning application to assess the impact of the proposed scheme on the Wensum SAC. The results of this assessment are expected to conclude there would be no adverse effects on the integrity of the Wensum SAC with mitigation in place.</p>
7.2	<p>Question from Cllr Jamie Osborn</p> <p>According to the cabinet report, the Norwich Western Link will add about 5,500 tonnes of CO2 into the atmosphere each year for its 60-year lifespan. Please can the cabinet member explain in detail what assessment of the carbon budget for transport in Norfolk has been done and what calculation has been done of whether the increased carbon from this project can be afforded?</p> <p>Response from the Cabinet Member for Environment and Waste</p> <p>Meeting the national net zero targets will take co-ordinated action across the public and private sectors as we transition from our current ways of life to a way of life that is consistent with net zero.</p> <p>The County Council has taken important steps towards meeting the net zero challenge by adopting its Environmental Policy and by adopting Local Transport Plan 4 (LTP4) and its Implementation Plan. LTP4 sets out how the council intends to continue to support the people of Norfolk in travelling to, from and around the County safely and efficiently for work, leisure and business whilst having regard to setting a trajectory of emissions that is consistent with achieving net zero targets. The unavoidable emissions arising from the Norwich Western Link scheme must be seen in this wider context of the other planned measures intended to support travel and reduce emissions in the County.</p>

	<p>Supplementary question from Cllr Jamie Osborn Can the Cabinet Member confirm whether he will recommend the Norwich Western Link should definitely go ahead if the Government provides £213m in funding and leaves the council to fund a minimum of £60m in the shortfall between Government funding and the currently-predicted cost of the road?</p> <p>Response from the Cabinet Member for Highways, Infrastructure and Transport We are very hopeful, based on announcements made by the government, and specific reference within the OBC acceptance letter from DfT that the scheme could benefit from an uplift in government contribution. In that case, the local contribution required for the Norwich Western Link would actually be less than anticipated when we submitted the Outline Business Case.</p> <p>The significant traffic issues that are affecting people and businesses to the west of Norwich every day are projected to worsen if we don't take action, and the Norwich Western Link remains the best solution to these problems. A local contribution of £60m would bring £213m of national investment into Norfolk, and the benefits it would create for local residents and the economy would be significant. So, this would still be a good return on our investment but I don't anticipate that this will come to pass, and we hope to hear more from the Department for Transport in the near future on the suggestion that they will increase their funding contribution for major projects like the Norwich Western Link. The £213m of funding would go towards other schemes across the country and be lost to Norfolk should this scheme not go ahead.</p>
7.3	<p>Question from Cllr Paul Neale Recently the cabinet member said that Park and Ride is an important part of our transport strategy and the renewal of the contract gives us an opportunity to take stock and find out what residents would like to see from the service in the future. Norfolk residents have suggested to me that the county-run Park and Ride sites would make an ideal place for informal car shares to take place for residents traveling into Norwich if parking at the site could be made free to them. Does the cabinet member agree that this is a good idea and will he work with partners such as Liftshare to facilitate its progression?</p> <p>Response from the Cabinet Member for Highways, Infrastructure and Transport As part of the re-procurement of the Park & Ride contract we will be exploring all options. However, we do need to make sure that there is enough revenue from the service to keep the services viable. Allowing people to park for free and not use the bus service means lost revenue if those spaces would have been taken up by a Park & Ride user.</p> <p>Supplementary question from Cllr Paul Neale The Chancellor's autumn budget makes clear that real term deep cuts will be made in public spending. Momentum is growing from more local authorities having to declare 114 notices unable to balance their books with year on year real term reductions in government funding settlements. As this council already plans over £26 million cuts to its own budget, will they now have to make even more savage cuts to balance their books?</p> <p>Response from the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance Thank you for your question. Forecasts accompanying the Autumn Statement undoubtedly suggest a challenging financial landscape for public services in future years. I have previously commented to Council on the increased number of s114 notices, and I remain</p>

	<p>very aware of the risks to the financial sustainability of all authorities at the present time. However, there were very few specific announcements within the Autumn Statement directly relating to local government. As such, the Council is considering the implications of the broader changes, such as the increase to the National Living Wage, as part of 2024-25 Budget setting in the context of previous Government announcements including the Policy Statement issued in December 2022. It was disappointing, although not unexpected, that the Government did not set out any additional funding for social care at the Autumn Statement. The Council therefore continues to await the Provisional Settlement later in December, which will be critical to provide more detail and to inform our planning position for 2024-25. At this stage, and as set out in the October report to Cabinet, the Council is continuing to work to identify further savings, including a third round of Budget Challenge in December, which will contribute to the setting of a balanced budget in February 2024. It remains the case that the Council faces significant budget pressures, a combination of inflation and increasing demand which is outpacing our ability to meet it. This growth will be provided for in our spending plans meaning that in overall terms, the Council will be spending more next year than it does currently. The Budget reports to Cabinet and Full Council next year will provide details of the full implications of Government funding announcements, as well as the forecast level of savings required to balance the Budget over the medium term financial strategy period. As always, the budget setting process and savings targets will be kept under review as budget planning progresses.</p>
7.4	<p>Question from Cllr Catherine Rowett</p> <p>Can the Cabinet member explain what checks have been done and what legal advice has been obtained to secure confidence that the Environment statement, including impacts on biodiversity, relating to the NWL will be robust and comply with all necessary legislation.</p> <p>Response from the Cabinet Member for Environment and Waste</p> <p>The Council has appointed WSP as the competent experts to prepare the Environmental Statement. The Council has also appointed specialist legal advisors to advise the Council on its proposed application for planning permission. A legal review of all the planning application documents is being carried out prior to finalisation and submission of the planning application.</p> <p>Supplementary question from Cllr Catherine Rowett</p> <p>What risk analysis has the Council carried out on the delivery of the policies and proposals in the council's Local Transport Plan 4 (LTP4), and especially the LTP4 carbon reduction targets, in cases of with and without the NWL scheme?</p> <p>Response from the Cabinet Member for Highways, Infrastructure and Transport</p> <p>County Council officers are monitoring delivery of the local transport plan and will take a report to Members at Select Committee in the spring. Specifically on the carbon target, work on carbon quantification is being put underway that will provide an evidence base and technical support that can be used to inform decision-making on the measures required for the carbon target. Members will know that we are waiting for further guidance on local transport plans, first trailed by government in 2022. We will take stock of the guidance as and when it is released by government in respect of this work and also consider implications of the guidance on any other aspects of LTP.</p>
	<p>Question from Cllr Brian Watkins</p>

7.5	<p>Last year, the government opened a new immigration route by expanding the health worker visa scheme to include care workers. However, there are reports that restrictions could be put in place to reduce net migration to the UK. Professor Martin Green, CEO of Care England has said that some of the changes proposed could make it harder for providers to retain and recruit overseas staff and increase the risk of forcing some of them out of business altogether. Norfolk's care market is under huge strain and close to breaking point. How does the Cabinet member believe that residents and their loved ones will be impacted if the restrictions are implemented?</p> <p>Response from the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care Thank you for your question.</p> <p>The introduction of the health and social care visa helped the adult social care market to rapidly bolster vital workforce capacity, and has improved retention rates - enabling greater continuity of care. Furthermore International Recruits (IR) have enabled greater diversity within the workforce, beneficial for decision making, innovation and problem solving.</p> <p>There are around 62 adult social care providers in Norfolk that currently hold a license to sponsor international workers, so recruitment from outside of the UK is a key feature of some, but not all workforce strategies. Developing sustainable approaches to increase domestic based recruitment remains a priority, as we rise to the challenge to resource ever growing demand.</p> <p>Supplementary question from Cllr Brian Watkins This Council faces a budget shortfall of £46 million for the forthcoming 2024/25 financial year. This is a staggeringly high amount and is by far the highest deficit faced by any other local authority in the East of England as 'Politics East' recently highlighted. You have repeated on several occasions that although worrying, Norfolk County Council is not standing on the edge of a financial precipice. Are you prepared to stake your administration's reputation that this remains the case and that the Council's financial future is safe in your hands?</p> <p>Response from the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance Thank you for your question. I would note in this context that all local authorities are highly dependent on central government funding decisions and we continue to face significant uncertainty about funding levels for 2024-25 and beyond. This is why we continue to call on Government to provide us with funding certainty over the medium to longer term to enable sustainable and robust long-term financial planning. In terms of 2024-25 planning, you are correct that £46m is a significant budget gap, and I do not underestimate the scale of the challenge this represents. However, I would note that it is significantly less than the gap of £59.927m which we addressed in the 2023-24 budget, and is broadly in line with average level of savings that the Council has found each year since 2011-12 (£564.933m budgeted in total, representing an average of c£43m savings for each year). The size of the gap reflects the fact that this administration is being realistic during budget setting about the level of financial pressures we face each year. We will continue our approach of tackling this in a managed and robust way. This Council has a strong track record of balancing the budget each year.</p>
	<p>Question from Cllr Rob Colwell</p>

7.6	<p>With 'efficiency saving' in the budget consultation significantly impacting children's services, what reassurances can you provide to Norfolk families who say their child's special educational needs are not currently being identified?</p> <p>Response from the Cabinet Member for Children's Services</p> <p>The support that is provided for children with special educational needs is a combination of support direct from early years settings, schools and colleges and that provided by Children's Services. In simple terms children at 'SEN Support' have their support provided by educational settings with funding delegated directly to them (£38million+ annually) and for those with 'Education, Health & Care Plans' provided by Children's Services. The majority of funding for SEN in this way is via the High Needs Block grant and the Local First Inclusion programme, which has been set out in detail at Cabinet and Committee throughout this year, is the joint DfE / NCC £100million investment to increase opportunities for mainstream inclusion alongside expanding our specialist provision over a six year period. A key focus of this new programme of work is identify needs earlier and putting in place effective support.</p> <p>Second question from Cllr Rob Colwell</p> <p>It is welcome to see £2m of levelling up funding for Hunstanton to build a new library and bus stop. However, many residents have raised concerns about the lack of facilities currently available in the area for disabled and less able people. Between now and September 2024, what is the plan to ensure that these people are provided with suitable facilities to meet their needs?</p> <p>Response from the Cabinet Member for Highways, Infrastructure and Transport</p> <p>These types of facility are the responsibility of the King's Lynn and West Norfolk Borough Council, however the County Council is refurbishing the library and creating a Travel and Community Hub in the heart of Hunstanton. This will enable residents, tourists, people working in Hunstanton and those who use the town to; access services, travel easily, use greener travel options including cycling as well as accessing an improved library offer with Adult Education and Tourist Information, combined with spaces for community groups and outreach.</p> <p>The Travel and Community Hub share many aims and objectives, including improving access to community services, improving visitor information and transport connections, and promoting net-zero and sustainability. It will also provide refurbished community toilet facilities including a new Changing Places facility.</p> <p>The refurbished, accessible library will be a community space for all with computers and free Wi-Fi, activities for all ages including 'Bounce and Rhyme' sessions, 'Just a Cuppa', 'Knit and Knatter' and many more.</p> <p>The project is estimated to cost £2m, with £1m being funded through the Norfolk Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) and £1m from the County Councils Capital Fund.</p> <p>The work is being carried out in two phases to avoid disruption during the busy summer season and we are aiming to keep the bus station operational throughout both phases of the work. All elements of the project are planned to be completed by early 2025.</p>
	<p>Question from Cllr David Sayers</p>

7.7 How can the council address the critical funding gap in the early years sector, particularly with the current inadequacy in covering nursery charges? The sector, a lifeline for families, faces a recruitment crisis and is making it impossible to accommodate more children. Staff, overworked and underpaid, are at breaking point. Insufficient funding fails to attract talent, barely covering growing daily costs. The widening gap between government funding rates and the living wage exacerbates the issue. Without an improved funding offer, providers may struggle to retain qualified staff, jeopardising the sector's vital role. What immediate steps can the council take to rectify this urgent funding shortfall?

Response from the Cabinet Member for Children's Services

Early Education and Childcare funding rates are set using an national funding formula. As a local authority we consult with early years providers and a consultative group of early years providers to determine with Schools Forum the best local formula for distribution of this funding within a strict set of limited rules. We are not able to distribute more funding than we receive from central government.

In the Spring budget there were several announcements which have the potential to make a significant difference to the childcare market in Norfolk – this included from September some increase in funding for 3-to-4-year olds and a significant increase in the funding rate for 2-year-olds. Starting in April there will be a phasing in of extended entitlements for working families of children from 9 months of age. Funding allocations to local authorities were published on the 29th November – with an increase of 4.6% to the base rate for 3-and-4-year olds. The local authority will receive £5.48 per funded 3-and-4-year old, £7.70 per funded 2 year old and £10.48 for children under 2. The government has stated the revised rates reflect the increase to the national minimum wage. We remain in full agreement that funding rates remain too low, but welcome the increase and continue to do everything we can to maximise the funding available to providers.

Recruitment and retention is an issue nationwide – the Department for Education (DfE) are starting a national early years recruitment campaign in the new year and are promoting early years apprenticeships to try and grow the workforce, but there remain significant challenges across the care and education sectors in recruiting and retaining staff as a result of competition from other sectors and the increased cost of living. We have also supported new providers to open, including Little Gillies, a new provision in Wells-next-the-Sea. We have an active childminder recruitment campaign where we are supporting more new childminders to enter the market with training and start-up funding. We continue to effectively support providers to adapt their business models and be sustainable.

The evidence suggests that despite significant challenges, Early Education and Childcare in Norfolk remains strong - the percentage of good and outstanding early years providers is slightly above the national average (the most recent figures show that 97% of Norfolk providers are good or outstanding, compared to 96% nationally) and the percentage of children who reach expected standards in the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile is above the national average in every Early Learning Goal

Second question from Cllr David Sayers

	<p>The February 2023 P&CSC report outlined notable EHCP progress, especially in initial assessments. Challenges remain in prolonged EHCP plan production. EHCP reviews face persistent challenges. Baseline data comparisons highlight positive trends, but sustained efforts are crucial for EHCP performances to meet statutory timescales. How does the council intend to address challenges, ensuring timely EHCP processes and enhanced outcomes for SEND children? Additionally, could the council provide updates on progress post November 2022, indicating any continued improvement in EHCP performance?</p> <p>Response from the Cabinet Member for Children's Services</p> <p>The current performance for the number of new EHCPs issued within the 20 week timeframe is 42.3% (taken as a cumulative measure January to end of October 2023). The marginal reduction in performance from 2022 arises from clearing a large backlog of overdue EHCPs in the first quarter of 2023 where recognition should be given to the team who produce EHCPs whose exemplary performance has resulted in record numbers of new EHCPs being issued so far this year. As at October 2023, 2039 EHCPs have been newly issued, an 87% increase on the total for 2022. Demand for EHCPs continues at overwhelming rate, with requests for EHCPs on course to reach 2,500 for 2023, an increase of a further 25% from 2022's record peak. The Council continues to support EHCP delivery with further reviews of the resourcing within those teams, and effective use of the commercial sector to supply Educational Psychology resource which is suffering from national shortage. Critical to an EHCP system that is ultimately sustainable is enabling the children's needs to be more effectively met at SEND Support and this is the cornerstone of the Council's Local First Inclusion strategy which places resource, funding and support directly into mainstream schools, early years settings and colleges so that children's needs are well met and the confidence in this system increases.</p>
7.8	<p>Question from Cllr Terry Jermy</p> <p>I am grateful that following my question at the Corporate Select Committee meeting that officers have confirmed there remains approximately 15,000 streetlights in Norfolk still to be upgraded to LED. This is of course disappointing news given the benefits that LED upgrades have. Can the Cabinet Member for Corporate Services and Innovation confirm how many are located in each Councillor division and the timetable for upgrading those remaining 15,000 lights to LED?</p> <p>Response from the Cabinet Member for Corporate Services and Innovation</p> <p>Works are ongoing and will be completed in two years time.</p> <p>The remaining non LED lights are on many roads which have been built or adopted since the start of the PFI contract. Outside of these adoptions, the remaining roads are those with the lowest energy use, as our previous upgrade programmes targeted the roads with lighting systems that used the most energy, which would therefore save the most carbon and money.</p> <p>The programme of 15,000 lights are spread across the county and I have asked the team to send you details of the lights within your division.</p>
	<p>Question from Cllr Julie Brociek-Coulton</p>

7.9	<p>Can the Cabinet Member for Corporate Services and Innovation confirm what actions are being taken to ensure the property and grounds of the Angel Road Junior School site does not fall into further disrepair?</p> <p>Response from the Cabinet Member for Corporate Services and Innovation / Children's Services</p> <p>As previously indicated to Members, the responsibility for the site and buildings at Angel Road at present remains with the Evolution Academy Trust (EAT) under its academy lease. However, we have been working with the EAT on the basis the site will return to NCC, acknowledging that the Multi-Academy Trust has Secretary of State for Education permission to surrender the lease once the conditions are met.</p> <p>As a result, we have worked with EAT to specify the required level of security on the site, set out by NCC insurers, so when it does return to the NCC Estate, it will not require additional works to secure. When the buildings and site are surrendered back to the County Council, officers from Children's Services and Corporate Property Team will visit and agree an appropriate monitoring schedule.</p> <p>We will commission any works to the ground periodically to ensure it remains relatively tidy.</p>
7.10	<p>Question from Cllr Chrissie Rumsby</p> <p>Can the Leader confirm the carbon impact of reintroducing the "Your Norfolk" magazine being sent to every household in Norfolk and how this is being measured?</p> <p>Response from the Leader and Cabinet Member for Strategy and Governance</p> <p>Your Norfolk has been reintroduced in paper format, acknowledging not all households have access to digital means, to give residents essential information regarding winter issues and to ensure we reached every household in the County.</p> <p>We have sought further details from our printing and distribution suppliers and we will provide further information as we receive it. We believe any impact is outweighed by the benefits of supplying useful council information to all county residents, which digital channels cannot achieve on their own. We have already received a positive reaction to the reintroduced print edition.</p>
7.11	<p>Question from Cllr Colleen Walker</p> <p>Since my question last month, the people of Hemsby have seen further permanent loss and damage to the coastline, creating continuing anguish and uncertainty. The Council resolved to write to the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs – please can you share the letter that was sent and the response received?</p> <p>Response from the Cabinet Member for Environment and Waste</p> <p>Thank you for your question. This matter was debated fully at the Scrutiny committee and there was a resolution to write to government concerning the appointment of a Coastal and Flood Minister. This will be brought before Council this month for debate and should it be agreed a letter will be sent from the Leader of the Council to the Secretary of State. A copy will be shared with members at that time</p>

Cabinet

Item No: 8

Report Title: Improvements to Norfolk Fire Stations

Date of Meeting: 10 January 2024

Responsible Cabinet Member: Cllr Jane James (Corporate Services and Innovation) and Cllr Margaret Dewsbury (Cabinet Member for Communities & Partnerships)

Responsible Director: Ceri Sumner (Chief Fire Officer) and Grahame Bygrave (Executive Director of Community & Environmental Services)

Is this a Key Decision? Yes

If this is a Key Decision, date added to the Forward Plan of Key Decisions: 07 December 2023

Executive Summary / Introduction from Cabinet Member

Norfolk County Council (NCC) is committed to delivering a first-class fire and rescue service for the communities in Norfolk. Recently, significant funding has been provided by the Council to introduce new modern fire engines, equipment, and new training towers.

In addition to first class kit and equipment, we also want to ensure Norfolk's fire stations keep pace with changing needs and demonstrate the value our communities place in our firefighters, as well as ensuring we are compliant with the Equalities Act 2010. Significant investment and improvements have been made to the Fire and Rescue estate over the last few years, and there are several ongoing projects which enhance the operating environment for the service. These include:

- Improvements to Sprowston station to provide additional space and training facilities.
- Extension at Thetford to provide an additional appliance bay, compressor and training facilities.
- Planned development of a logistics hub at Wymondham fire station.

However, we have also recognised some presenting and emerging issues to be addressed. Norfolk has the lowest proportion of female firefighters in England and the provision of adequate facilities is important in attracting and retaining women into this profession. Concerns are also emerging around appropriate zoning to ensure clean workspaces, free from contaminants.

Over the summer of 2023 a survey was conducted across the fire and rescue estate, which concluded that investment is required to proactively bring our fire stations up to the standard needed for a modern workplace.

Recommendations:

- 1. To approve reallocation of existing capital funding for the first phase of the programme totalling £2m for the financial year 2024/25**
- 2. Approve in principle the funding requirement of an additional £2m capital for phase 2 for the financial year 2025/26, which will require separate Cabinet approval.**
- 3. Agree in principle the third phase, which will commence post-2026, as this will be rolled out as part of the decarbonisation programme and offer learning from the first two phases. This is estimated to require a further £4.5m. Similar to 2025/26 funding, this will require separate Cabinet approval.**

1. Background and Purpose

- 1.1 Norfolk County Council's Strategic Property Asset Management Framework 2021/22 to 2026/27 objective is to provide the right property, fit for purpose, in the right place, to meet current service delivery needs and to plan for the future.
- 1.1 To meet this objective for Norfolk Fire and Rescue Service (NFRS), the Corporate Property Team undertook a property review to meet the service's policy objectives and concerns around adequate provision for female firefighters and emerging research on carcinogenic contaminants.
- 1.2 MOPA architects were commissioned and over the summer of 2023 a professional services team visited all NFRS fire stations, and the training centre at Bowthorpe, to undertake a visual inspection of the accessible areas of each building and site.
- 1.3 Within the overarching brief of equality and contaminants, the team reported against 8 areas:
 - layout and zoning,
 - spatial use,

- inclusion and access,
- building user journeys,
- healthy workplace,
- safe use of the sites,
- staff wellbeing and amenities.

This is believed to be one of the most comprehensive reviews undertaken in a fire and rescue estate in the country.

- 1.4 The profile of the fire service has changed significantly over the years, with an increasing number of female firefighters. 36% of new recruits on the last wholetime firefighter course were female and there is an ongoing national and local drive to ensure fire services are representative of the communities they serve. Norfolk has the lowest proportion of female firefighters in England and the provision of adequate facilities to support women into the profession is a key step in improving this situation.
- 1.5 NFRS fire stations are mainly on-call with many dating from the 1960's, retaining some of the features from when they were originally built.
- 1.6 Because of their age, on-call fire stations were predominantly built to reflect a male workforce, with piecemeal adaptations being made to stations through the introduction of female facilities. This often meant that female facilities evolved in an ad hoc way, often opening directly onto muster bays. These are not fit for purpose and do not provide adequate provision for female staff.
- 1.7 It is therefore unsurprising that the survey concluded that none of the fire stations have equitable facilities and that due to their age and condition *a majority of the stations appear decoratively tired with evidence of redundancy in services or fixtures.*
- 1.8 The surveyors all commented on a great sense of pride and interest from an engaged workforce but that they regularly encountered staff working in conditions that do not meet modern standards, which we are keen to address.

2. Proposal

- 2.1 Produce a standardised approach to the layout and facilities of all fire stations to ensure the safety and dignity of its users, with a particular focus on ensuring equality and zoning of clean spaces.
- 2.2 Introduce a prioritised programme to improve the décor, layout, and facilities of fire stations to provide a working environment that demonstrates the value of all firefighters and fire staff. The timetable will be programmed and realigned to other initiatives such as decarbonisation of the wider county council estate to ensure best value for money.

3. Impact of the Proposal

3.1 Works have been split into three categories:

- Priority one, for where the impact is most needed (nine stations fall into this category).
- Priority two, where minimal works are required and quick results can be achieved (six properties have been identified as suitable for this category).
- Priority three, which encompasses the remainder of the sites and will be rolled out at the same time as the planned decarbonisation works. The Corporate Property Team will separately submit a bid to bring forward decarbonisation funding for four properties as undertaking the works at the same time will minimise disruption and deliver best value.

3.2 In addition to demonstrating the value our communities place in their firefighters and fire staff, investment in improving Norfolk fire stations will also result in:

- Compliance with the Equalities Act 2010; with all fire stations having equitable male and female welfare facilities.
- Compliance with the Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations 2002; with all fire stations having zones to reduce the risk of spreading any contaminants to as low as reasonably practicable (this is emergent work where additional requirements could be legislated over the lifespan of the programme).
- Compliance with The Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations 1992; with all fire stations having reasonable indoor temperatures and ventilation.
- A gym area or dedicated room on every fire station so firefighters can maintain their operational fitness and wellbeing (including mental resilience).
- Provision of PPE drying facilities on every station.
- Redecoration of all fire stations.
- Replacement of outdated fixtures and fittings on all fire stations.
- Provision of suitable furniture for all fire stations.
- Provision of cycle storage at every fire station.

4. Evidence and Reasons for Decision

4.1 Survey reports produced by MOPA undertaken during the summer in 2023, identified the works required at each location. These have been reviewed by the Corporate Property team to provide the initial estimates of the capital required.

5. Alternative Options

- 5.1 The comprehensive review of NFRS estate is believed to be amongst the first of its kind in the UK. The areas needing to be addressed do not leave scope for a “do nothing” approach.
- 5.2 For the duration of the programme the Corporate Property team, in consultation with NFRS, will continue to assess alternative options related to collaboration or relocation as they arise, and where they provide an operationally equivalent (or superior) and cost-effective alternative to the renovation proposals.

6. Financial Implications

- 6.1 The initial estimates of the capital required are as follows. For Year 1 (2024/25) £2m as well as £0.923m of decarbonisation work to be brought forward. For Year 2 (2025/26) £2m as well as £0.470m of decarbonisation work to be brought forward. For Year 3 onwards, £4.5m.
- 6.2 Whilst the report seeks approval and agreement in principle on the level of funding required over the next few years, this Cabinet report is only seeking approval for 2024/25 spend, which will be funded from reallocation of existing capital borrowing within the capital programme. Funding for 2025/26 and beyond will require separate Cabinet approval.
- 6.3 To deliver best value and minimise disruption to operational services, the station improvement works will be aligned with the planned decarbonisation programme. This will require a reprofiling exercise for existing allocated capital funding.

7. Resource Implications

- 7.1 **Staff:** A dedicated project manager for the Corporate Property Team will be funded, along with support from NFRS, from the capital allocation above to manage the improvements.
- 7.2 **Property:** As outlined in this report.
- 7.3 **IT:** Network implications will be captured for every station refurbishment.

8. Other Implications

- 8.1 **Legal Implications:** Three fire stations are leased in and will require the landlord’s consent for any works.
- 8.2 **Human Rights Implications:** None

8.3 Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) (this must be included): The planned works will ensure compliance with the Equalities Act 2010 and where applicable inclusive accessibility.

8.4 Data Protection Impact Assessments (DPIA): None.

8.5 Health and Safety implications (where appropriate): The planned works will ensure compliance with the Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations 2002, and therefore help demonstrate and ensure the Council's compliance with the Regulations.

8.6 Sustainability implications (where appropriate): The planned works will be undertaken in accordance with the decarbonisation programme, so will therefore have a positive contribution towards the Council's Norfolk Climate Strategy.

8.7 Any Other Implications: None.

9. Risk Implications / Assessment

9.1 The main risk is around the forecast for the works with the potential for tender pricing exceeding the budgetary allowances. Regular cost reviews will be undertaken to help manage the proposed programme within the approved budget.

10. Recommendations

- 1. To approve reallocation of existing capital funding for the first phase of the programme totalling £2m for the financial year 2024/25**
- 2. Approve in principle the funding requirement of an additional £2m capital for phase 2 for the financial year 2025/26, which will require separate Cabinet approval.**
- 3. Agree in principle the third phase, which will commence post-2026, as this will be rolled out as part of the decarbonisation programme and offer learning from the first two phases. This is estimated to require a further £4.5m. Similar to 2025/26 funding, this will require separate Cabinet approval.**

11. Background Papers

12.1 [Strategic Property Asset Management Framework 2021/22 to 2026/27](#)

Officer Contact

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

Officer name: James Belcher (Head of Capability; Norfolk Fire and Rescue Service) and Jeannine de Sousa (Head of Construction, FM & County Farms; Corporate Property Team)



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Cabinet

Item No: 9

Report Title: School Sufficiency Plan 2024

Date of Meeting: 10 January 2024

Responsible Cabinet Member: Cllr Penny Carpenter (Cabinet Member for Children's Services)

Responsible Director: Sara Tough, Executive Director Children's Services

Is this a Key Decision? ~~Yes~~ / No

If this is a Key Decision, date added to the Forward Plan of Key Decisions:

Executive Summary / Introduction from Cabinet Member

Norfolk County Council has a statutory duty to provide sufficient mainstream school places and this report provides an annual snapshot of how these will be secured in response to the development of District Local Plans. The detailed planning is included in Annex A – the School Sufficiency Plan.

Recommendations:

- 1. Cabinets resolves to adopt the School Sufficiency Plan 2024.**

1. Background and Purpose

- 1.1 Norfolk County Council has a statutory duty to provide sufficient school places and provides an annual snapshot of how these will be secured – the School Sufficiency Plan 2024 supports this long-term view of education trends.

2. Proposal

- 2.1 The school sufficiency plan outlines how Norfolk County Council will deliver its statutory duty to provide sufficient school places. This annual snapshot of how the school places will be secured is created in response to a) demographic change, prompted by changes such as birth rates and life expectancy and b) population movement, resulting from new housing development or migration to and from particular geographic areas. Pupil forecast information is taken annually in May ensuring a consistent timescale, that sits within the admission process.
- 2.2 The evidence used for the identification of planned growth and decline comes from a range of sources, including population data provided by health authorities and planned housing growth by District Councils. The housing data can be based on both their five-year land trajectory and local plan information provided annually. We liaise with the districts at least twice a year to gain further updated information as required. Where decisions are necessary for school capital development, we will also engage with the developers when appropriate to monitor local context.
- 2.3 School forecasting data has been used to inform the pupil movement across the schools' estate. The data identifies patterns in relation to catchment change and parental preference patterns. We plan using catchment numbers, assessing the capacity of schools against the overall catchment cohorts giving defined measurable areas. We take into account the impact of parental preference, but this can be variable from year to year, and our intention is to always provide sustainable education settings in sustainable locations.
- 2.4 Some housing developments agreed as part of Local Plans will take many years to be delivered. Where a need for new places is identified, this is considered as part of the planning process at an early stage.
- 2.5 The impact of nutrient neutrality will delay timescales for certain projects which impacts the timing of any new school build. This delay could also put some further strain on the existing estate alongside changes for fees for the independent sector. We could see an increase of pupils into the mainstream sector as a result.
- 2.6 Housing Growth projected by District Councils is subject to change, so the School Sufficiency Plan provides a snapshot in time, anticipating the **likely** investments in new places for the next 10 years.

- 2.7 Details of proposed expansion projects and proposed plans for new schools are included in the plan in Appendix A. The report includes greater emphasis on the changing demographic patterns against the context of the growth areas, and as a result, an increased commentary and discussion of the methodology to plan for any reduction in school places.
- 2.8 The school's capital programme is scheduled to be presented to Cabinet on the 29th of January 2024, as part of the overall Council capital programme which will set out the prioritised projects to provide new places during a three-year period.
- 2.9 The School Sufficiency Plan identifies the capacity of the mainstream sector only and takes account of census information relating to those schools. It does not include the children placed in specialist provision, where not dual registered across the county, the SEND Sufficiency Strategy outlines this information for Norfolk County Council. The population information does, however, include all Norfolk children.

3. Impact of the Proposal

- 3.1 As a result of this proposal Norfolk County Council will:
- Continue to implement the policies for developing Norfolk's Education Landscape agreed in March 2020.
 - Review our current policies to address the decline in pupil numbers and how we best support schools which may be unsustainable. Our aim is to ensure schools are situated in the right locations to meet communities need.
 - Continue to adopt a pro-active approach to place planning for all areas with demographic change, ensuring efficient use of resources and value for money.
 - Identify any changes to the school's capital programme through the regular reporting to Cabinet.

4. Evidence and Reasons for Decision

- 4.1 The proposed School Sufficiency Plan provides the necessary detail to ensure we secure sufficient school places and prioritise capital appropriately.

5. Alternative Options

- 5.1 The statutory duty is to provide sufficient places.
- 5.2 It is possible to plan for fewer additional places, where surplus places are available further afield, but within maximum recommended travel distances.
- 5.3 Norfolk County Council would then have a duty to provide Home to School Transport. This would add a considerable inconvenience to children and families and is outside of

the Council's policies (e.g., building local communities). It would also add to the existing transport costs, where budget pressures already exist.

6. Financial Implications

- 6.1 There are significant financial implications for Norfolk County Council if all housing developments are delivered as expected. Timescales for building, however, are often longer than anticipated.
- 6.2 Careful consideration will always be given to existing other local school capacity, ensuring we make use of the existing estate before commissioning new places, balancing against growth and sustainable transport costs.
- 6.3 Government grant contributions (Basic Need Capital) funds the majority of the programme.
- 6.4 Developer contributions are secured as part of the planning process and set out in S106 agreements, and these continue to ringfence education contributions for some areas of the County. These also include provision for school sites in larger housing developments.
- 6.5 For areas covered by Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL), separate arrangements are in place to secure contributions for Education Infrastructure. These have been set out as part of previous reports on the schools' capital programme.
- 6.6 The overall cost of delivering all places identified in this plan is approximately £396m. Funding from developer contributions is expected to provide approximately £103m, leaving a shortfall of £293m. This assumes no additional external funding via Basic Need. Whilst the amount of future Basic Need funding is currently not known, it is highly unlikely that this substantial flow of funding will not continue. Historically, we have always received additional funding and, together with developer contributions, the programme has been 100% funded year-on-year.
- 6.7 Whilst the funding sources mentioned above usually closes the gap, a shortfall from both these funding sources represents a risk for Norfolk County Council, for which, to reduce the risk, the capital programme contains a contingency for £30m of borrowing capacity. This mitigation arose following the move to Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) contributions for part of Norfolk, rather than S106, which has resulted in lower contributions being available. To date, this facility has not required to be used, but review is underway to identify if it may be required in future years, depending upon the level of Basic Need grant funding from Government.
- 6.8 Financial planning for providing new school places is set out as part of the capital programme scheduled to be presented to cabinet on the 29th of January 2024, this will set out the prioritised projects for the next three years and will take into account available funding.

6.9 The Greater Norwich Growth Board last year approved the use of £2.5M CIL income for the Greater Norwich area to be used to offset the borrowing required to deliver schools infrastructure projects in Greater Norwich.

6.10 The Government is proposing to change the Community Infrastructure Levy and introduce the Infrastructure Levy that could fund a wider selection of projects, this may impact the available funds for education. In addition, the current proposal is to fund commitments based on the property sale values which would mean funding would be released after the development has reached near completion. This would increase the potential for NCC having to forward fund projects with no certainty on the available funding that could yield from the development. This proposal remains at government consultation stage, which we have submitted a response highlighting the increased risk on Local Authorities.

7. Resource Implications

7.1 Staff: The place planning duties will continue to be delivered with current staffing levels.

7.2 Property: There are no changes to the requirements for office space.

7.3 IT: There are no changes to the requirements for IT.

8. Other Implications

8.1 Legal Implications: none identified.

8.2 Human Rights Implications: none identified.

8.3 Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) (this must be included):

New school places are planned to ensure that provision has no adverse impact on young people including those with disabilities, gender reassignment, marriage/civil partnerships, pregnancy/maternity, race, religious belief, sex, or sexual orientation where appropriate. In particular it seeks to ensure that every school has sufficient capacity for strong leadership and governance to safeguard a good education for all. For some children, a place outside the mainstream may be the appropriate way to safeguard a good education. SEND Sufficiency and the Local First Inclusion Programme determine these places for Norfolk County Council.

8.4 Data Protection Impact Assessments (DPIA): none identified.

8.5 Health and Safety implications (where appropriate): none identified.

8.6 Sustainability implications (where appropriate):

- 8.6.1 Large scale housing developments require associated infrastructure, including school places to create sustainable communities. The School Sufficiency Plan in Annex A sets out how these are likely to be secured in Norfolk. This will ensure that places are available locally and the need for travel and Home to School Transport is minimised.
- 8.6.2 Section 4 of the School Sufficiency Plan sets out how to address provision of places that becomes unsustainable, usually through demographic decline.
- 8.6.3 NCC has a target to carbon net zero by 2030 and this has implications for all new building design and schools as a subset. This is addressed within the Schools Capital Programme.

8.7 Any Other Implications: none identified.

9. Risk Implications / Assessment

- 9.1 The key risk for Norfolk County Council is a failure to provide sufficient school places. The School Sufficiency Plan sets out how this will be mitigated.

10. Select Committee Comments

- 10.1 This is a routine (annual) report, not usually discussed at a select committee.

11. Recommendations

- 1. Cabinet resolves to adopt the School Sufficiency Plan 2024.

12. Background Papers

- 12.1 Schools' capital programme, May 2022
- 12.2 [Education Landscape and School Place Sufficiency](#), January 2020, page 757

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Norfolk County Council

School Sufficiency Plan

2024

This year's School Sufficiency Plan has been dedicated to our dear friend and colleague Jane Blackwell who very sadly lost her life earlier this year. Jane served 21 years within the Local Authority with dedication and commitment. For her last 10 years, up until she retired, Jane ensured education places were safeguarded and secured for children and young people across Norfolk. We would like to recognise Jane's legacy which will last with the continued work associated with the planned new school places.



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Introduction

The School Sufficiency Plan outlines how the Local Authority is meeting its statutory duty to ensure sufficient school places for Norfolk children aged 4-16. It gives an overview of the key demographic changes that impact on this duty and highlights areas of interest across the county that could be affected by growth or decline. Our vision for 'Every Child in Norfolk to Flourish' continues to unite the county but we know that success can only be fully realised through the way we work together at a local and community level, through system leadership across the landscape and through sustainable partnerships with one another.

Norfolk County Council works collaboratively to achieve a locally coherent and sustainable organisation of schools by working closely with the Regional Director, local partners, and communities. We continue to foster our existing partnerships with our schools, academy trusts, governing boards, diocese, and other stakeholders to ensure we have the appropriate school places to provide the highest quality of education for our children and young people to flourish.

This plan will show local communities how we expect school provision to change over the next few years. It brings together various information sources and highlights some of the challenge the Local Authority must ensure it is meeting its statutory duty.

Planning Policy and Principles

The Schools Infrastructure Policy setting out the council's approach for education for the next few years is currently being refreshed and updated. It will consider the ambition for Norfolk alongside the national policy framework and local context, to ensure changes to existing schools' infrastructure and the creation of new infrastructure will support a self-improving system that provides the best possible outcomes for Children.

To ensure the children and young people of Norfolk Flourish. Education sufficiency must consider many, at times conflicting factors. This includes the need to:

- Respond to local need, to raise standards, to manage inclusion across the education sector.
- Address the shortage in skilled staff to support our Early Years and School system.
- Manage within a confined financial system delivering our duties as efficiently as possible.

Schools and academies that make up the education landscape will need to collaborate with the LA (Local Authority) to meet the challenges in demographic decline and support processes to best operate the school infrastructure to benefit all children in our care.



Within our current policy, any new provision that is built to meet need is usually two forms of entry for all through-primary, providing 420 places with Early Years or specialist resource provision. This is the national, as well as local expectation and overall, it facilitates the best educational structure. Secondary schools should be a minimum of 900 places or larger. All school organisational changes should promote the inclusion of children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) into mainstream schools. Meeting this expectation can be more challenging, where there is not a steady flow of children from new developments, and it is less predictable.

Capacity across the sector will be measured to ensure all buildings are fully utilised and delivering for their local communities, to maximise the occupancy of the existing estate. We must ensure every child receives a fulfilled and expansive education giving children of the future aspiration to flourish and exceed their expectations. Having a secure education setting delivering at the highest standard will support this.

New schools or decisions relating to existing schools are made with an expectation that schools are situated in the heart of their communities in sustainable locations, giving the ability for local children to walk or cycle within the legally determined travel distances for children in school.

School Organisation

Norfolk's education landscape is very diverse and mixed, it reflects the urban and rural mix of settings that exist. There are 400 schools delivering mainstream education, 18 complex needs schools and 3 nursery schools all contributing to the outcomes of our children and young people.

As of September 2023, there are 350 primary phase schools, 187 of which are academies or free schools and 163 are LA Maintained.

Secondary provision is made up of 50 schools in the sector, 49 of the schools are academies or free schools with 1 remaining as an LA Maintained (Foundation) school.

The most common model of curriculum delivery is 11-18 years with a sixth form, although there are 25 Norfolk Secondary schools currently offering 11-16 study only.

Three of Norfolk's schools provide "all-through" primary and secondary education.

One school provides specialist education for the 14-19 age range:

- **University Technical Colleges (UTC)** specialise in subjects that need modern, technical, industry-standard equipment such as engineering and construction, teaching these disciplines alongside business skills and the use of ICT. They are sponsored by a local university and employers, and often work in partnership with FE (Further Education) colleges and established academy trusts. They are usually for 500-800 students.



Any new schools since 2011 are established as a Free School and therefore set up as academies. After opening the free school will be run by a Multi Academy Trust.

Norfolk County Council works closely with schools, governing bodies, and academy trusts to manage the supply and demand of pupil places. The County Council will undertake statutory consultations on the school changes and significant alterations. The consultation process includes residents, parents, governors, local Councillors, and other community representatives all with an interest in the proposals.

Surplus places can also mean the reduction of school provision in an area through reduced admission arrangements or rationalisation of school provision, including changes to existing catchment areas. Any review of school provision whether it be, opening, closing, amalgamating, expanding, or contracting of schools will be led by forecast information or organisation/structure changes. We will try to ensure that there is the right pupil places or pupil demand that exists.

Duties and Legislation

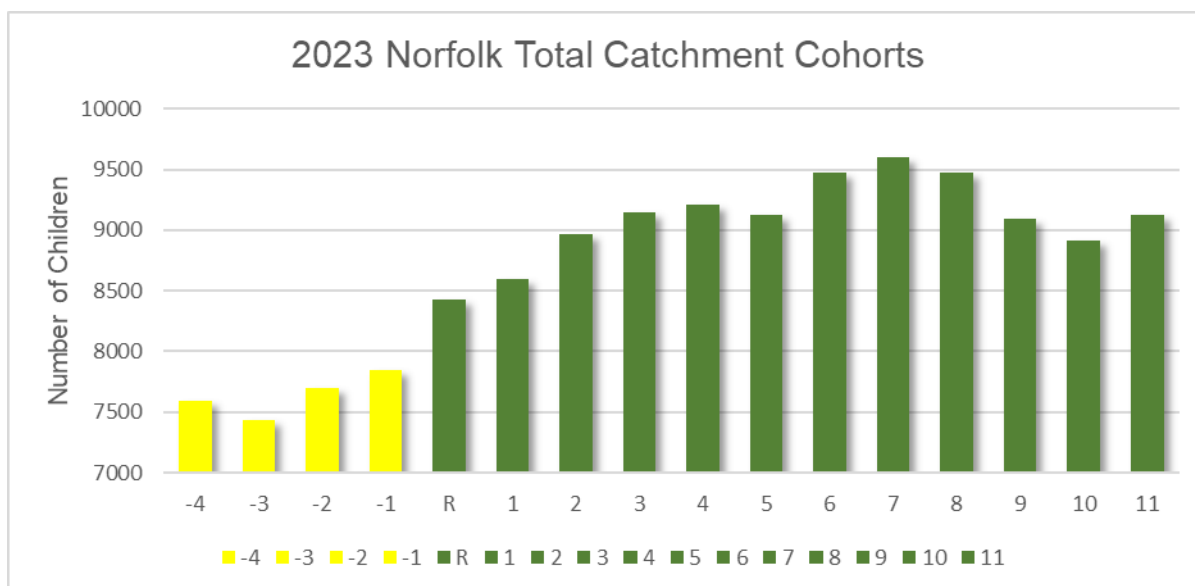
Set out below is a list of key national legislation affecting school organisation and place planning.

- Ensure sufficient schools places to meet demand (Education Act 1996)
- Increase opportunities for parental choice (Education and Inspections Act 2006)
- Ensure fair access to educational opportunity (Education and Inspections Act 2006)
- Working Together to Safeguard Children (2018)
- The Children Act 1989 Guidance and Regulations Vol 2
- Equality Act 2010: Advice for schools
- Childrens and Families Act (2014)
- School Admission Code

Pupil Population

Norfolk's pupil population has been in decline for some time, this was first highlighted to schools in 2019 when it was evident the birth rate was starting to fall. The previous peak in pupil population occurred in 2003 and these pupils entered the primary phase around 2007/2008. Since this period numbers have gradually been reducing with some recovery, but now continue to fall and reach an all-time low of approximately 7400 pupils.

(Graph 1 Norfolk Total Pupil Population, indicating total catchment numbers by cohort – data taken from NHS (National Health Service) Health data for Norfolk)



The data shows the existing higher cohorts of the primary phase sector transitioning through into the secondary phases, following September 2023 admission round we will have one final year of higher numbers expected. This will impact different areas and schools differently and will present a challenge as the affect is not sustained for a long period in the secondary phase. School's Infrastructure colleagues have been working with Post 16 education colleagues to assess how these increased numbers may be accommodated across the existing Post 16 provision.

Based on the current trajectory of birth numbers the primary phase will continue to see reduced numbers entering the reception cohort and as a result, overtime, the older cohorts reducing, this will have quite different and significant effects on settings in different communities. It does impact all schools but presents different challenges dependent upon the size of the school. Children's Services Place Planning expects the smallest of cohorts to begin entering the primary phase from September 2024 and the same time the last of the higher cohorts leaves the phase we will work alongside key stakeholders to manage the implications of this and support schools to safeguard places where absolutely necessary. The reduced numbers in the preschool and early years sectors will also have a considerable impact on early years settings presenting its own challenges for a different stakeholder group.

Norfolk schools have not seen such significant small numbers as are currently being presented and it will require collaboration across all stakeholders to navigate this challenge. We cannot underestimate the impact this will have on our settings across the region, this is a national trend which will challenge our school infrastructure.

The local planning authorities continue to plan for housing delivery across the county, the impact of the housing market slowdown is not helping the schools currently, and those areas with limited housing are likely to reduce at a faster rate



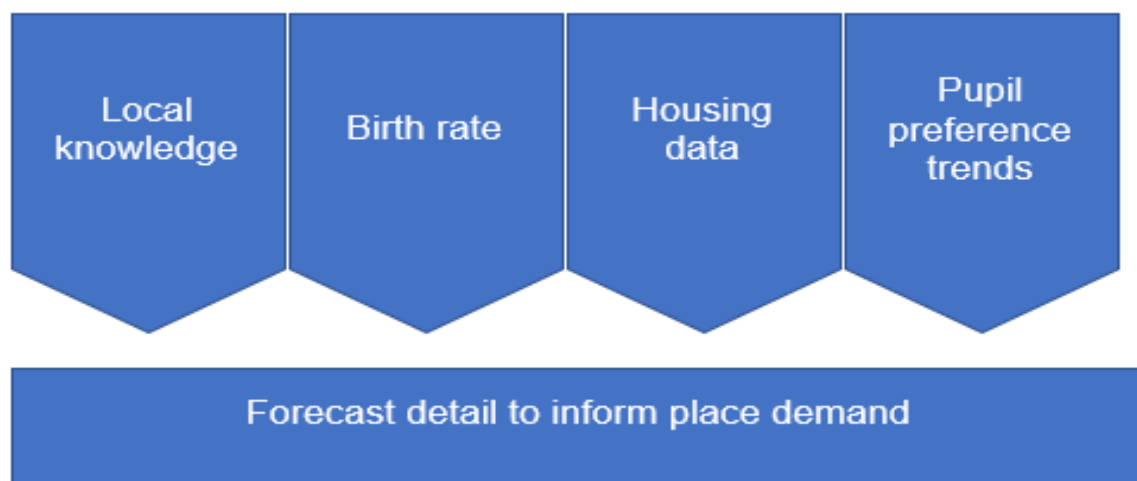
than those in expanding urban settings. We must balance the impact using existing capacity and resource in differing ways to support demand and have a clear vision for managing that capacity for areas where the need will once again return.

Approach to Pupil Place Planning

Pupil place planning and provision of additional schools' places is an increasingly complex task with the changes in the school population in both primary and secondary phases. Norfolk County Council must ensure we create high quality school educational provision within Norfolk whilst considering many varied factors, such as new housing development, demographic change, individual school status within a system where schools increasingly have greater autonomy. The size and diversity of Norfolk also creates challenges for meeting the demand for place planning against the main principle for providing appropriate local places for local children.

Each year we undertake a robust and comprehensive approach to pupil place planning that builds and revises the forecasting information, outlining the place demand for children requiring a mainstream stream school placement across the age group of 4-16.

(Diagram 1 details the steps taken to build the forecast for pupil places)



Forecasting for mainstream schools are split across the county by planning areas which is a mechanism required when reporting school capacity back to the DFE (Department for Education) via the School Capacity Return. The planning areas are geographical areas across the county which have several schools both in primary and secondary phase that often interact with each other, they may not always be in traditional feeder school groups, they are arranged often by proximity to one another.

The following factors inform the forecasting for school places:

- Numbers of children living in an area, taken from school census detail.



- Numbers of children attending local schools, taken from school census.
- Birth data provided monthly; detail provided through GP (General Practitioners) registration data (NHS).
- Preference patterns assessed over a three-year weighted average.
- Detail on migration and admissions data is modelled to inform transition years across Year Reception, Three and Seven.
- Housing detail is received from the district, borough, and city councils. Local plan and housing projections from the five-year land supplies are factored in against the pupil data using local multiplier information.

The School Capacity Return once assessed by the DFE also informs a Local Authority scorecard which determines the accuracy of forecasting. Norfolk has achieved very highly against this measure in recent rounds and continues to monitor its performance against the national picture. ([DFE LA Scorecard Information](#))

Planning Process

Norfolk's Local Planning Authorities (including Norfolk County Council) have a long track record of working together to achieve shared objectives. In doing so they have all agreed to cooperate on a range of strategic cross-boundary planning issues through the implementation of the Norfolk Strategic Planning Framework ([Norfolk Strategic Planning Framework \(NSPF\) Web Link](#)) It sets out how all planning authorities will work together to reach the same agreed outcomes.

Norfolk County Council is a statutory consultee on all planning applications which consists of more than 20 dwellings. We apply fair principles in reviewing the need for school places which is set out in the Planning Obligation Standards ([Planning Obligation Standard Web Link](#)).

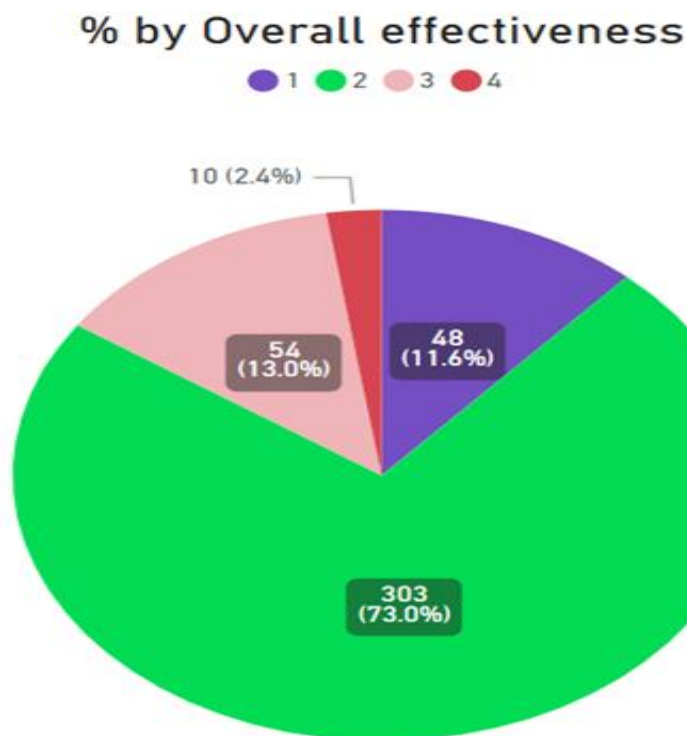
(Diagram 2 – Outlining the involvement of Children's Service in the planning process)



National Policy Guidance/ Legislation	District Council Local Plans	Neighbourhood Plans	Planning Applications
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Responding as a consultee on national planning policy guidance and any legislative amendments. Providing a response, as required, on behalf of Childrens Services to shape guidance and legislation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Responding to consultations on housing allocations and accompanying infrastructure policies ensuring that the County Council Planning Obligations Standards are referred to in the Local Plan. Ensuring that education requirements are included in any strategic housing site masterplans / Supplementary Planning Document and allocation policy. Ensuring existing school sites are adequately protected and allow for future expansion where appropriate. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Responding to consultations on Neighbourhood Plans. In particular on the designation of school playing fields as local green spaces and housing allocations to ensure that school land is retained for future school use. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Responding to planning applications, including pre-applications, over 20 dwellings. To secure monetary mitigation, through Section 106 agreements and the Community Infrastructure Levy, to ensure there are sufficient school places for growing populations. Ensuring on major strategic sites that new on-site school(s) are delivered through developer funding mechanisms.

School Performance

(Ofsted judgements indicated as a percentage of overall effectiveness from September 2023)



A good Ofsted judgement gives us confidence that a provider is safe, children learn well and achieve good outcomes, which means they are more likely to succeed at the next stage of their education.



As of 1st September 2023, 85% of Norfolk schools were rated Good or better, by Ofsted, compared to 89% nationally.

The percentage of secondary and special schools judged good or outstanding remain above national figures (Norfolk secondary 85% v England 82%, Norfolk special 92% v National 90%). The proportion of primary schools judged to be good remains below the national average (Norfolk 84%, England 90%).

Plan Structure

The School Sufficiency Plan (SSP) provides a snapshot of Norfolk County Council's education landscape and how it plans to fulfil its statutory responsibility to ensure there are sufficient school places for Norfolk children aged 4-16. Fundamentally, it addresses two issues.

- 1) Demographic change, prompted by changes such as birth rates and life expectancy and
- 2) Population change, resulting from new housing development or migration across geographical areas.

The plan is structured across the seven district, boroughs or city councils and identifies any growth or decline associated with the following four key areas:

Part 1 Major growth areas which will require multi school solutions.

Part 2 Development locations where one new school is planned.

Part 3 Growth area with implications for existing schools

Part 4 Areas indicating decline in pupil numbers and where there are several small schools.

Breckland District

District Context

(Table 1 indicates total number and type of schools across the county)

Phase of School	All Through	Alt provision	Nursery	Primary	Secondary	Special	Total
Breckland	1	1	0	57	7	2	68
Academies			47		LA Maintained		21



Pupil Population

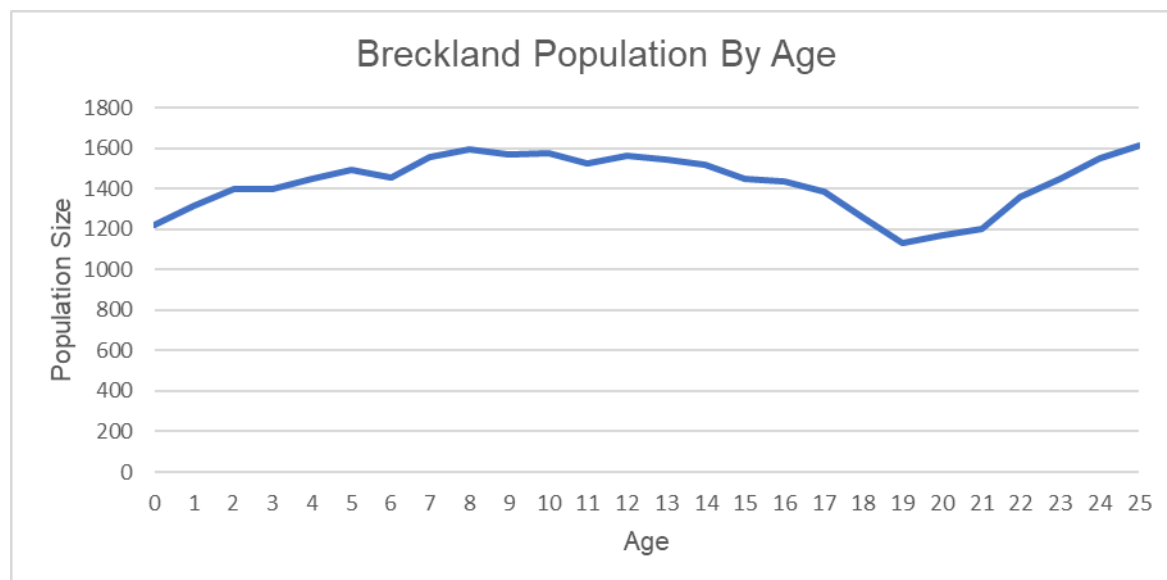
(Table 2 – Mainstream pupil population figures for Breckland for period 2016 to 2023)

Year	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Primary Places	9,637	9,659	9,634	9,557	9,610	9,603	9,425	9,403
Secondary Places	5,856	5,855	5,833	6,018	6,033	6,123	6,207	6,198
Total	15,493	15,514	15,467	15,575	15,643	15,726	15,632	15,601

(Figures taken from September census data each year. Data for 2023 has been taken from the May census count)

The data continues to show a slowing of the population across Breckland in school age children, the higher year groups in primary moving into secondary which is expected to be followed by a sharp decline.

(Graph 2 Population size by Age taken from ONS (Office for National Statistics) census 2021 detail)



Figures suggest a sharp reduction from the peak, in recent years of just under 1,600 children down to 1,200 children based on the graphs detail from the ONS census data of 2021. The lowest age being 19 where it reached a significant low of 1,133, shortly after a sudden increase can be seen.

Breckland are in the process of reviewing their Local Plan for the period 2011-2036, the new plan will run from 2021 to 2046. Over the life of this plan the number of young people aged 0-15 is estimated to increase by only 2.2%, which is a small



fraction of the overall population aged 16 and over. Over the last five-year period 6,018 houses have been built across the district.

At the time of writing there were no further updates from the Office of the National Statistics to give any mid-year review of data which was provided last year.

The total capacity across all schools in the area in the primary phase totalled 11,403 places the number on role across the same group of schools was 9,413 places identifying 1,990 surplus places. We expect the net change of places to increase by a further 75 places in this area with the movement between the existing Year 6 and the incoming Reception cohort. Increasing surplus places across the sector to 2,065 places across the primary age schools.

Part 1 - Major growth areas which will require multi-school solutions.

Attleborough

Sustainable Urban Extension of 4000 new homes

Current local provision – capacity and organisation

There are two primary schools centrally located collectively able to provide 150 places across each year group. Preference patterns suggest movement into the Wymondham schools and surrounding villages impacting the central schools and some outliers of Attleborough.

Latest assessment of growth

An outline planning permission was approved in March 2020 for 4,000 new homes, a link road, two new primary phase schools, community facilities and neighbourhood centres.

Homes England continue to lead the delivery on this large-scale development, time taken in delivering the road infrastructure needed to unlock the project has slowed progress overall. On the 3rd of March 2023 the first reserved matters application for the first road infrastructure phase with associated housing was submitted for determination. It is expected later this year the project will recommence, coming forward in seven phases.

Childrens Services is currently engaged in discussion regarding the phasing and location of the first primary school site associated with this development.



Current pressures on pupil numbers

There remains capacity across the existing primary phase, and this appears stable for the next two to three years, but beyond this, capacity of existing schools is absorbed. Parental preference will continue to draw pupils out of the town to smaller surrounding schools. This spread of parental preference using both town schools and more rural schools is a pattern expected to continue when additional development comes forward.

The secondary school numbers are steadily increasing against the capacity of the building. Numbers for academic year 23/24 were in excess of the schools PAN, the school has been able to offset this higher intake by smaller cohorts higher up the school age range, but it is anticipated this demand will progressively increase through the next few years.

Sufficiency response

The impact on the local schools will largely depend on the pace of development, by both the significant Strategic Urban Extension as well as other surrounding developments which are contributing to growth.

Primary numbers are expected to maintain manageable levels over the next few years, Childrens Services Place Planning will monitor as part of the annual review and assess any changes in parental preferences. This detail will inform decisions in relation to the delivery of additional land for the delivery of safeguarded sites for new primary phase schools.

Secondary provision is expected to see increased numbers flow through from the primary phase. The pattern of movement to Wymondham is likely to continue whilst that is possible, but as this reaches capacity, more pupils are expected to remain in Attleborough and surrounding secondary provision. The growth will impact both 11-16 and post-16 learners as capacity across the site will be put increasingly under pressure. Childrens Service Capital Programme has a planned approach for expansion to meet demand which will safeguard provision and meet local need for the future. The options for expansion and the size of this expansion are being consider currently against the available funds for delivery.



Table 3. Capital response.

Attleborough	School	Scheme	Stage	Cost/ estimate	Date if known
Current Programme	Attleborough Academy (High)	7FoE/9FoE expansion	Stage 1 complete. Concept design underway	IRO £10.0m	2025+
Future programme	New primary 1	2-3FoE	-	IRO £11.0m	2026+
Future programme	New primary 2	2-3FoE	-	IRO £11.0m	2028+

Thetford

Kingsfleet – 5000 new dwellings

Current local provision – capacity and organisation

Primary School places within Thetford are provided by 8 schools, 6 academies and 2 community schools, a mix of infant, junior and all-through primary. A total of 360 places are available in each year group across the primary phase. Numbers of places in catchment suggest a decline against overall capacity, and broadly most of the preference is directed to the town schools, a small number of pupils are moving outside of the town.

Latest assessment of growth

The land promoters for this strategic development, Pigeon Investment Management Limited (Pigeon Homes), have been working with NCC (Norfolk County Council) Children's Services to ensure new schools are provided as part of the project masterplan. Progress in build out continues to be slow with three housebuilders onsite aiming to speed up delivery against previous years outturns. NCC is currently in discussion on the transfer of the first school site based on agreed triggers within the S106, this could happen during 2024/2025 academic year, delayed due to the current slower than anticipated build out of homes.

Current pressures on pupil numbers

There is some spare capacity at some schools in the town. With the relatively slow build out of new homes, and a decline in the birth rate. The existing primary school provision in the town appears adequate for the short/medium term. Secondary capacity remains capable of accommodating the current demand and has taken



steps to increase PAN based on a change in preference as the larger cohorts reach secondary phase.

Sufficiency response

The slower than expected development has impacted the delivery of pupils along with the widespread demographic downturn. Transfer of the first primary school site will occur during the next academic year and Children's Services Place Planning will continue to monitor existing school capacity against population changes.

The parental preference change for Thetford Academy and additional pupils in the secondary phase cohort will continue to increase, confirmation of the overall capacity of the school site is due to be completed by the DFE. This will give a clear position of the overall capacity the LA can utilise as numbers increase and discussion with the Trust will begin if pressure is recognised leading into the admission rounds. The school has already taken steps to admit above its PAN this year and increased its PAN to 290 for the 2024/25 admission round.

Table 4. Capital response.

Thetford	School	Scheme	Stage	Cost/ estimate	Date if known
Future programme	New Primary School 1	2FoE (Forms of Entry)	Design stage	IRO £11.0m (increased as working towards carbon net zero)	2026+
Future programme	New Primary School 2	2FoE	-	£11.0m	-
Future programme	New Primary School 3	2FoE	-	£11.0m	-
Future programme	Secondary extension	Tbc	-	tbc	-

Part 2 - Development locations where one new school is planned.

There are no development locations in scope for the Breckland area.



Part 3 - Growth areas with implications for existing schools

Dereham/Scarning/Toftwood

1000 homes

Area Overview

Dereham has had significant amount of housing over a sustained period however, the pressure for school places has not been evident in the primary phase. Parental preference continues to be evident across the town and surrounding villages, which continues to manage numbers in the area. The level of capacity in the primary phase allows for the spread of parental preference which could impact sustainability of certain schools over this sustained period of decline. The admission round for 2023 indicated 80 surplus places across the reception cohort for the schools in the planning area.

The two secondary schools within the town have some capacity against their catchment numbers, the pressure comes from parental preference, where Netherd admits pupils above its PAN and has for several years, so the school has reached capacity. Northgate continues to operate within its acceptable levels because of the draw to Netherd, the pressure mainly stems from out of area pupils which would be managed at admission rounds if required.

Infrastructure Growth Requirements

The growth is currently contained for the immediate local area based on the delivery of expected housing, according to current forecasts. The Childrens Services Place Planning Team will continue to monitor the implications of the housing against the local school capacity.

Part 4 - Areas of the District indicating a decline in pupil numbers and where there are several small schools.

Norfolk, as a rural county, is seeing some areas with considerable growth yet other areas with small and sometimes larger decline in pupil numbers. The Local Authority needs to plan effectively to ensure that provision matches the place needs. Whilst surplus places can sometimes facilitate improvement through parental preference patterns, they can also be a barrier to success. Surplus places create inefficiencies



in the school system, which individual institutions may find difficult to manage. The analysis below shows the level of surplus places and indicates some of the demographic trends. Larger schools can often manage both contraction and expansion of pupil numbers. School infrastructure officers and advisers will actively monitor the quality of education provided in any area and consider any action that may be needed, which could include:

1. Agree changes to the PAN (Planned Admission Number) with associated change to accommodation.
2. Conducting an area-based review, which could lead to
 - a. Schools joining a MAT or assessing the short-term collaboration via a federation.
 - b. Changing age range for a school
 - c. Merging schools in existing or newly provided buildings.
 - d. Close schools which have significant sustainability issues in the following areas: Pupil numbers, financial viability, staffing, education outcomes.

The local authority needs to ensure we maintain sustainable schools which meet the need of the local communities. We will review the capacity in schools against their overall building capacity and consider the geographical changes that may be occurring that could influence schools in certain communities. We must be clear this could where development is happening lead to closure of schools which may not be assessed as delivering a good education to our Norfolk children.

We will continue to work with schools to identify a RAG rating that they may fall into. We will continue to work with schools to ensure they are managing their estate as efficiently and effectively as possible, to ensure they continue to deliver the best education for their local communities.

1. Norfolk Planning Areas have been RAG rated to identify long term excess school places across each area:
 - a. Green – where there are sufficient places to match the catchment area numbers.
 - b. Amber – where there is 30+ spare places across the Planning Area but places are often filled with out of area children. These areas will be



monitored but with the expectation that either catchment number increase, or housing will solve the issue.

- c. Red – areas with considerable surplus places, limited housing, and catchment decline.

Information is based on the School Capacity Return which is sent to the Department for Education on an annual basis. The school planning areas are used to combine groups of school which have similar characteristics and operate within a similar geographical area. They may not link within the traditional catchment or feeder approach and may not strictly sit in the districts they have been included in.

Amber planning areas

Dereham Planning Area – a large planning area of 16 schools including the town of Dereham and its surrounding village schools. The area is seeing a significant reduction in the number of children moving into the primary phase against the available capacity in the schools. Secondary schools remain extremely popular across the town where there is no issue. The primary phase will need to assess their PAN numbers to consider how to manage with the reduction, some schools will need to assess the impacts against their own viability.

Old Buckenham Planning Area - a planning area with 6 primary schools included in relatively rural locations. Two schools have 1 full form of entry and remainder have a half form or lower. The catchment suggests a significant decline in available pupils, with parental preference being affected as a result. With limited development schools may need to consider organisational changes and PAN sizes to manage places.

Thetford Planning Area – this planning area has 8 primary phase schools and 1 secondary with a mix of infant, junior and primary. The catchment numbers suggest no significant increases which will impact local schools. The rate of parental preference moving pupils away from the town will affect those centrally located schools. Until housing begins to yield a higher proportion of pupils this trajectory may not change. The Secondary continues to see an increase in numbers due to previous growth in primary working through and a change in parental preference. The school does have capacity to accommodate these increased numbers, the area will need monitoring to assess changes relating to the housing yield.

Watton Planning Area – a planning area with 8 schools primary, infant, and junior. The centrally located schools have 3 forms of entry with the surrounding schools largely been half form of entry (15 places). Schools are largely underutilised against an area that has and is having development in the area. Suggests numbers of pupils are moving out of the area, which impacts both primary and secondary provision.



Red planning areas

Litcham Planning Area – a planning area of 10 schools only one school has a full form of entry. 5 of the schools have less than 65 pupils on role. Expected intake numbers are in decline and there is little housing in the area.

Broadland District

District Context

(Table 5 indicates total number and type of schools across the county)

Phase of School	All Through	Alt provision	Nursery	Primary	Secondary	Special	Total
Broadland	0	0	0	52	7	1	60
Academies		24		LA Maintained		36	

Pupil Population

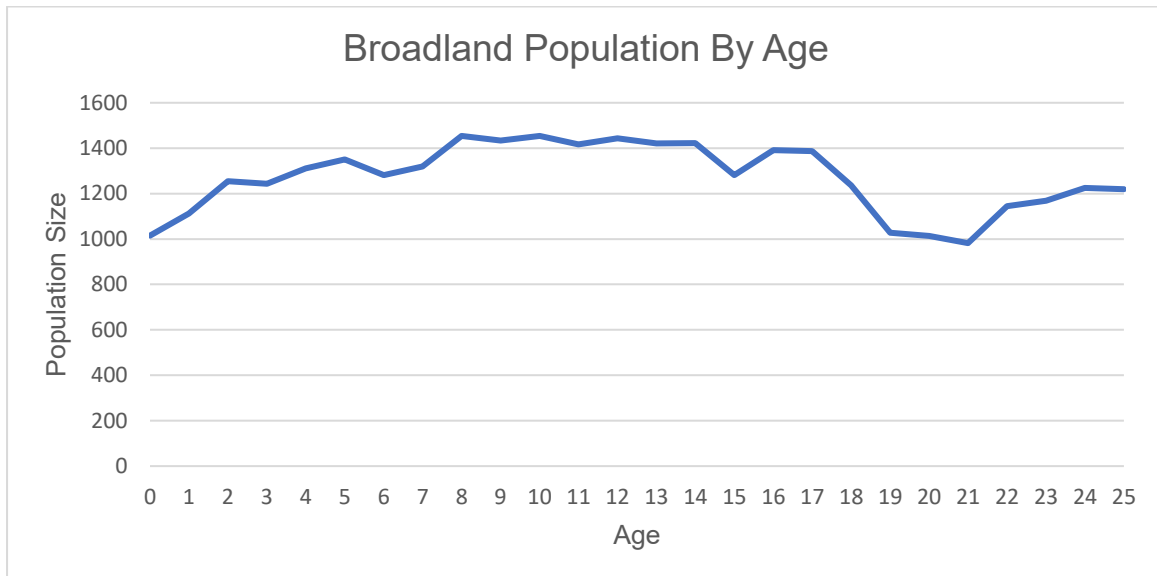
(Table 6 – Mainstream pupil population figures for Broadland for period 2016 to 2023)

Year	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Primary Places	9,854	10,058	10,020	10,089	10,016	10,007	9,864	9,877
Secondary Places	7,134	7,062	7,176	7,404	7,512	7,641	7,797	7,807
Total	16,988	17,120	17,196	17,493	17,528	17,648	17,661	17,684

(Figures taken from September census data each year. Data for 2023 has been taken from the May census count)

Pupil numbers across Broadland remain stable, pupils transitioning between primary and secondary phase education are on the increase. The forecast information suggests a decline continuing to impact the primary phase which may move to the secondary phase in a few years' time. Housing levels are not likely to affect this decline, numbers in the primary phase are expected to be lower than those seen in 2016 and could be as low as 9,000 pupils across the sector, whereas the secondary sector is set to reach 8,400 pupils over the next five years.

(Graph 3 Population size by Age taken from ONS census 2021 detail)



Numbers across Broadland were at their highest in 2011 and 2013 reaching 1,454 children. Current numbers are around 1,012 children under 1 which is slightly higher than the lowest child population reached in 2000.

Following possible adoption of the Greater Norwich Local Plan in 2024 we could expect to see housing delivery increase against those over the past year, based on implications from nutrient neutrality. We could anticipate larger housing developments across the region to commence onsite within the next two years, which will have some effect on the surrounding schools.

The total capacity across all schools in the area in the primary phase totalled 11,458 places the number on role across the same group of schools was 9,877 places identifying 1,581 surplus places. We expect the net change of places to increase by a further 177 places in this area with the movement between the existing Year 6 and the incoming Reception cohort. Increasing surplus places across the sector to 1,758 places across the primary age schools.

Part 1 - Major growth areas which will require multi-school solutions.

North Norwich growth triangle

Sprowston, Old Catton, Rackheath (Area within the GNLP)



Current local provision – capacity and organisation

There is still a significant number of homes expected to come forward across the area known as the Norwich Growth Triangle, this spans an area from Norwich Airport across to Postwick and between Sprowston up to Rackheath in the north.

Beeston Park delivering in the region of 3,500 homes could begin to move quickly once issues surrounding nutrient neutrality are resolved. Rackheath is another significant development adding just over 4,000 homes to this area and extensive community facilities.

Catchment numbers across the area remain quite static but with some delivery of housing will add to the capacity but shouldn't until the larger developments begin to make progress.

Secondary provision currently meets demand, with the additional capacity added into Sprowston Community Academy last year this will support the area until those larger developments begin to reach higher numbers of homes being delivered.

Latest assessment of growth

This is the largest development area across the LA, as well as those larger sites there is significant infill sites across this area which are at various stages of planning and others are currently being built out.

Housing delivery rate has not reached previous levels which is supporting existing infrastructure to meet need, it continues to be slow but could pick up based on changes with nutrient neutrality and the economic situation.

Current pressures on pupil numbers

There are currently excess surpluses across the planning areas that group the primary schools in this area. As development continues, we might see some higher year groups, years 4-6 impacted with some squeeze on places but it should balance across the next 5 years, offsetting higher cohorts with smaller lower year groups.

Secondary covers a vast area in this development area, but with the additional capacity added to Sprowston and movement across North Norwich the forecast indicates capacity across the next few years. This created from smaller cohorts working through from primary once the larger cohorts have progressed in the next couple of years.

Sufficiency response

This seeing a substantial concentration of development will mean we will continue to work with colleagues across the district and in the schools to assess the impacts as housing comes forward.

The forecasts continue to show a decline moving forward into the primary phase with new housing tending to yield older children in later year groups. This impact will need to be factored in to ensure schools can organise effectively.



The sites currently underway will begin to yield children slower than previously recognised which will be offset from capacity across the system, in secondary we will tackle any pressure via the admission round, managing preference where possible to not over subscribe schools unless accepted by the schools themselves.

Longer term we will be working with developers to assess how the planning comes forward and ensure we take steps to safeguard those sites outlined for primary and secondary provision, agree the trigger points to benefit the wider sector and balance against the timing of delivery ensuring not to create an overprovision of places.

It will be important to try and safeguard the secondary site at the earliest opportunity to reduce the need from pupils becoming displaced from the settlement to which they live, safeguarding this pupil's movement into the future.

Table 7. Capital response.

North Norwich Growth	School	Scheme	Stage	Cost/ estimate	Date if known
Future programme	Rackheath primary 1	2FoE	Site identified	£11.0m (unfunded)	2026+
Future programme	Rackheath primary 2	2FoE	Site identified	£11.0m (unfunded)	2028+
Future programme	Beeston Park primary 1	2FoE	Site identified	£11.0m (unfunded)	2026+
Future programme	Beeston Park primary 2	2FoE	Site identified	£11.0m (unfunded)	2029+
Future programme	South of Salhouse Rd new primary	2FoE	Site identified, await transfer of land if required.	£11.0m (unfunded)	2025+
Future programme	Smee Lane North/South	2FoE	Initial site layout options	£11.0m (unfunded)	2025+
Future programme	New high school	6-8FoE tbc	Site identified agree specification	£40m (unfunded)	2026+



Part 2 - Development locations where one new school is planned.

Aylsham (Area within the GNLP)

500 new homes

Current local provision – capacity and organisation

There are currently nine primary schools across this planning area, three schools are centrally located which may be directly affected by this expected development. John of Gaunt Infant and Bure Valley provide 420 places of provision across them, and St Michael's C of E Primary offers 140 places. Secondary places are provided by Aylsham High School offering a minimum of 1025 places across five-year groups.

Latest assessment of growth

Aylsham has seen previous developments delivered which assessments have shown parental preference selecting schools from a wide range of locations, some of those been central to Aylsham and others across the wider area.

The LA has secured a school site as part of the Local Plan policy which will ensure based on this additional development, and any change in parental preference those moving into the area will have sufficient capacity to meet their need.

Current pressures on pupil numbers

Numbers remain quite stable and supporting schools in the local area, but the pattern of children selecting schools out of the town will support capacity in the short term. Centrally located schools are providing for catchment, with the catchment showing signs of decline until the further housing delivers additional homes it is expected schools can accommodate any additional pupils in the short term.

Sufficiency response

With a relatively small housing numbers coming forward Aylsham continues to be a popular area which is why the school site has been safeguarded as part of the 250-home development.

Schools across the area are expected to have marginally higher numbers in later year groups based on the forecasting trajectory, but this should be managed as part of the existing estate and offset from lower intake years expected in the future. Children's Services Place Planning officers will continue to monitor the impact of the housing as it begins to come forward and assess the output of pupils against the existing school infrastructure.

Each assessment made will review the course of action to take in delivering the school meeting the need for the local community.



Aylsham High School continues to draw pupils from out of its catchment and local area which increases pressure on places, but the school has some capacity to accommodate this local need. S106 contributions have been received to support some school redesign and increase of capacity which will be to provide for additional pupils as required. Any risk of over provision of places will be managed between the LA and the school.

Table 8. Capital response.

Aylsham	School	Scheme	Stage	Cost/estimate	Date if known
Future programme	Aylsham High School	Increase capacity	Section 106 contributions collected	-	2023/24
Future programme	New primary school	2FoE	Site discussion underway	IRO £10.2m	2026+

Blofield/Brundall (Area within the GNLP)

Allocation for up to 400 new homes

Current local provision – capacity and organisation

This local area has its primary school places provided by mainly two schools – Blofield Primary (210 place) and Brundall School (315 place). Hemblington draws some children out of catchment and has consistently for a few years, this could be because of limited numbers being available in the centrally located schools.

All schools in the planning area are all through primary phase schools, two being maintained schools and the other two being academies with different trusts.

The primary schools feed into Thorpe St Andrew Secondary School. Based on existing preference patterns the secondary school is set to have capacity to meet demand of the developments in the area.

Latest assessment of growth

Three large housing developments have either commenced or have permission granted in this area which centre around the Blofield/Brundall area. Numbers in catchment appear high but preference spreads the children across the schools. We expect the development to yield the children sufficient to populate the additional form of entry, although it can take many years for the additional children to enter the system.



Current pressures on pupil numbers

Catchment numbers are more than the capacity of the local school's centred around the development scope. Adding an additional 1FoE to Blofield Primary School will ensure those children have a school place within their local community.

Sufficiency response

Children's services continue to work on the land transfer for the school site which will provide a new school providing two forms of entry for Blofield Primary School. This will be a relocation and expansion of the existing school to accommodate the additional pupils expected to yield across the local area. As soon as the land transfer is complete, building work will commence with the anticipated opening of the new premises by January 2025.

Delays with the land transfer process have delayed the original project which anticipated an earlier opening in time for the new academic year.

Table 9. Capital response.

Blofield	School	Scheme	Stage	Cost/ estimate	Date if known
Current Programme	New primary school building	2FoE primary school	Site acquisition and concept design complete	£11.2M (£1M CIL funding)	2023 opening 2024

Hellesdon (Area within the GNLP)

Allocation for up to 1000 new homes

Current local provision – capacity and organisation

Hellesdon has infant/junior schools situated across the area and a large and popular High School. The infant schools (Arden Grove, Heather Avenue and Kinsale) have 180 places per year group between them. These 3 infant schools feed into two junior schools – Firside Junior and Kinsale Junior.

Hellesdon High School continues to meet need across its local area, any pressure is from out of catchment pupils and could be managed via the admission round as required.

Latest assessment of growth

The hybrid planning application for this 1,000-home development was approved in 2016. The two phases 252 homes are on site with a large number of homes have



currently been completed, the phase 3 development remains currently held up with the nutrient neutrality situation.

With the delays expected with the remainder of the site and that contain the school site it is likely to be some years yet before the triggers to transfer the school land are reached.

Current pressures on pupil numbers

There is little impact from the existing housing delivery, and there is not expected to be pressure until closer towards the whole site has been delivered. Children's Services will continue to monitor the progress of the development and liaise with developers on the triggers for the proposed new school site when required.

Sufficiency response

A new school site has been safeguarded through a S106 agreement between Norfolk County Council and Persimmon Homes. With the scale of housing anticipated a new two form of entry primary is expected to come forward, but only when the provision is needed.

Nearer the time assessments will continue to assess the requirement of whether there will be a new school alongside existing provision or reorganisation occurs of existing infant/junior schools to provide for an all through primary school.

Local places within the existing secondary estate will be monitored and capacity will be assessed if any further expansion maybe required in the longer term.

Childrens Services officers will maintain communication with local councillors and school representatives to plan effectively for future demand.

Table 10. Capital response.

Hellesdon	School	Scheme	Stage	Cost/ estimate	Date if known
Future programme	New primary school	2FoE	Section 106 in place and site location agreed	IRO £11.0m	2027+
Future programme	High school	Expansion of Hellesdon High to be considered if necessary	-	-	-

Taverham (Area within the GNLP)

Strategic allocation for 1530 new homes



Current local provision – capacity and organisation

Taverham primary phase education is provided by two infant schools feeding into one junior school, both infant schools have an admission number of 60 and the junior school 120. Taverham High School is also located in the village which provides secondary education for the local area. Part of this development, to the eastern side, is within the Drayton primary phase school's catchment. This contains Drayton Infant and Junior school providing 90 places at each age group.

Latest assessment of growth

This site has come forward as a strategic allocation in the Greater Norwich Local Plan, an application was submitted in March 2022. Work continues to with key consultees to complete assessments of the overall development.

Current pressures on pupil numbers

There is minimal housing included in the existing forecast which indicates surplus capacity across this planning area. With a development expected of this size it is anticipated new primary provision will be required to meet the local community demand once existing capacity has been fully utilised. Schools in the area are managing their planned admission number to meet need and must continue to do so.

Sufficiency response

Children's Services Place Planning is continuing dialogue with the land agents and developers to secure a school site within the development.

It is Children's Services belief a development of this size will require additional education provision to meet need that will ensure a school is a central location for the new community.

We continue to monitor existing school numbers across the area and review forecast trends to assess any changes which may have implications on the local area. It would appear this area has an aging population which is impacting the numbers across the existing school infrastructure.

Children's Services will review the two-tier education establishments and have regard for the need for a single primary school provision understanding the impact this may have on the provision across the village. As the development timescales move forward Children's Services will engage in discussion with the schools in scope as appropriate about the introduction of a new school as may be required.

Table 11. Capital response.

Taverham	School	Scheme	Stage	Cost/ estimate	Date if known
Future programme	New primary school	2FoE	Site location continues	IRO £11.0m	2026+



Part 3 - Growth areas with implications for existing schools

Acle

700 homes

Area Overview

There are currently planning applications awaiting decision and additional sites earmarked as part of the Local Plan that could impact the school infrastructure across Acle. In both the local primary and secondary school's parental preference is high with limited movement out to surrounding areas. With additional housing coming forward across Brundall and Blofield and an increase in preference shown for the secondary, we could see a level of pressure growing in this area.

Infrastructure Growth Requirements

Children's Services Place Planning will continue to monitor the housing progress across areas that have an impact on the schools of Acle. Both sites of the secondary and primary have confined sites but deliver their existing demand, if housing begins to have an impact an assessment of options that may be available will need to be considered, with consideration for the financial contributions via CIL expected. This might put a limitation on any project and solution required. The additional surplus across the wider planning area will need to be considered to not destabilise existing schools.

Part 4 - Areas of the District indicating a decline in pupil numbers and where there are several small schools.

Norfolk, as a rural county, is seeing some areas with considerable growth yet other areas with small and sometimes larger decline in pupil numbers. The Local Authority needs to plan effectively to ensure that provision matches the place needs. Whilst surplus places can sometimes facilitate improvement through parental preference patterns, they can also be a barrier to success. Surplus places create inefficiencies in the school system, which individual institutions may find difficult to manage. The analysis below shows the level of surplus places and indicates some of the



demographic trends. Larger schools can often manage both contraction and expansion of pupil numbers. School infrastructure officers and advisers will actively monitor the quality of education provided in any area and consider any action that may be needed, which could include:

3. Agree changes to the PAN (Planned Admission Number) with associated change to accommodation.
4. Conducting an area-based review, which could lead to
 - a. Schools joining a MAT or assessing the short-term collaboration via a federation.
 - b. Changing age range for a school
 - c. Merging schools in existing or newly provided buildings.
 - d. Close schools which have significant sustainability issues in the following areas: Pupil numbers, financial viability, staffing, education outcomes.

The local authority needs to ensure we maintain sustainable schools which meet the need of the local communities. We will review the capacity in schools against their overall building capacity and consider the geographical changes that may be occurring that could influence schools in certain communities. We must be clear this could where development is happening lead to closure of schools which may not be assessed as delivering a good education to our Norfolk children.

We will continue to work with schools to identify a RAG rating that they may fall into. We will continue to work with schools to ensure they are managing their estate as efficiently and effectively as possible, in order to ensure they continue to deliver the best education for their local communities.

2. Norfolk Planning Areas have been RAG rated to identify long term excess school places across each area:
 - a. Green – where there are sufficient places to match the catchment area numbers.
 - b. Amber – where there is 30+ spare places across the Planning Area but places are often filled with out of area children. These areas will be monitored but with the expectation that either catchment number increase, or housing will solve the issue.



- c. Red – areas with considerable surplus places, limited housing, and catchment decline.

Information is based on the School Capacity Return which is sent to the Department for Education on an annual basis. The school planning areas are used to combine groups of school which have similar characteristics and operate within a similar geographical area. They may not link within the traditional catchment or feeder approach and may not strictly sit in the districts they have been included in.

Amber planning areas

Sprowston Planning Area - a planning area which consists of 10 primary phase schools, largely made up of infant and junior mix. Based on catchment numbers there are sufficient places to meet overall demand, but parental preference is drawing places out of the area which is making schools must adjust their PAN to plan for the impact. Large scale development is continuing across this area and some significant development will come forward over the next couple of years which should begin to fill the school system, schools will need to work together to plan for the short to medium term.

Spixworth and Horsford Planning Area – a planning area with 4 primary phase schools, 1 infant and 1 junior. Currently 100 places of capacity across all schools, 3 schools with less than half form of entry are expecting lower than their indicated Reception PAN. Schools will need to adjust future planning to accommodate the parental preference and falling roles in this area.

Red planning areas

Reepham Planning Area – a planning area with 8 primary schools and 1 secondary school. Each of the primary schools have 1FoE or less, and 4 of the primary schools have continued to admit fewer than 15 pupils over a sustained period. The secondary school draws children from a wide area, local catchment is lower than intake PAN and the projected numbers are expected to further decline over the next three to five years. Schools must manage their planned admission numbers in line with available residents to plan for the future.



Great Yarmouth Borough Council

District Context

(Table 12 indicates total number and type of schools across the county)

Phase of School	All Through	Alt provision	Nursery	Primary	Secondary	Special	Total
Great Yarmouth	0	0	0	30	6	2	38
Academies		25		LA Maintained		13	

Pupil Population

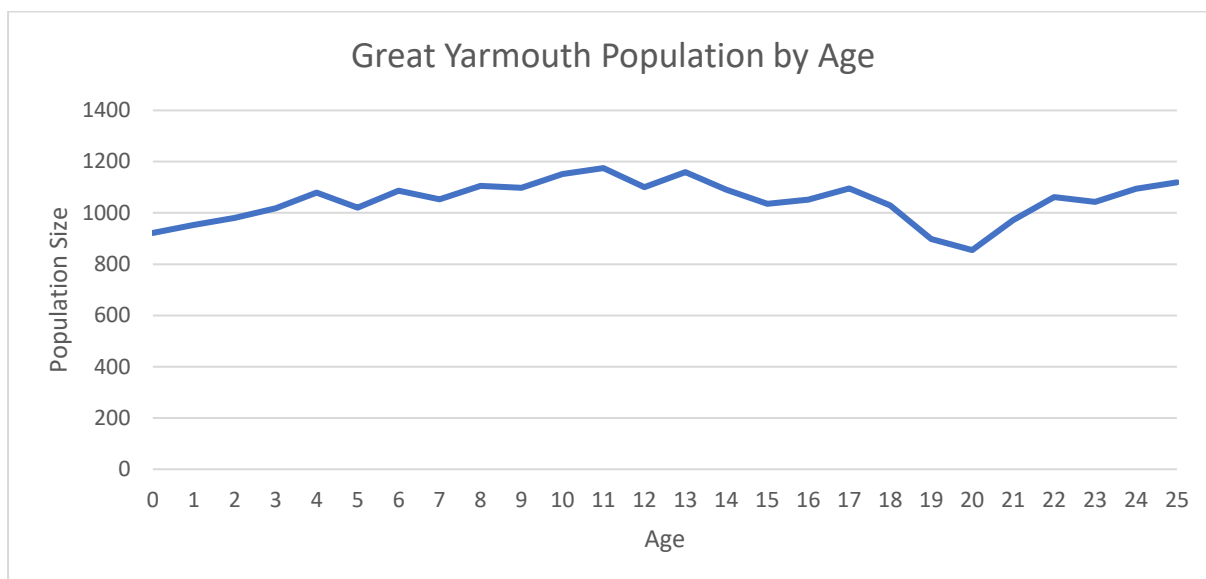
(Table 13 – Mainstream pupil population figures for Great Yarmouth for period 2016 to 2023)

Year	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Primary Places	7,748	7,901	7,781	7,704	7,634	7,601	7,554	7,605
Secondary Places	5,008	4,988	5,057	5,141	5,117	5,269	5,308	5,245
Total	12,756	12,889	12,838	12,845	12,751	12,870	12,862	12,850

(Figures taken from September census data each year. Data for 2023 has been taken from the May census count)

Primary numbers appear to show the apparent drop from 2017, and since 2020 those numbers have stayed relatively stable. The secondary phase suggests a steep increase from 2017 reaching a peak in 2022. The numbers for 2023 have been taken from the May census where we should expect to see a consistent or increasing position between September and May numbers, but the figures indicate something different. Based on the three census dates we see a reverse in both phases of the expected trend but continue to expect an increase of pupils moving across into secondary from the primary phase. This is largely due to increased housing and higher numbers in later year groups. The secondary sector is expected to reach a peak of 5,470 pupils by 2027 and primary numbers may fall following the 2023 academic year.

(Graph 4 Population size by Age taken from ONS census 2021 detail)



The highest cohort size reported via the ONS data suggests those pupils aged 11 being the highest in 2021, and from then on, those earlier cohorts sizes reduce over time. The proposed trajectory of decline does not show the level of decline experienced in this area in 2001 when there only appeared to be 855 children in this cohort, reducing numbers in the early years sector are a little higher than this all-time low, but we are yet to see how that continues.

This information does not include any effects of housing growth which is expected to be delivered over the life of the Local Plan.

The Local Plan is currently in Regulation 18 consultation stage with further drafts due later in 2023, when additional housing targets will be set. The last plan aimed to deliver 5,300 homes across the plan period and at the last count 2,489 homes had been delivered. Its anticipated further housing will come forward in the southern and northern parts of the Borough which will have some impact on those schools more closely situated.

The total capacity across all schools in the area in the primary phase totalled 8,701 places the number on role across the same group of schools was 7,605 places identifying 1,096 surplus places. We expect the net change of places to increase by a further 204 places in this area with the movement between the existing Year 6 and the incoming Reception cohort. Increasing surplus places across the sector to 1,300 places across the primary age schools.



Part 1 - Major growth areas which will require multi-school solutions.

There are no developments that fall within this category across Great Yarmouth.

Part 2 - Development locations where one new school is planned.

Bradwell

1000 new homes

Current local provision – capacity and organisation

The catchment schools for this new development are Hillside, Homefield and Woodlands Primary Schools who provide 120 places between them for each year group and share a large catchment area. The three schools are at very close to capacity, with little ability to deal with any in year movement of pupils. All local children are provided a place with some out of catchment children not able to have their first-choice preference met. The catchment secondary school is Lynn Grove Academy we need to assess their capacity as the development continues to build, to ensure sufficient places for local children.

Latest assessment of growth

The housing delivery has reached a point which meets criteria determined within the S106 agreement to schedule transfer of the school site and associated services. Norfolk County Council Children's Services are currently negotiating the trigger point to finalise the legal transfer with Persimmon.

Current pressures on pupil numbers

NCC officers are aware the pressure for places can take some time to yield the pupils that will need accommodating in the new school provision. We continue to assess the data and look at the options of provision that need to be delivered to meet the local need. In year admissions is causing a level of pressure in this area as the housing is inhabited which is causing a level of pressure for local residents. Conversations have occurred with the local schools and the local officer group to determine how best to deliver this school within the current landscape.



Sufficiency response

Children's Services are conducting a consultation on the relocation and expansion of Bradwell Homefield CE VC Primary that will move to the new site within this development area. The school will increase from its current one form of entry to two form's and due to the confined site provided, it will not be able to deliver nursery provision as part of its offer. The school is anticipated to open from September 2026, we continue to monitor the impact of the changing pupil numbers alongside the demographic changes in area against the wider development that is currently coming forward across the settlement.

The consultation closes on the 20th of October 2023, and it is hoped the land transfer will occur early in 2024 to enable development to commence shortly after.

Table 14. Capital response.

Bradwell	School	Scheme	Stage	Cost/ estimate	Date if known
Future programme	New primary school	2FoE	School land transfer to finalise and masterplan prepared	IRO £11.0m	2025

Caister-on-Sea

Allocation for up to 665 new homes

Current local provision – capacity and organisation

The local area has infant and junior schools which operate as a federation with one executive Headteacher, both schools have a PAN of 90. Secondary education is provided at Caister Academy operated by Creative Education Trust.

Latest assessment of growth

The planning application for 665 homes has recently been approved by Great Yarmouth Borough Council. The site has provision for a two forms of entry primary school within the heart of the new community. The local area does have other sites identified and being put forward within the update to the new Local Plan, those sites could contribute to increased capacity required beyond that currently available within the existing schools. Based on the locations of the existing schools and the new developments pupil movement may be improved by the new school location.

Current pressures on pupil numbers

The birth rate decline seen at a county level is evident in Caister with lower admission numbers at the infant phase which will draw through to the junior school.



To help with planning both schools have adjusted their planned admission number to accommodate the current reduction experienced. Caister Academy catchment will see the decline but preference that incorporates Great Yarmouth continues to sustain numbers within the school's capacity.

Sufficiency response

Children's Services Place Planning continues to work alongside the Borough council to ascertain the proposed impact of the approved application and if future changes to the Local Plan expect to have further implications for the schools in this area.

The S106 agreement includes criteria to consider the need for a new primary school within this development or alternative provide for developer contributions if the land may not be required. Local Authority officers will meet with local schools as plans develop to discuss the potential implications of the development in this area.

Table 15. Capital response.

Caister	School	Scheme	Stage	Cost/ estimate	Date if known
Future programme	New primary school	2 FoE	-	IRO £11.0m	2026+

Part 3 – Growth areas with implications for existing schools

Hopton

750 homes

Area Overview

Development sites have gradually come forward within the catchment for Hopton and currently a development for 200 homes is being built out. With sites earmarked for pending applications and those being proposed in the new Local Plan we could expect a level of pressure increasing on the existing one form entry primary school. The school sits on a confined site with little room for expansion. The catchment area for the school abuts Ormiston Cliff Park to the north where some development is being proposed and this could see pupil movement across into Cliff Park as opposed to the development's catchment school of Hopton. We would need to consider the implications of this effect and how parental preference may be met.



Infrastructure Growth Requirements

Children's Service Place Planning continues to liaise with the Borough planning department on the implications across this school catchment. With the site being very small and the potential for additional growth we might have expected available space for two forms of entry to meet this level of housing yield that has come forward around the school. With it being very early stages in terms of the update to the Local Plan and pending development applications Place Planning will need to monitor the effect of housing across the wider area and discuss with the school and Academy Trust what action is likely to be possible to meet need.

Part 4 - Areas of the District indicating a decline in pupil numbers and where there are several small schools.

Norfolk, as a rural county, is seeing some areas with considerable growth yet other areas with small and sometimes larger decline in pupil numbers. The Local Authority needs to plan effectively to ensure that provision matches the place needs. Whilst surplus places can sometimes facilitate improvement through parental preference patterns, they can also be a barrier to success. Surplus places create inefficiencies in the school system, which individual institutions may find difficult to manage. The analysis below shows the level of surplus places and indicates some of the demographic trends. Larger schools can often manage both contraction and expansion of pupil numbers. School infrastructure officers and advisers will actively monitor the quality of education provided in any area and consider any action that may be needed, which could include:

5. Agree changes to the PAN (Planned Admission Number) with associated change to accommodation.
6. Conducting an area-based review, which could lead to
 - a. Schools joining a MAT or assessing the short-term collaboration via a federation.
 - b. Changing age range for a school
 - c. Merging schools in existing or newly provided buildings.
 - d. Close schools which have significant sustainability issues in the following areas: Pupil numbers, financial viability, staffing, education outcomes.



The local authority needs to ensure we maintain sustainable schools which meet the need of the local communities. We will review the capacity in schools against their overall building capacity and consider the geographical changes that may be occurring that could influence schools in certain communities. We must be clear this could where development is happening lead to closure of schools which may not be assessed as delivering a good education to our Norfolk children.

We will continue to work with schools to identify a RAG rating that they may fall into. We will continue to work with schools to ensure they are managing their estate as efficiently and effectively as possible, in order to ensure they continue to deliver the best education for their local communities.

3. Norfolk Planning Areas have been RAG rated to identify long term excess school places across each area:
 - a. Green – where there are sufficient places to match the catchment area numbers.
 - b. Amber – where there is 30+ spare places across the Planning Area but places are often filled with out of area children. These areas will be monitored but with the expectation that either catchment number increase, or housing will solve the issue.
 - c. Red – areas with considerable surplus places, limited housing, and catchment decline.

Information is based on the School Capacity Return which is sent to the Department for Education on an annual basis. The school planning areas are used to combine groups of school which have similar characteristics and operate within a similar geographical area. They may not link within the traditional catchment or feeder approach and may not strictly sit in the districts they have been included in.

Amber planning areas

Gorleston Planning Area – The Gorleston area is made up of 15 schools, a large geographical area with 13 primary schools and 1 infant and 1 junior. The eastern part of this planning area that falls between the A47 and the river has very limited opportunity for development, and we see numbers for the schools across this area in decline and below their planned admission number. Growth continues across the western side of this planning area and the schools are not impacted as much by significant falling roles. We do not yet see a reverse in the birth rate decline and therefore expect some further shrinking of the population in the eastern part of the planning area and therefore schools will need to manage their intake cohorts to accommodate the reductions to assist with planning.



Red planning areas

Flegg Planning Area – The planning area consists of 8 schools, primary, infant, and junior and one secondary school. There remains significant decline in this area with almost 130 spare places across the schools in the primary phase. The secondary has a surplus of one form of entry on the planned admission number with this trajectory expected to continue over the next few years. There is some development expected in an around Martham, Ormesby and Hemsby but it is relatively small scale and will not affect the capacity that exists across the area. The surplus capacity allows for flexibility in parental preference and can hinder school's ability to plan accordingly.

Kings Lynn and West Norfolk Borough Council

District Context

(Table 16 indicates total number and type of schools across the county)

Phase of School	All Through	Alt provision	Nursery	Primary	Secondary	Special	Total
King's Lynn and West Norfolk	1	0	2	66	7	2	78
Academies		56		LA Maintained		22	

Pupil Population

(Table 17 – Mainstream pupil population figures for Kings Lynn for period 2016 to 2023)

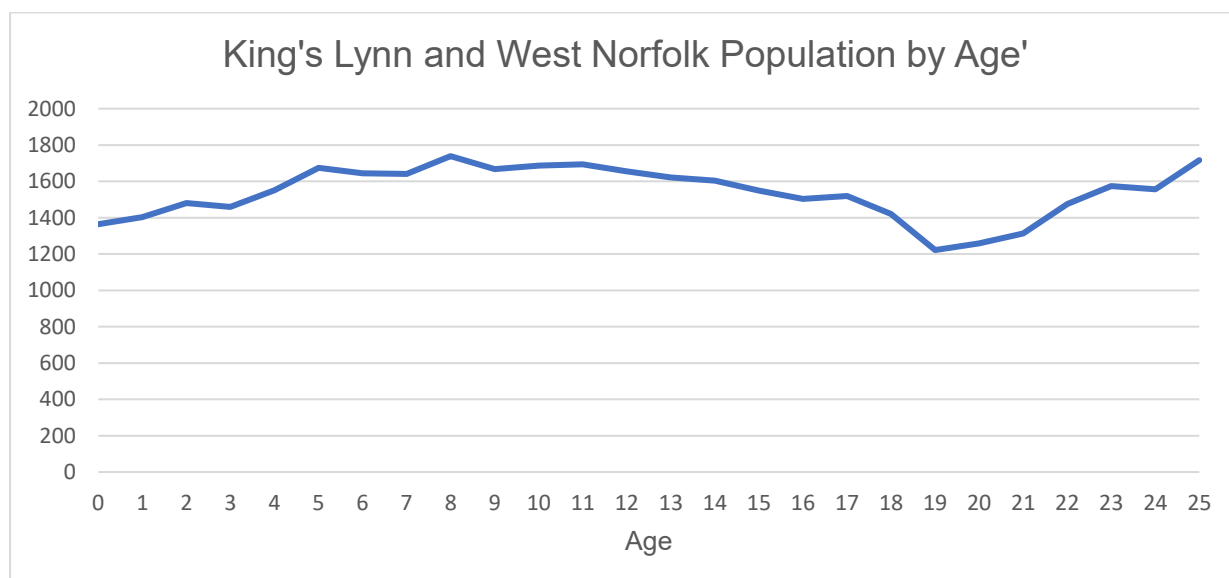
Year	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Primary Places	10,842	10,978	11,024	10,935	10,916	10,835	10,684	10,717
Secondary Places	6,602	6,602	6,612	6,777	6,872	7,010	7,206	7,138
Total	17,444	17,580	17,636	17,712	17,788	17,845	17,890	17,855

(Figures taken from September census data each year. Data for 2023 has been taken from the May census count)



The data shows a primary phase in decline reaching a level of stability between 2022 and 2023 numbers, forecasting beyond this point suggests a gradual decline not counteracted by the impact of housing across the area. Secondary pupils show an increase in pupil numbers from 2019 onwards, our forecast suggests with housing numbers will grow further into 2023 and beyond. This period of increased numbers transitioning into secondary remains for the next three years when the primary numbers behind this period then begin to show a level of decline. This does not in the forecast take account of additional large-scale housing that is anticipated to come forward included within the Local Plan.

(Graph 5 Population size by Age taken from ONS census 2021 detail)



The highest cohort size reported via the ONS data suggests those pupils aged 8 being the highest in 2021, and from then on, those earlier cohorts sizes reduce over time. The lowest cohort entering the school system across this area was back in 2004 when there were 517 fewer children across the reception age range.

This information does not include any effects of housing growth which is expected to be delivered over the life of the Local Plan. Our forecast estimates housing will have some impact against the decline, this will not offset the impact of the birth rate decline over the next five years, until larger housing development begins to make progress.

The new emerging Local Plan is currently under examination by the inspectorate, timescales for adoption are currently unclear. The last plan aimed to deliver 16,500 homes across the plan period which 11,381 homes were delivered. The emerging plan has a target currently of 12,057 houses to be delivered across the new period with large sites expect across West Winch, Wootton and Kingsfleet.



The total capacity across all schools in the area in the primary phase totalled 12,247 places, the number on role across the same group of schools was 10,771 places identifying 1,476 surplus places. We expect the net change of places to increase by a further 175 places in this area with the movement between the existing Year 6 and the incoming Reception cohort. Increasing surplus places across the sector to 1,651 places across the primary age schools.

Part 1 - Major growth areas which will require multi-school solutions.

West Winch/North Runcton

Up to 4000 new homes in multiple phases:
1100 up to 2026
2900 post 2027

Current local provision – capacity and organisation

West Winch village is situated to the south of King's Lynn with geographically a large catchment area and one primary school of 210 places. The development will slightly overlap into the Middleton Primary catchment area, which has maximum capacity for 140 places. West Winch is popular and fills its reception intake each year drawing pupils from other schools' catchments. Middleton primary is further south of West Winch and struggles to retain its catchment pupils, reception numbers began to decline from 2018 onwards. Secondary School places for this area are provided by the three secondary schools within King's Lynn. Secondary provision is experiencing some pressure although it is being managed currently.

Latest assessment of growth

West Winch is a large strategic allocation for King's Lynn and West Norfolk Borough Council. It is not unusual for an allocation of this size to take some years to come to forward. Hopkins Homes Ltd. Has submitted an outline planning application for 1,100 homes to the north part of the overall site. An important part for the development to move forward is to bring forward the road infrastructure to the area which is being led by NCC. It is likely to lead to expansion of the existing primary school with the need for two further schools situated to the north and south of the development area, land has been secured to support these projects.



Current pressures on pupil numbers

The current West Winch primary catchment remains lower than the schools PAN and is expected to remain stable for a period of time. Middleton's numbers in area decrease over time remaining in the low 20's in the future. The forecasting data does not currently include the impact of the large-scale housing development and will only impact the pupil trajectory once housing begins to become occupied. More central schools of the planning area see some effect of housing where housing is coming forward across the central King's Lynn Area.

The secondary schools are working with the LA to meet the demand in the area, they currently have sufficient places to meet demand, but this is very quickly being filled. Plans are being formalised to expand Kings Lynn Academy to meet demand expected in the secondary sector, this school has been assessed has having the capacity to expand on its existing site against the other two in the town.

Sufficiency response

The plan to expand and develop the education infrastructure in alongside this development will come forward over a long period of time and in a phased way. Currently there is space on the existing West Winch site to expand via a further 1FoE to grow alongside the development. This will be managed alongside surplus space in other surrounding schools in order to not destabilise schools. Based on the size and scale of this proposed development it will take some time to begin to impact existing schools, with the secondary impacted much later in the programme. Children's Services Place Planning will monitor the impact of in year movement to assess that trend and liaise with schools as appropriate.

There are contributions being sort that will support the expansion of West Winch Primary and land provided in the north and south elements of the development that will come forward against the proposed phasing of the housing. King's Lynn Academy will grow in a staged way that will meet demand over time. The initial phase will aim to deliver eight forms of entry with a maximum of ten forms of entry being added if required.



Table 18. Capital response.

West Winch/ North Runcton	School	Scheme	Stage	Cost/ estimate	Date if known
Future programme	West Winch Primary	1 to 2FoE	-	IRO £5m	2026+
Future programme	New primary 1	2FoE	-	IRO £11.0m	2028+
Future programme	New primary 2	3FoE	-	IRO £12m	2030+
Future programme	King's Lynn secondary phase	Expansion	Expansion to 8FoE in design phase.	£5.5M	2025

Part 2 - Development locations where one new school is planned.

There are no developments that fall within this category for King's Lynn and West Norfolk.

Part 3 – Growth areas with implications for existing schools

Downham Market

640 homes

Area Overview

There are two large housing sites planned and with permission to the north and south of the central town, and smaller developments which impact on the overall housing yield expected to affect the schools in this area. As with many areas across Norfolk the primary phase has felt the pressure moving through with numbers now in decline and surplus capacity expected. The higher year groups are in transition between primary and secondary, and a change of preference the central Downham Market High school have become under pressure for places, also contributing to this was a rationalisation of accommodation across the site, moving the sixth form provision within the mainstream school area.



Infrastructure Growth Requirements

Increased demand has materialised across the secondary phase with continued catchment and preference growth. The historic movement of pupils selecting Cambridge has reduced due to capacity in those schools and the preference trend changing. The Capital Priorities Group have agreed early design work to consider how expansion work could take place to grow by one form of entry to accommodate the growth moving through the age ranges.

King's Lynn Knight's Hill

635 homes

Area Overview

The outline planning permission was approved after a public enquiry. We continue to wait for a further development of this site and receive detail of the first phases. The development boundary falls within the Sandringham and West Newton catchment, with an element of the site within Reffley' area. Based on the proximity to Reffley any pupils that are generated could decide to attend Reffley before their catchment school, which is to the northeast of the development boundary.

Infrastructure Growth Requirements

Schools in this immediate area currently appear to have capacity, with catchment numbers currently operating below the PAN for each school but they do stay at quite consistent numbers over the next five years. Preference patterns does have impact in area with the Reffley school seeing a decline against its catchment numbers, where pupils choose surrounding schools over it, and Sandringham does see some increase from its catchment based on preference, although is a small school under 105. The level of preference being expressed is causing some operational issues for schools in this area and the additional housing will contribute to this problem and may make some schools unviable before the development begins to impact the area.

South Wootton

530 homes

Area Overview

The housing numbers are made up of two sites one north of the junior school and another northwest, both applications have been granted permission. The area is served by an infant and junior school, both schools are Local Authority maintained currently. The infant site is a little more confined by the existing community, with the junior slightly larger, confined by one side of the existing community and will be



landlocked by the new larger development. For local children there is sufficient places for pupils in the area, both schools are popular with surrounding families. There is also an element of movement between South Wootton families and North Wootton in both directions, this has been somewhat of an historical trend.

Infrastructure Growth Requirements

The expected homes will generate a level of need within the existing local schools, which will impact existing preference and reduce the numbers of pupils coming into the catchment area. The larger development currently provides for a parcel of land to allow expansion of the junior school if required. Decisions will be made in conjunction with local schools as the development begin onsite to secure long term places for local children.

Wisbech

550 homes in Norfolk

Area Overview

The 550 homes have come forward as part of King's Lynn and West Norfolk's Local Plan, this is annexed by the potential of a large housing development coming forward as part of the Fenland District Council Local Plan. The Fenland plan is currently under review and could determine what level of impact this has on the proposed site for King's Lynn. We continue to collaborate with both councils to establish how this could impact on the surrounding schools on both sides of the border.

Infrastructure Growth Requirements

We have reviewed the demand for places in the surrounding schools and undertaken some analysis to assess what solution might be sought if either of the scenarios occur. There was agreement to pass the agreed Section 106 contributions across to Cambridgeshire to meet demand of the larger scale development. If Fenland removed the entire large-scale development in Cambridgeshire, we would again assess the implications of this with colleagues in the LPA and see at that point what are the likely implications for local schools. School numbers are in decline across Norfolk, but this level of development would be difficult to accommodate in both primary and secondary phases. We will continue to assess the options and liaise with colleagues across the LA to develop an outcome that meets our statutory obligations and supports the children as appropriate.



Part 4 - Areas of the District indicating a decline in pupil numbers and where there are several small schools.

Norfolk, as a rural county, is seeing some areas with considerable growth yet other areas with small and sometimes larger decline in pupil numbers. The Local Authority needs to plan effectively to ensure that provision matches the place needs. Whilst surplus places can sometimes facilitate improvement through parental preference patterns, they can also be a barrier to success. Surplus places create inefficiencies in the school system, which individual institutions may find difficult to manage. The analysis below shows the level of surplus places and indicates some of the demographic trends. Larger schools can often manage both contraction and expansion of pupil numbers. School infrastructure officers and advisers will actively monitor the quality of education provided in any area and consider any action that may be needed, which could include:

7. Agree changes to the PAN (Planned Admission Number) with associated change to accommodation.
8. Conducting an area-based review, which could lead to
 - a. Schools joining a MAT or assessing the short-term collaboration via a federation.
 - b. Changing age range for a school
 - c. Merging schools in existing or newly provided buildings.
 - d. Close schools which have significant sustainability issues in the following areas: Pupil numbers, financial viability, staffing, education outcomes.

The local authority needs to ensure we maintain sustainable schools which meet the need of the local communities. We will review the capacity in schools against their overall building capacity and consider the geographical changes that may be occurring that could influence schools in certain communities. We must be clear this could where development is happening lead to closure of schools which may not be assessed as delivering a good education to our Norfolk children.

We will continue to work with schools to identify a RAG rating that they may fall into. We will continue to work with schools to ensure they are managing their estate as efficiently and effectively as possible, in order to ensure they continue to deliver the best education for their local communities.



4. Norfolk Planning Areas have been RAG rated to identify long term excess school places across each area:
 - a. Green – where there are sufficient places to match the catchment area numbers.
 - b. Amber – where there is 30+ spare places across the Planning Area but places are often filled with out of area children. These areas will be monitored but with the expectation that either catchment number increase, or housing will solve the issue.
 - c. Red – areas with considerable surplus places, limited housing, and catchment decline.

Information is based on the School Capacity Return which is sent to the Department for Education on an annual basis. The school planning areas are used to combine groups of school which have similar characteristics and operate within a similar geographical area. They may not link within the traditional catchment or feeder approach and may not strictly sit in the districts they have been included in.

Amber planning areas

Hunstanton Planning Area – There are 8 primary phase schools within this area, current schools' capacity is 1,131 places and being required is 889 places giving 242 surplus places. Parental preference is ensuring some schools have higher numbers than building capacity allows, which impacts the pupil's movement in this area. There is limited development in most of this planning area with housing coming forward closer to main towns and settlements. The high school continues to meet demand which appears stable over the next five years.

Methwold Planning Area – this planning area has 8 schools for primary and secondary phase. 6 of the schools have lower than one form of entry (30 places). There are some very small catchments across this area which are below current planned admission numbers, with limited housing this will begin to impact sustainable class sizes in the sector.

Downham Market Planning Area – there are 13 schools in this planning area, 5 schools near the town and the remainder in outlying villages across the area. 5 of the primary phase schools have an admission number of 10 or less and the forecasts indicate continued decline to the reception number. There are some specific schools which continue to operate below both building and PAN capacity which will impact long term sustainability. Secondary remains stable based on the primary numbers working through. Development is expected with a limited number of completions to date, but we continue to monitor the impact in area on the secondary school as



developments begin to come forward and manage the effect of in year pupil movements with our Admission colleagues.

Red planning areas

King's Lynn Area Planning Area – this planning is all primary phase schools around the central area of King's Lynn. There are 8 schools with a mix of faith and non-faith primary schools. There is expected growth near to West Winch, but more rural locations have very limited opportunity of housing coming forward. Catchments are all lower than the schools current operating PAN and preference therefore is high, as pupil numbers reduce further this will challenge the sustainability of some schools within this area. There are currently 174 spare places across this group of schools, managing the organisation of the cohorts and planning for further decline will be key for schools.

North Norfolk District Council

District Context

(Table 19 indicates total number and type of schools across the county)

Phase of School	All Through	Alt provision	Nursery	Primary	Secondary	Special	Total
North Norfolk	0	1	0	46	7	3	57
Academies		26		LA Maintained		31	

Pupil Population

(Table 20 – Mainstream pupil population figures for North Norfolk for period 2016 to 2023)

Year	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Primary Places	6,055	6,046	5,983	5,913	5,798	5,698	5,552	5,577
Secondary Places	3,938	3,950	4,048	4,139	4,182	4,226	4,337	4,326
Total	9,993	9,996	10,031	10,052	9,980	9,924	9,889	9,903

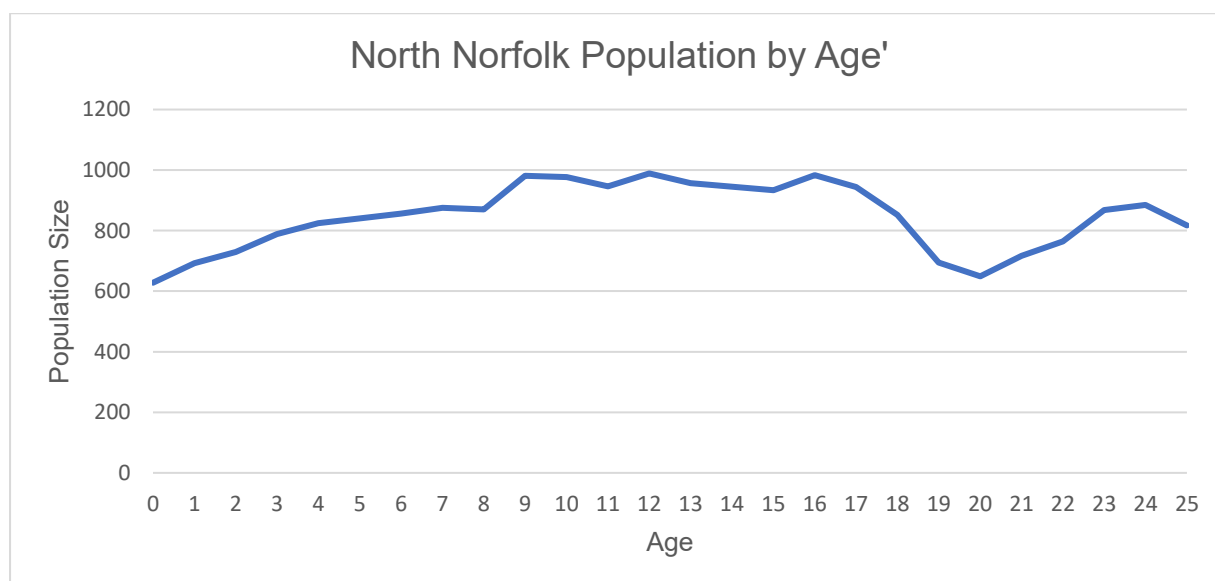
(Figures taken from September census data each year. Data for 2023 has been taken from the May census count)

Numbers across the district fell between 2017 and 2022 with a slight increase shown in 2023, this fits with the expect Reception cohort entering the system for September 2023 where it shows a very slight increase on last year. Some of this could be in relation to housing but also parental preference patterns across the border areas.



It is anticipated with the higher cohorts moving through the primary phase into secondary, the numbers in the primary sector will reduce over time and will only change based on additional development and a reverse in the birth rate decline. Secondary sectors continue to grow while the higher year groups move through but will only remain at increased levels in some instance for the next five years or so, until the smaller groups begin to appear.

(Graph 6 Population size by Age taken from ONS census 2021 detail)



The highest cohort size reported via the ONS data suggests those pupils aged 12 being the highest in 2021, and then we see slow and gradual decline down as far as 693 children aged 1.

This information does not include any effects of housing growth which is expected to be delivered over the life of the Local Plan. Our forecast estimates housing will have some impact against the decline, but we are not expecting numbers to return to those high seen back in 2011.

The existing Local Plan which ran for period of 2001-2025 set targets of 8,025 homes to be completed within that plan period, the housing delivered reached 8,347. The updated emerging plan sets an increased target of 12,096 homes to be delivered across a similar plan period, this represents an increase of 4,071 homes expected across North Norfolk.

The total capacity across all schools in the area in the primary phase totalled 7,643 places, the number on role across the same group of schools was 5,577 places identifying 2,066 surplus places. We expect the net change of places to increase by



a further 185 places in this area with the movement between the existing Year 6 and the incoming Reception cohort. Increasing surplus places across the sector to 2,251 places across the primary age schools.

Part 1 - Major growth areas which will require multi-school solutions.

There are no developments that fall within this category for North Norfolk.

Part 2 - Development locations where one new school is planned.

Fakenham

Allocation of 950 new homes

Current local provision – capacity and organisation

Children have both an infant and a junior school in the town and if they wish there is the offer of smaller village schools surrounding Fakenham. Both Fakenham Infant and Junior School are run by Synergy Multi Academy Trust. The infant school reduced its PAN from 90 to 60 to enable it to deal with the issue of the falling birth rate, catchment numbers continue to show a level of decline across the area. Secondary provision for Fakenham children is provided at Fakenham Academy run by Sapientia Academy Trust. The Academy provides education to both the 11-16 age range and 16-18 range. Catchment identifies higher numbers than their PAN allows but parental preference continues to play a part in where families choose to send their children, allowing the number of children to be accommodated.

Latest assessment of growth

The major growth site to the north of Fakenham was approved at NCC Cabinet in October 2021 and a Section 106 has been signed that secures land for a new 2FoE Primary school building and financial contributions towards the building of that school. The land is being marketed by Trinity College, there has been no further movement on this site coming forward at the current time. Pupil numbers in area continue to be monitored for both reception and year 7, we are awaiting the land being sold and a reserved matters application being submitted.



Current pressures on pupil numbers

With a decline in birth rates across the County and limited development expected in Fakenham catchment numbers have fallen over the last three years which is why the infant and junior schools have adjusted their planned admissions numbers. Parental preference drives movement of pupils across the area with a wide selection of schools being chosen out of the central town catchment. We must monitor this pattern to assess when the schools may need to increase their PAN once again and we will work with admission colleagues to adapt as required.

Sufficiency response

The size of the proposed development will create a substantial number of pupils based on the county pupil yield assessment. Changes in the forecast alongside information received from district colleagues in relation to progress in the development will be used to monitor the situation across Fakenham. Discussions did take place with Synergy Mult Academy Trust and will need to be revisited once further detail becomes available.

Colleagues from both Place Planning and Admissions will work with all schools in this area to assess any changes in projection and take action to support places being secured as parents require.

Table 21. Capital response.

Fakenham	School	Scheme	Stage	Cost/ estimate	Date if known
Future programme	New primary school	2FoE	Section 106 agreed.	IRO £11.0m	2027+
Future programme	Possible expansion to Fakenham Academy	Unknown at present	-	-	-

North Walsham

1800 homes

Current local provision – capacity and organisation

North Walsham includes 3 primary phased schools and 1 secondary school. There is an infant and junior school providing 60 places per age group operated by Broad Horizons Academy Trust and Millfield Primary School has a PAN of 45 operated by



Enrich Learning Trust. The secondary school has capacity of 950 places also operated by Enrich Learning Trust.

The primary phase as a combined catchment overall capacity across the primary schools could reach 135 places across the three settings, but due to reduced numbers in the catchment the infant and junior has reduced its PAN accordingly. The secondary school has high numbers but battles parental preference for areas outside of the town.

Latest assessment of growth

The proposed Strategic Urban Extension of North Walsham is proposed to deliver 1,800 homes across the western side of the town, it will be a consortium of developers coming together to deliver the programme. A site for a new school has been secured as part of the plan which will be near other community facilities. The proposed school will have a site allocated of just over 2Ha and is planned for being 2 forms of entry primary.

Children's Services continues to work with the district to bring forward the project, it will form a key part of the emerging Local Plan.

Current pressures on pupil numbers

As stated previously the catchment numbers have declined across this area over the course of six years. The numbers in area do appear to have reached a particular low and remain static at that point servicing places for approximately 100 places. Clearly this reduction in numbers will impact those centrally located schools and the infant and junior schools have adapted their PAN to manage the numbers expected. Alongside the decline in catchment parental preference appears to have changed reducing the numbers of pupils entering those schools from elsewhere.

Due to the size of this development, it is expected a new school will be required but the new school will be scheduled alongside the existing capacity to ensure the school infrastructure is not destabilised as the development comes forward.

Sufficiency response

A new 2FoE primary school is part of the masterplan and Children's Services Place Planning will work alongside district and developer colleagues to plan the required triggers for the new school. When the development comes forward which may not be for another 3-4 years, we will engage in conversations with the schools in the area to discuss the delivery plan and how we may mitigate the impact of the new school on the existing estate.

The size and scale of this development will take some time to fully deliver, and the school is situated in the central part of the development, it is likely housing will build up to either the north or south of the development so assessing the impact of delivery against the school capacity will be key in long term planning for the area.



Table 22. Capital response.

North Walsham	School	Scheme	Stage	Cost/estimate	Date if known
Future programme	New primary school	2FoE	Site location assessed	£11.0m	2028+
Future programme	Possible expansion to North Walsham Academy	Unknown at present	-	-	-

Part 3 – Growth areas with implications for existing schools

Holt

250-400 homes

Area Overview

Existing and future development has led to assessment of need for a new primary school to come forward. Land has been secured as part of an outline approved planning application which will deliver 110 dwellings with associated infrastructure. The existing school is situated on a confined site with separate playing fields, the new development gives an opportunity to improve the primary school provision in the area.

Infrastructure Growth Requirements

A new 2FoE primary school will be delivered in a central location of this development which will allow the existing school to relocate and expand onto the new site. This will provide additional places to meet future demand across perspective sites within the new Local Plan.



Part 4 - Areas of the District indicating a decline in pupil numbers and where there are several small schools.

Norfolk, as a rural county, is seeing some areas with considerable growth yet other areas with small and sometimes larger decline in pupil numbers. The Local Authority needs to plan effectively to ensure that provision matches the place needs. Whilst surplus places can sometimes facilitate improvement through parental preference patterns, they can also be a barrier to success. Surplus places create inefficiencies in the school system, which individual institutions may find difficult to manage. The analysis below shows the level of surplus places and indicates some of the demographic trends. Larger schools can often manage both contraction and expansion of pupil numbers. School infrastructure officers and advisers will actively monitor the quality of education provided in any area and consider any action that may be needed, which could include:

9. Agree changes to the PAN (Planned Admission Number) with associated change to accommodation.
10. Conducting an area-based review, which could lead to
 - a. Schools joining a MAT (Multi Academy Trust) or assessing the short-term collaboration via a federation.
 - b. Changing age range for a school
 - c. Merging schools in existing or newly provided buildings.
 - d. Close schools which have significant sustainability issues in the following areas: Pupil numbers, financial viability, staffing, education outcomes.

The local authority needs to ensure we maintain sustainable schools which meet the need of the local communities. We will review the capacity in schools against their overall building capacity and consider the geographical changes that may be occurring that could influence schools in certain communities. We must be clear this could where development is happening lead to closure of schools which may not be assessed as delivering a good education to our Norfolk children.

We will continue to work with schools to identify a RAG rating that they may fall into. We will continue to work with schools to ensure they are managing their estate as efficiently and effectively as possible, in order to ensure they continue to deliver the best education for their local communities.



5. Norfolk Planning Areas have been RAG rated to identify long term excess school places across each area:
- a. Green – where there are sufficient places to match the catchment area numbers.
 - b. Amber – where there is 30+ spare places across the Planning Area but places are often filled with out of area children. These areas will be monitored but with the expectation that either catchment number increase, or housing will solve the issue.
 - c. Red – areas with considerable surplus places, limited housing, and catchment decline.

Information is based on the School Capacity Return which is sent to the Department for Education on an annual basis. The school planning areas are used to combine groups of school which have similar characteristics and operate within a similar geographical area. They may not link within the traditional catchment or feeder approach and may not strictly sit in the districts they have been included in.

Amber planning areas

Cromer and Sheringham Planning Area – this area has 11 schools; forecasts indicate falling catchment numbers with limited development that may only affect certain schools. The schools clearly admit children from out of catchment due to parental preference compared to the actual numbers in the catchment areas. 6 schools have below 30 pupils in reception and decline in their catchment is currently being forecast. The secondary phase has some spare capacity, with larger cohorts working their way through the school any development could take some time before it affects the pupils entering this phase.

Fakenham Planning Area – is a market town with an infant and junior in the centre with many village schools around it. There are 8 schools in this planning area, 3 schools have a PAN of below 15. The large infant has managed their PAN to accommodate the decline in area. Individual schools may have some lasting sustainability issues which the LA will need to address.

North Walsham Planning Area – this planning area has 10 schools including infant, junior, primary, and secondary. The schools centred around North Walsham have consistent numbers that appear stable. Catchment numbers in all but 1 school are lower than what their PAN determines, with preference appearing to stay quite static. A large strategic development is planned the LA will need to monitor growth based on current capacity and liaise with some particularly vulnerable schools accordingly.



Red planning areas

Stalham Planning Area – The planning consists of 8 primary phase schools only one school has a PAN over 1FoE, remainder are small rural schools. There is considerable capacity across the area allowing parental preference to be high. Limited housing will not impact the schools, the decline is reduction of pupil's overtime and surplus places not being adjusted accordingly. With the High school drawing from its catchment the lower numbers will begin to impact the secondary sector in the next 3-5 years.

Wells Planning Area – There are 6 schools all primary all through schools in this planning area. One school in this area has 1 full FoE the remaining schools has a half form of entry or lower. There is significant capacity across the primary sector and the catchment for the secondary is below the operating capacity with the school drawing pupils from Hunstanton and Fakenham regularly. The LA will monitor the area and continue to work with schools which may have some sustainability concerns to plan to meet educational demands.

Norwich City Council

District Context

(Table 23 indicates total number and type of schools across the county)

Phase of School	All Through	Alt provision	Nursery	Primary	Secondary	Special	Total
Norwich	0	0	1	34	8	5	48
Academies		31		LA Maintained		17	

Pupil Population

(Table 24 – Mainstream pupil population figures for Norwich for period 2016 to 2023)

Year	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Primary Places	9,292	9,425	9,456	9,427	9,242	9,200	9,281	9,462
Secondary Places	4,932	4,961	5,134	5,340	5,528	5,619	5,781	5,776
Total	14,224	14,386	14,590	14,767	14,770	14,819	15,062	15,238

(Figures taken from September census data each year. Data for 2023 has been taken from the May census count)

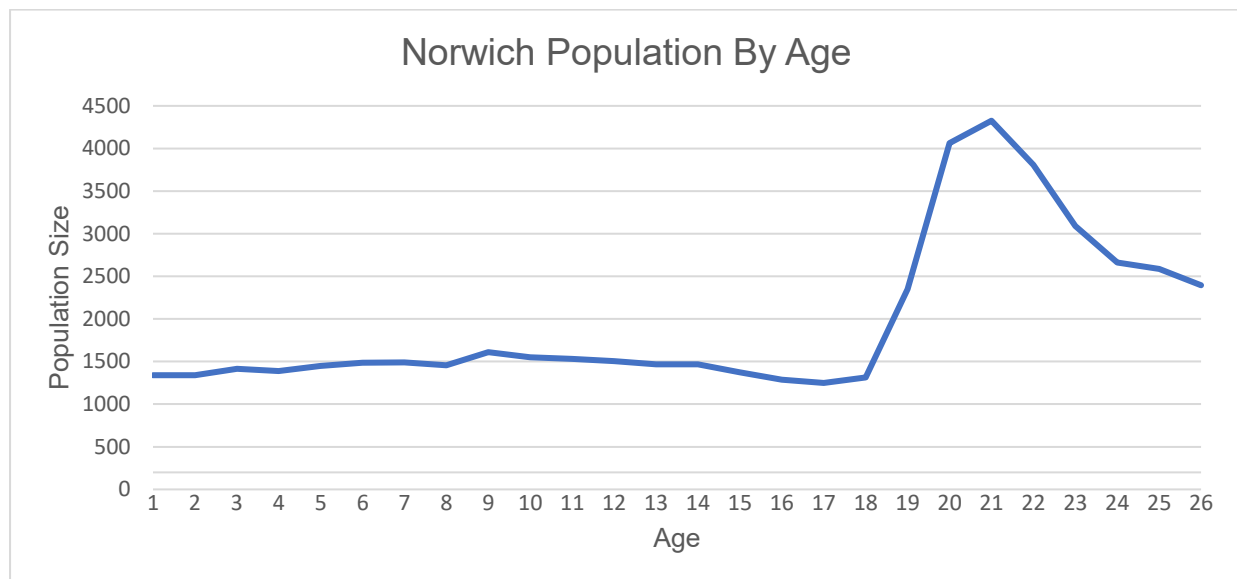
The figures indicate a slight increase between 2022 and 2023 in the primary phase, when reviewing actual cohort numbers, it is not the children entering in Reception



cohorts, its later year groups Year 4 to 6 where the increase has grown over this period. This is a common theme across the county which suggests internal movement across the LA into central areas and more urban areas.

The secondary cohorts will grow further with increases expected to reach a peak by 2027, this tracks those higher cohorts from primary moving through into the secondary sector.

(Graph 7 Population size by Age taken from ONS census 2021 detail)



The highest cohort size reported via the ONS data suggests those pupils aged 20 being the highest in 2021, there is then a significant reduction in the cohorts across Norwich, reaching a low of 1249 pupils aged 16 and then it appears to stabilise and remain relatively constant. This significant high did not impact the school age population it is as a result of inward migration at post 18 for education and employment purposes.

This information does not include any effects of housing growth which is expected to be delivered over the life of the Local Plan. Our forecast estimates housing will have some impact against the decline, this will be expected in the longer term beyond 2027, this is after reaching an absolute low of approximately 1,175 pupils entering the reception age cohorts. It is a very slow and long-term position and similar to those numbers seen in 2005. Even with the impact of housing the numbers are not likely to increase substantially.

Following possible adoption of the Greater Norwich Local Plan in 2024 we could expect to see housing delivery increase against those over the past year, based on implications from nutrient neutrality and delays with the plan.



The total capacity across all schools in the area in the primary phase totalled 10,555 places, the number on role across the same group of schools was 9,461 places identifying 1,094 surplus places. We expect the net change of places to increase by a further 195 places in this area with the movement between the existing Year 6 and the incoming Reception cohort. Increasing surplus places across the sector to 1,289 places across the primary age schools.

Part 1 - Major growth areas which will require multi-school solutions.

There are no developments that fall within this category within Norwich.

Part 2 - Development locations where one new school is planned.

East Norwich (Area within the GNLP)

Allocation for up to 4000 new homes

Current local provision – capacity and organisation

The centrally located development in Norwich falls within the catchment for Lakenham Primary School and the Lionwood Infant and Junior schools and will be quite close to other surrounding schools. Lakenham is a 2FoE primary all through school having capacity for 420 places and the Lionwood schools have capacity for 3FoE across both school sites. Both schools have capacity within their existing buildings and continue to operate under their planned admission number.

Secondary education is provided by the Hewett Academy, CNS, and Notre Dame. CNS and Notre Dame continue to be popular across secondary cohorts and the Hewett has seen some increases in pupil numbers over the last year and could continue to have higher numbers over this sustained period.

Latest assessment of growth

The East Norwich development covers three key areas across Norwich. Covering the Carrow Works, the Deal Ground and the Utilities site on the opposite side of the river. This is a difficult development to coordinate and bring forward and currently is being overseen by the East Norwich Partnership. This is collaboration of public-



private sector groups with representatives of the County Council working in partnership to steer and deliver the masterplan for the site.

The initial site to come forward with a planning application is the Carrow Works site and this could be closely followed by the Deal Ground. We could see 2,500 dwellings from both development areas, of which a large proportion are likely to be flats.

Current pressures on pupil numbers

Primary provision is currently experiencing a demographic decline, early pressure may exist in later years groups. We anticipate this level of development to require additional capacity over time and to meet demand over a long period of time. The Hewett has a level of capacity but is part of a rebuild programme led by the DFE which will alter capacity but is expected to be available to meet demand from this project.

Sufficiency response

Children's Services Place Planning continues to be consulted on the plans for the development and is working with colleagues from the City to determine the required location of a new school which will serve this new community. The school design will need to meet an urban delivery which will be quite different from that delivered previously across Norfolk.

Working alongside colleagues we are working to assess the school delivery and understand further the needs of the development alongside the existing school capacity, which will determine the next steps of planning for this development area.

Table 25. Capital response.

East Norwich	School	Scheme	Stage	Cost/estimate	Date if known
Future programme	New primary school	2FoE	Site location assessed	IRO £11.0m	2027+

Part 3 – Growth areas with implications for existing schools

There are no developments that fall within this category within Norwich.



Part 4 - Areas of the District indicating a decline in pupil numbers and where there are several small schools.

Norfolk, as a rural county, is seeing some areas with considerable growth yet other areas with small and sometimes larger decline in pupil numbers. The Local Authority needs to plan effectively to ensure that provision matches the place needs. Whilst surplus places can sometimes facilitate improvement through parental preference patterns, they can also be a barrier to success. Surplus places create inefficiencies in the school system, which individual institutions may find difficult to manage. The analysis below shows the level of surplus places and indicates some of the demographic trends. Larger schools can often manage both contraction and expansion of pupil numbers. School infrastructure officers and advisers will actively monitor the quality of education provided in any area and consider any action that may be needed, which could include:

11. Agree changes to the PAN (Planned Admission Number) with associated change to accommodation.
12. Conducting an area-based review, which could lead to
 - a. Schools joining a MAT or assessing the short-term collaboration via a federation.
 - b. Changing age range for a school
 - c. Merging schools in existing or newly provided buildings.
 - d. Close schools which have significant sustainability issues in the following areas: Pupil numbers, financial viability, staffing, education outcomes.

The local authority needs to ensure we maintain sustainable schools which meet the need of the local communities. We will review the capacity in schools against their overall building capacity and consider the geographical changes that may be occurring that could influence schools in certain communities. We must be clear this could where development is happening lead to closure of schools which may not be assessed as delivering a good education to our Norfolk children.

We will continue to work with schools to identify a RAG rating that they may fall into. We will continue to work with schools to ensure they are managing their estate as efficiently and effectively as possible, in order to ensure they continue to deliver the best education for their local communities.



6. Norfolk Planning Areas have been RAG rated to identify long term excess school places across each area:
- a. Green – where there are sufficient places to match the catchment area numbers.
 - b. Amber – where there is 30+ spare places across the Planning Area but places are often filled with out of area children. These areas will be monitored but with the expectation that either catchment number increase, or housing will solve the issue.
 - c. Red – areas with considerable surplus places, limited housing, and catchment decline.

Information is based on the School Capacity Return which is sent to the Department for Education on an annual basis. The school planning areas are used to combine groups of school which have similar characteristics and operate within a similar geographical area. They may not link within the traditional catchment or feeder approach and may not strictly sit in the districts they have been included in.

Amber planning areas

Norwich North Planning Area – this area has 18 schools across the area with all phase and type being recognised. The catchment at primary demonstrates the schools have enough capacity to accommodate all pupils, but parental preference is leading to decline in take up of places, with 120 places not utilised. Schools will need to plan effectively using their planned admission number to adjust cohort sizes during this period of decline. It is not anticipated the level of development across this area will counteract the birth rate decline. The key developments across the city may take a long time before they yield any pupils.

Red planning areas

No planning areas with this category.



South Norfolk District Council

District Context

(Table 26 indicates total number and type of schools across the county)

Phase of School	All Through	Alt provision	Nursery	Primary	Secondary	Special	Total
South Norfolk	1	0	0	62	8	1	72
Academies			36	LA Maintained			36

Pupil Population

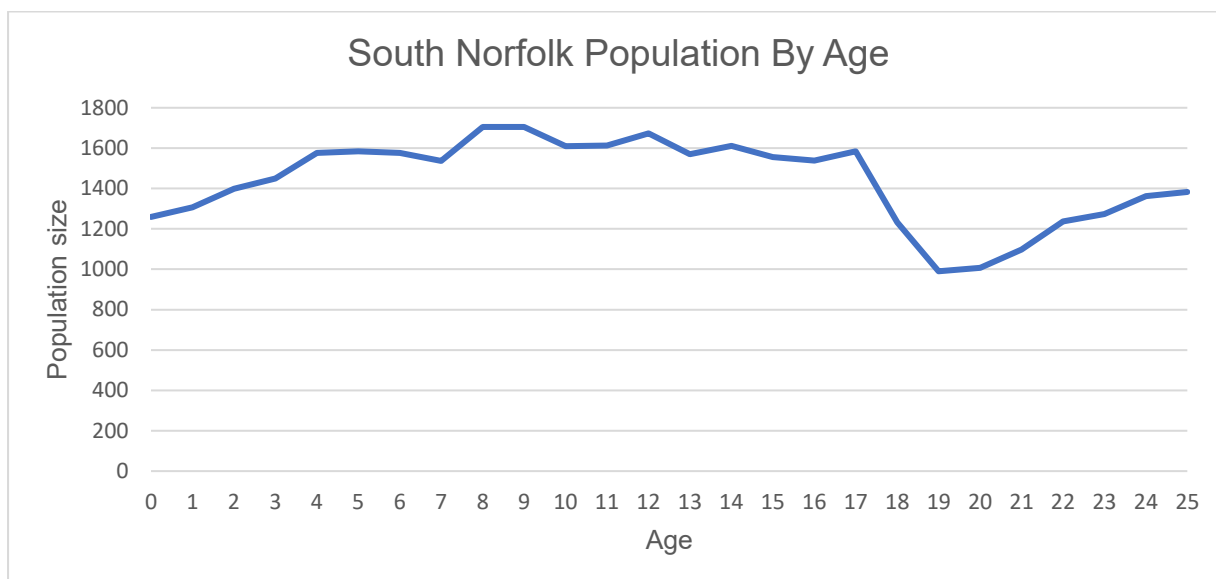
(Table 27 – Mainstream pupil population figures for South Norfolk for period 2016 to 2023)

Year	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Primary Places	9,694	9,999	10,284	10,426	10,629	10,929	10,909	11,027
Secondary Places	6,430	6,549	6,759	7,047	7,404	7,808	8,053	7,990
Total	16,124	16,548	17,043	17,473	18,033	18,737	18,962	19,017

(Figures taken from September census data each year. Data for 2023 has been taken from the May census count)

Numbers continue and progressively are increasing across the district. The slight change in primary numbers for 2022 appears to be related to in year adjustments. The change in secondary between 2022 and 2023 could be linked to capacity in area and movement of pupils out of area schools. The transition into secondary continues to be a pressure area for Children's Services which we plan to address in the coming academic year.

(Graph 8 Population size by Age taken from ONS census 2021 detail)



The pupil population across South Norfolk has seen quite varying changes over the generations. The low being reached for those pupils aged 19, with those children entering the reception cohort in 2002 has not been repeated. There has then been significant growth where numbers reached the high of 1,705 pupils in 2013, since then numbers have progressively been in decline.

The numbers in this chart do not show the effects of housing growth which is expected across the district. The forecast information currently plans for further reduction before numbers again begin to rise to levels experienced in 2020.

The total capacity across all schools in the area in the primary phase totalled 11,060 places, the number on role across the same group of schools was 10,976 places identifying 1,709 surplus places. We expect the net change of places to increase by a further 268 places in this area with the movement between the existing Year 6 and the incoming Reception cohort. Increasing surplus places across the sector to 1,977 places across the primary age schools.

Part 1 - Major growth areas which will require multi-school solutions.

There are no developments that fall within this category within South Norfolk.



Part 2 - Development locations where one new school is planned.

Wymondham (Area within the GNLP)

Up to 1300 new homes in various locations across the Town with planning permission and still to be built.

Current local provision – capacity and organisation

Wymondham has four primary phase schools, Browick Road, Ashleigh, Robert Kett and Wymondham Prep providing eight forms of entry between them. Early pressure seen from the extensive development in the town has been managed across all schools. In year admissions continues to be a challenge to accommodate in later year groups of the primary phase. However, there is some capacity in Key Stage 1-year groups which narrows the choice to new families moving into the area. The secondary provision is delivered by both Wymondham High and Wymondham College, and as the year groups move through into the secondary phase increased pressure is expected across most year groups.

Latest assessment of growth

Those sites that had permission before nutrient neutrality have continued at pace. Other sites will have been delayed until a solution is finalised in relation to nutrient neutrality mitigation. There are no further sites allocated across Wymondham as part of the Greater Norwich Local Plan, this is because of the period of extensive development in the area.

Children's Service Place Planning continues to assess the pupil numbers across the area and does not believe the school infrastructure can accommodate additional housing without putting excess strain on the schools both at primary and secondary.

Current pressures on pupil numbers

Pressure for places at the admissions round, reception and Year 7 for secondary are being managed well. The issue Children's Services has with pupil places is the in-year admissions which is high and with very limited options for families across the primary phase schools, children are often offered a place outside of their local area.

Sufficiency response

The impact on housing continues to cause some issues in later year groups and for in year admissions. Robert Kett does have some capacity but only in the reception cohort, and where Wymondham Prep continues to expand into later year groups it



would not be sustainable to allocate small cohorts in the older age range based on the need from in year changes.

Children's Services has taken transfer of the land for the new Silfield 2FoE primary school and has consulted on the procedure to open. The presumption process has identified a trust which will run the school and work alongside the LA when delivering the build. The school is scheduled to open in September 2025, the initial PAN for the school will be 1FoE, this will need to be reviewed based on the level of demand in the town.

To tackle the large numbers in the secondary sector a project has been started to look to expand Wymondham High. This will achieve up to 10FoE for the school and will maximise the space available on the site. Numbers in area will be monitored and managed through the admissions process in accordance with the policy set out by the trusts involved.

Table 28. Capital response.

Wymondham	School	Scheme	Stage	Cost/ estimate	Date if known
Future programme	Silfield new primary school	2FoE	Detailed design	£11.5m	2025
Future programme	Wymondham High Academy	Further phases	Final Expansion to bring to capacity of site	IRO £12m	2025

Cringleford (Area within the GNLP)

1200 homes

Current local provision – capacity and organisation

Cringleford village is served by one 420 place primary school, Cringleford CE VA Primary School. Secondary age children feeder catchment school is Hethersett Academy, which is operated by Inspiration Trust. Both schools remain popular within this local community and generally see's little movement to alternative schools unless through parental preference or capacity. Certainly, the High school continues to experience high volumes putting pressure on families at the admission round.

Latest assessment of growth

One of the sites south of the A11 has two developers on site which brings the housing yield forward faster, the other continues to have one developer so this will be at a slightly slower rate. This is a popular location based on its proximity to the city amenities housing will continue into 2027-28 based on current projections.



Current pressures on pupil numbers

Primary phase cohorts remain stable with pressure for places in higher year groups from when the school was asked to take a bulge year. The school is very popular and does pull some children from out of catchment, but numbers are controlled according to their PAN. Hethersett High has continued to support growth by over admitting beyond PAN for the transition into Year 7 and has committed to continue this approach while expansion comes forward. Overflow of pupils that may not get into Hethersett are able to take up a place in the Hewett which is another of the Inspiration Trust schools.

Sufficiency response

Children's Services School's Infrastructure team has begun a project on site delivering the new 2FoE primary school. This will support demand across this local community and meet the needs of the continued housing in the future. The presumption process to select a new trust has concluded and the LA is collaborating with the new trust to manage the school delivery to meet its scheduled opening date of September 2024.

Discussions have taken place with local schools to manage the expectations and limit any impact of the new school on those existing settings. Continued monitoring of the pupil yield in this area will occur alongside the forecasting round and further land is available if further expansion in the primary phase may be required.

Additional land has been handed over to Hethersett Academy under the planning application for the strategic growth in Hethersett. Work is underway to agree plans for the expansion project which will fully utilise the school site and bring it up to the maximum operating capacity of 1,350 pupils.

Table 29. Capital response.

Cringleford	School	Scheme	Stage	Cost/ estimate	Date if known
Future programme	New primary	2FoE	Detailed design. Started on site.	£11.5m	2024

Long Stratton (Area within the GNLP)

1800 - 2400 new homes

Current local provision – capacity and organisation

Long Stratton primary school provision is provided by Manor Field Infant School run by Corvus Education Trust and St Mary's Junior School run by Diocese of Norwich



St Benet's MAT. The schools operate as two forms of entry but are seeing much lower numbers of intake at reception. This is due to preference in the town drawing children into the surrounding village schools. Secondary education is delivered by Long Stratton High School operated by Enrich Learning Trust, as an operating PAN of 150 places with some capacity in higher year groups.

Latest assessment of growth

This large Strategic Urban Extension for Long Stratton developing both the east and west sides of the existing A140 and includes a new bypass. Delays have occurred linked to nutrient neutrality, but the LPA planning committee approved the first planning application which brings forward the key infrastructure of the road. It will be some time before housing commences and begins to impact the local schools.

Current pressures on pupil numbers

There does not appear to be pressure on places currently with preference spreading out the number of pupils from the central location to the surrounding areas. Children's Services plan school provision in accordance with pressure on catchment numbers, the place planning in this area continues to be monitored to track any change in preference pattern which may impact the centrally located schools and the plan for the new school as the project begins to build momentum.

Sufficiency response

A site for a new 2FoE primary school has been agreed to form part of a phase on the eastern development. It is expected the development will take several years before pressure on places will require the addition of a new school. When the time is right discussions will be had to determine the right approach for the school infrastructure to meet the needs of the local community and how the new building may be utilised.

Children's Services Place Planning continues to engage with stakeholder groups to plan for the development. A site assessment has been requested to understand the land specification better to plan a project and know the potential cost implications.

Table 30. Capital response.

Long Stratton	School	Scheme	Stage	Cost/estimate	Date if known
Future programme	New primary phase school building	2FoE	Site location agreed	IRO £11.0m	2027+
Future programme	High school	Expansion of Long Stratton High to be	-	-	-



		considered longer term			
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Poringland (Area within the GNLP)

Current local provision – capacity and organisation

The village of Poringland is served by Poringland Primary School. There are other smaller primary schools surrounding the village of Poringland namely, Stoke Holy Cross, Brooke, Trowse, Alington and Rockland all of which provide primary education for children in the area. Framingham Earl High School provides secondary education. The primary school operates two forms of entry delivering 420 places and the secondary school has a PAN of 160 places, both schools have relatively confined sites.

Latest assessment of growth

Housing continues to be delivered in the village, windfall sites have come forward outside of the LP process which has caused some capacity issues across both the primary and secondary sectors. No new development is expected as part of the new Local Plan.

Current pressures on pupil numbers

The catchment for Poringland continues to operate above the PAN for the primary school which requires parents to choose other local schools and is managed as part of the admission round. In some instances, pupils have been allocated schools outside of Poringland which leads to travel implications and has supported surrounding schools which ordinarily may have not reached their admission number.

Sufficiency response

Children's Services has been unable to secure a site alongside the long-term development that has occurred across the village. Continued site assessment has been undertaken to establish a suitable location for an additional school to serve the local community.

A recent site has come forward for planning permission which offers a new primary school site as part of its masterplan, and this is currently being assessed by the district and statutory consultee's. It may offer a solution to support an additional school site to the north of the town, but it is currently too early to say.

Until a site is agreed the only option available is to manage the admission process for this area allocating the most appropriate schools accordingly to parental



preference and the policies set out by the schools in scope. We continue to be aware the primary school cannot cope with demand expected.

Framingham Earl is a popular school often accepting beyond its local community to meet preference. Its anticipated growth can be managed in the secondary sector in the foreseeable future, any additional pressure may have to utilise existing schools near to Poringland.

Table 31. capital response.

Poringland	School	Scheme	Stage	Cost/ estimate	Date if known
Future programme	New primary school	Initially 1FoE with the scope to increase to 2FoE	Site search	£11.0M	2026+

Part 3 – Growth areas with implications for existing schools

Easton (Area within the GNLP)

890 homes

Area Overview

The development surrounding Easton is beginning to come forward where full planning has been received for phases 1-4.

The development includes land to extend St Peter C of E Primary Academy which is currently a one form entry school. Secondary provision is served through Ormiston Victory Academy where expansion has already occurred to meet this and other development demands.

Infrastructure Growth Requirements

It is proposed we will expand the existing school to either one and half or two forms of entry when the place planning need is evident. The secondary sector has been expanded to 10FoE to support meeting the need across this area.



Hethersett (Area within the GNLP)

570 homes

Area Overview

This is the last known position of remaining homes from a larger Strategic Urban Extension allocation of 1400 homes. The development is coming forward to the northern edge of the village centre. There are two developers onsite which are delivering houses at pace.

Infrastructure Growth Requirements

Children's Services previously reorganised the schools in area from a two-tier system into two all through primaries delivering 840 places across both settings. Hethersett Woodside Primary is a popular set in a new provision supporting pupils from around its local community, and Hethersett Primary is the previous junior school expanded to meet its additional demand and see children from Wymondham showing preference into the school. Further land is available as part of an existing S106 which will allow for expansion of outside space for the Hethersett Woodside site.

The secondary school admits pupils from across its catchment which has lots of housing developing including Cringleford. The school has continued to over admit supporting parental preference and expansion of the site is expected to meet continued demand, with a project being agreed to come forward over the next year to utilise the school site, which will maximise the capacity of the school.

Part 4 - Areas of the District indicating a decline in pupil numbers and where there are several small schools.

Norfolk, as a rural county, is seeing some areas with considerable growth yet other areas with small and sometimes larger decline in pupil numbers. The Local Authority needs to plan effectively to ensure that provision matches the place needs. Whilst surplus places can sometimes facilitate improvement through parental preference patterns, they can also be a barrier to success. Surplus places create inefficiencies in the school system, which individual institutions may find difficult to manage. The analysis below shows the level of surplus places and indicates some of the



demographic trends. Larger schools can often manage both contraction and expansion of pupil numbers. School infrastructure officers and advisers will actively monitor the quality of education provided in any area and consider any action that may be needed, which could include:

13. Agree changes to the PAN (Planned Admission Number) with associated change to accommodation.
14. Conducting an area-based review, which could lead to
 - a. Schools joining a MAT or assessing the short-term collaboration via a federation.
 - b. Changing age range for a school
 - c. Merging schools in existing or newly provided buildings.
 - d. Close schools which have significant sustainability issues in the following areas: Pupil numbers, financial viability, staffing, education outcomes.

The local authority needs to ensure we maintain sustainable schools which meet the need of the local communities. We will review the capacity in schools against their overall building capacity and consider the geographical changes that may be occurring that could influence schools in certain communities. We must be clear this could where development is happening lead to closure of schools which may not be assessed as delivering a good education to our Norfolk children.

We will continue to work with schools to identify a RAG rating that they may fall into. We will continue to work with schools to ensure they are managing their estate as efficiently and effectively as possible, in order to ensure they continue to deliver the best education for their local communities.

7. Norfolk Planning Areas have been RAG rated to identify long term excess school places across each area:
 - a. Green – where there are sufficient places to match the catchment area numbers.
 - b. Amber – where there is 30+ spare places across the Planning Area but places are often filled with out of area children. These areas will be monitored but with the expectation that either catchment number increase, or housing will solve the issue.



- c. Red – areas with considerable surplus places, limited housing, and catchment decline.

Information is based on the School Capacity Return which is sent to the Department for Education on an annual basis. The school planning areas are used to combine groups of school which have similar characteristics and operate within a similar geographical area. They may not link within the traditional catchment or feeder approach and may not strictly sit in the districts they have been included in.

Amber planning areas

Harleston Planning Area – a small planning area consisting of 4 schools, a 354 dwelling development has approval but not yet started and is not likely to impact the capacity within the primary phase for some time. The secondary phase is managing with numbers, it gains a consistent number across from the Diss catchment and this slightly increased in the last admission. Reduced numbers entering the primary phase will over time impact the secondary cohorts.

Loddon Planning Area – This is a large planning area consisting of 13 schools across the phases. 9 of the schools are operating a half form of entry or less, the concentration of pupils' centre around Loddon with 5 of the schools running along the border seeing some challenge with pupil movement and intake numbers. The secondary school is operating at current PAN and appears to maintain this for a period, numbers will reduce if pupil numbers do not increase via additional development expected centrally located to Loddon.

Long Stratton Planning Area – a small planning area with 6 schools, 1 infant and junior in the village centre with the surrounding schools all primary. The secondary school has stable numbers against its catchment numbers, infant and primary have 50 surplus places against catchment, with preference matching. The large-scale development will take some time before it begins to impact on the schools in the area.

Queen's Hill Costessey Planning Area – a single school planning area, the school built specifically to meet the demand of the new community it serves. The school is a 3FoE primary and manages its PAN against demand, although in recent years catchment has been higher than PAN parental preference has supported sufficiency of school places. This preference pattern could lead to sustained difficulties for the school as the catchment continues to decrease over time below current PAN.

Red planning areas

Diss Planning Area – there are 12 schools in this planning area, 3 near the town centre and the remainder in outlining villages close to the border with Suffolk. 6 schools have a PAN of less than half form of entry and struggle to reach their intake number. There are some small cohorts across the schools in this area and pupil



numbers do not suggest a return to increased numbers. The schools will need to work together to manage capacity accordingly and allow planning for the future to safeguard schools in this area.

Appendix 1

The list of projects where development is planned linked to Local Plans, the projects are current safeguarded sites where Education feel there could be some impact on the existing estate and may require additional facilities. The costs associated are currently indicative based on current design guidelines and principles.

Summary of Proposed Projects

Location	District	Scheme	Cost/Estimate	Estimate Date of Delivery
Attleborough	Breckland	High School Expansion	IRO £10.0m	2025+
Attleborough	Breckland	New Primary 1	IRO £11.0m	2026+
Attleborough	Breckland	New Primary 2	IRO £11.0m	2028+
Thetford	Breckland	New Primary 1	IRO £11.0m	2026+
Thetford	Breckland	New Primary 2	IRO £11.0m	2028+
Thetford	Breckland	New Primary 3	IRO £11.0m	2030+
Thetford	Breckland	High School Expansion	Not Yet Known	2030+
Beeston Park	Broadland	New Primary 1	£11.0m	2026+
Beeston Park	Broadland	New Primary 2	£11.0m	2028+
Rackheath	Broadland	New Primary 1	£11.0m	2026+
Rackheath	Broadland	New Primary 2	£11.0m	2028+
Rackheath	Broadland	New High School	IRO £40.0m	2027+
Smee Lane North/South	Broadland	New Primary	£11.0m	2025+
South of Salhouse Road	Broadland	New Primary	£11.0m	2026+
Aylsham	Broadland	New Primary	£11.0m	2026+
Blofield	Broadland	Primary Expansion	£11.2m	2024
Hellesdon	Broadland	New Primary	IRO £11.0m	2027+
Hellesdon	Broadland	High School Expansion	Not Yet Known	2030+
Taverham	Broadland	New Primary	IRO £11.0m	2026+
Bradwell	Great Yarmouth	New Primary	IRO £11.0m	2025



Caister	Great Yarmouth	New Primary	IRO £11.0m	2026+
West Winch	King's Lynn West Norfolk	Primary Expansion	IRO £5.0m	2026+
West Winch	King's Lynn West Norfolk	New Primary 1	IRO £11.0m	2028+
West Winch	King's Lynn West Norfolk	New Primary 2	IRO £12.0m	2030+
King's Lynn	King's Lynn West Norfolk	High School Expansion	£5.5m	2025+
Downham Market	King's Lynn West Norfolk	High School Expansion	IRO £10.0m	2024+
Fakenham	North Norfolk	New Primary	IRO £11.0m	2027+
Fakenham	North Norfolk	High School Expansion	Not Yet Known	2030+
North Walsham	North Norfolk	New Primary	IRO £11.0m	2028+
North Walsham	North Norfolk	High School Expansion	Not Yet Known	2030+
Holt	North Norfolk	New Primary	IRO £11.0m	2026+
East Norwich	Norwich	New Primary	IRO £11.0m	2027+
Silfield	South Norfolk	New Primary	£11.5m	2025
Wymondham	South Norfolk	High School Expansion	IRO £12.0m	2025
Cringleford	South Norfolk	New Primary	£11.5m	2024
Long Stratton	South Norfolk	New Primary	IRO £11.0m	2027+
Poringland	South Norfolk	New Primary	IRO £11.0m	2026+
Easton	South Norfolk	Primary Expansion	IRO £6.0m	2026+
Hethersett	South Norfolk	High School Expansion	IRO £8.0m	2024

Cabinet

Item No: 10

Report Title: Short Breaks Strategy 2023-2026

Date of Meeting: 10 January 2024

Responsible Cabinet Member: Cllr. Penny Carpenter, Cabinet Member for Children's Services

Responsible Director: Executive Director Sara Tough, Children's Services

Is this a Key Decision? No

If this is a Key Decision, date added to the Forward Plan of Key Decisions:

Executive Summary / Introduction from Cabinet Member

This Cabinet report brings together a new co-produced Short Breaks Strategy (2023-26) with a proposed change in approach in providing Short Breaks from an existing financial-focused *Resource Allocation System (RAS)* to a new, outcome-focused *Circle of Support* system.

We have completed a targeted consultation with families during the period of 27th June – 2nd August 2023. We emailed or posted the consultation to all families currently accessing Short Breaks, provided an online 'engagement session' on 27th July and 8 face-to-face sessions in libraries around the county.

There were 264 responses to the consultation. We have listened to and acted on the compliments and concerns of families included in a separate report called 'You Said, We Did' attached.

The co-produced Strategy, the outcome focused Circle of Support system and the feedback from the consultation were all discussed at the Peoples and Communities Select Committee on 17th November 2023.

Families will not receive a reduced Short Breaks offer.

The level of Short Breaks a family will receive under the new Circle of Support will remain the same as under the RAS, but some of this could be delivered in a different way to better meet the child's needs.

We will ensure there is clear communications with families when feeding back the findings of the consultation and the launch of the new strategy and approach.

Recommendation:

To proceed with the:

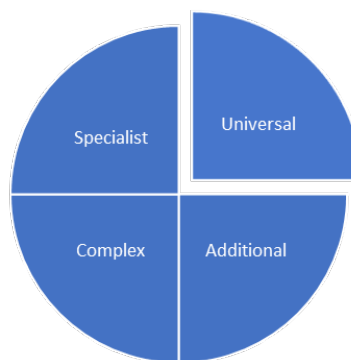
- Implementation of the Short Breaks Strategy.
- Change from the RAS to Circle of Support.
- Clear communications with families feeding back the findings of the consultation and the launch of the new Strategy and approach.

1. Background and Purpose

- 1.1 Norfolk County Council provides Short Breaks for children and young people with disabilities. The service has evolved and changed over time, adapting to the global pandemic, and working hard to best support the community.
- 1.2 Short Breaks aim to improve the lives of children, young people, parents and carers, and helps to prevent or reduce crisis by offering as much community based, inclusive support as possible.
- 1.3 Short Breaks can be in a child's home, in the home of an approved carer, in a community setting, or in a residential home. Depending on eligibility, needs and interests, a Short Break can be for anything from a few hours (for example attending a swimming lesson), to a few days for a child or young person who may need constant care and support.
- 1.4 In Norfolk, we pride ourselves on supporting children and young people to have fun experiences, establish friendships, and develop confidence, independence, and the social and emotional skills to enable them to transition to adult life successfully. The additional value Short Breaks brings to a family is that parents, carers, and siblings have time for themselves whilst knowing their child or young person is safe and having an enjoyable experience.
- 1.5 In addition to the direct positive benefits to children and families we should also recognise that the provision of Short Breaks can be of critical importance in keeping families together. Families with children and young people with disabilities often face substantial challenges and the provision of Short Breaks can sometimes make the difference between their ability to sustain caring for their children and so, avoid the need for children to be in local authority care.

2. Proposal

- 2.1 The draft *Short Breaks Strategy 2023-26* sets out our vision, mission and 10 key objectives for Short Breaks for children with SEND over the next three years.
- 2.2 Currently where children and young people want to access the service, we use a Resource Allocation System (RAS) process to identify the funding available to spend on their Short Breaks for the year. Families are awarded 'points' based on the level of need evidenced through the process. The total number of 'points' equates to an indicative annual Short Breaks budget. The higher the 'points', the higher the indicative annual budget. Families then choose how they wish to spend their budget. Families receive support and advice in relation to the spending of these budgets but ultimately, they have the choice and control and in some instances the activities they choose do not fully align with the needs and outcomes of their child. This is a financially focused points system that gives a child a 'number' in relation to the level of support the evidence provided entitles them to have.
- 2.3 Our proposal is to move away from the financially focused model and replace it with an inclusive, outcomes-focused Circle of Support system to support all children and young people accessing the service to have a fair and inclusive offer that best meets their needs.
- 2.4 The circle of support is broken into four quadrants:



- 2.5 If the proposal is implemented, the new approach will see families work alongside our team to consider their child's needs and to co-design support which aligns to that need. That package will then be put in place and funded either through a direct payment or by the County Council directly funding. In this way children with the same 'level' of need will have different packages and different total costs – rather than a fully fixed budget for each level of need.
- 2.6 Children and young people will all be supported to access the 'universal' offer and will move around the Circle of Support in relation to the level of need they require.

Universal: Support to access a wide range of services within the community, from after school and summer clubs, weekend activities and prepaid card for families to use on specific activities.

Additional: Community activities as well as some respite offered. Combination of activities and personal prepaid card to support with a rounded additional offer to support families.

Complex: A variety of activities and respite offered to children and young people with complex needs. Social Care support within the package allowing for families to have access tailored activities to support the family.

Specialist: Targeted support for children and young people with specialist support and care. Social Care support within the package allowing for families to have access tailored activities to support the family.

- 2.7 We plan to take a phased approach to implementation of the new model. Rather than making a change for all families simultaneously, the intention will be to introduce the new approach when families set up a new Short Breaks Plan or renew their existing Plan. We will communicate with each family on an individual basis to ensure they understand the new approach and will communicate clearly to reassure families that they will still be involved in designing their child's Short Breaks package and will still have a choice around the type of Short Breaks they receive.
- 2.8 Within the consultation we also highlighted the proposal to give families the choice to use a proportion of their funding to pay for other family members to attend activities alongside their child(ren) with SEND. This proposal was widely supported, but it is still important to be clear that it is not compulsory and just represents a further flexibility and option that families would have.

3. Impact of the Proposal

- 3.1 Moving to the Circle of Support families, carers, and children and young people will be able to access a more robust and inclusive offer.
- 3.2 12 case studies of families accessing Short Breaks were analysed to test the impact of the move from the RAS to the Circle of Support. The impact was positive with:
- Earlier help and prevention support provided to children with lower level social, emotional and mental health (SEMH) needs.
 - More inclusive universal offer to support integration into community services.
 - Families having access to a universal offer will have access to a newly appointed Inclusion Co-Ordinator to develop the inclusive practice between providers and families.
 - A mindset change moving from a financial focused system to an inclusive early help and prevention service that works within the community.

- Short Breaks services that meet the needs/outcomes of children more effectively.

3.3 In addition, the formal consultation identified further impacts that families highlighted themselves including:

- A new offer of funding towards family holidays in the UK.
- A new offer to pay for activities for the whole family, or siblings, not just the child on the plan.
- Positivity around the general move towards the offer being outcomes focused.

3.4 The consultation also highlighted proposals within the Strategy to provide more Short Breaks in the community (including group activities) where this is appropriate to meet the child or young person's needs and outcomes. This will give families more choice and provide activities in a more cost-effective way. Many families supported this approach but some expressed concerns. We want to reassure families that group activities will not be compulsory. Families will still be able to choose which Short Breaks they take part in, based on their child or young person's needs and outcomes. We recognise that every child and young person is different and group activities may not be suitable for everyone.

4 Evidence and Reasons for Decision

4.1 As described above, the intention of this proposal is to improve outcomes for children and young people. The Circle of Support model focuses on outcomes and aligning support to needs, rather than a purely financial approach.

4.2 The consultation feedback and a specific response document are attached to this paper. There was a significant amount of support for the proposals which was very encouraging. Equally a significant proportion of families did express some concerns about the changes. These concerns to a very large extent stemmed from a worry that additional options such as accessing more community-based or group activities, or spending budget on wider family members would be imposed – whereas they are not compulsory and families do not need to worry about reduced options which will work for their children and family. Nevertheless, before proceeding it will be critically important to communicate further with all families to provide that reassurance and ensure they understand what the changes mean. We are confident, however, that the new model will be better for children and families.

5 Alternative Options

5.1 The alternative approach would be to keep with the current RAS system. However, this does not allow us to work with families in a child-centred way

focusing on improving outcomes and supporting them towards leading their most independent lives.

6 Financial Implications

- 6.1 This proposal is not intended to reduce funding for Short Breaks, it does not deliver a saving to the County Council, nor does it put any additional pressure on the Short Breaks budget. The Short Breaks service is a demand and needs led service and the Strategy and move to Circle of Support approach does not change the commitment to provide services at a level which meets needs.
- 6.2 Families will not receive a reduced Short Breaks offer. The level of Short Breaks a child/family will receive under the new Circle of Support will remain the same as under the RAS, but some of this could be delivered in a different way to better meet the child's needs. Aligning a child's needs and outcomes with the Short Breaks they receive should result in their individual needs and outcomes being met more effectively.
- 6.3 As part of the change to the new model, some Short Breaks could be paid for directly by the County Council, rather than via a personal budget. In those instances, the family would receive less personal budget but obviously the service would still be provided.
- 6.4 Through commissioning more inclusive support in the community and providing families with more flexibility and choice, we should be able to provide better value for money for families accessing services at this level and prevent escalation of need to high-cost specialist packages of support.

7 Resource Implications

- 7.1 **Staff:** None.
- 7.2 **Property:** None.
- 7.3 **IT:** None.

8 Other Implications

- 8.1 **Legal Implications:** None
- 8.2 **Human Rights Implications:** None
- 8.3 **Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) (this must be included):** Yes
- 8.4 **Data Protection Impact Assessments (DPIA):** None
- 8.5 **Health and Safety implications (where appropriate):** None
- 8.6 **Sustainability implications (where appropriate):** None
- 8.7 **Any Other Implications:** N/A

9 Risk Implications / Assessment

- 9.1 It is right to consult widely to give families the opportunity to feedback and shape the proposal and to help ensure they understand the changes proposed. It is acknowledged that any change of approach in such a critical service area could be unsettling and create nervousness for families and so, every attempt has been made clarify and reassure families.
- 9.2 The risk was that it could be perceived as an attempt to cut provision or funds for families receiving Short Breaks, which is not the case. The consultation has highlighted that this was the perception of some families and we have made changes to the Strategy to make our proposals clearer and address the concerns of families. We have also put together a 'You Said, We Did' report that will be shared with all families accessing Short Breaks.

10 Select Committee Comments

- 10.1 The Select Committee identified some minor changes to the Strategy including:
- Clarify autonomy and independence for each child is relative to their needs and considers children will achieve different levels of independence dependent on their needs and disability.
 - Clarify what co-production was completed when producing the Strategy.
 - Clarify that respite is important for family members, not just the child within the Strategy document.
- 10.2 The Select Committee was supportive of the implementation of the Strategy and the move from the RAS to the Circle of Support.

11 Recommendations

- 11.1 To proceed with the:
- Implementation of the Short Breaks Strategy.
 - Change from the RAS to Circle of Support.
 - Clear communications with families feeding back the findings of the consultation and the launch of the new strategy and approach.

12 Background Papers

- Appendix A - Short Breaks Strategy 2023-26.
- Appendix B - Equality impact Assessment (EqIA).
- Appendix C - Consultation analysis report.
- Appendix D - 'You Said, We Did' report.

Officer Contact

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



Norfolk County Council Short Breaks Strategy 2023-2026





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1 Introduction

This strategy sets out the plan to improve the commissioning approach to Short Breaks over the next three years, supporting our wider strategic ambitions that are found within:

- [Flourish](#)
- [Special Educational Needs Sufficiency Strategy 2019](#)
- [Norfolk Area Special Educational Needs and/or Disability \(SEND\) Strategy 2019-2024](#)

The Short Breaks Strategy will be implemented over the three-year period, allowing for reflection, co-production, and collaboration. Yearly reviews of the strategy will allow for an evidenced based approach and proactive learning to take place.

2 What are Short Breaks?

2.1 The background and our duty

[The Breaks for Carers of Disabled Children Regulations 2011](#) sets out how local authorities must provide Short Breaks and what they should provide. Short Breaks are primarily designed to give parent carers a break from their caring responsibilities, although it is also important that they meet the needs and outcomes of the child or young person being supported. They come in different shapes and sizes ranging, and will depend on the needs of the child or young person being supported. They range from inclusive local provision activities in the community that are available to everyone, to more specialist activities with trained staff and specialist equipment. They can be delivered in families' homes, at centres, or out in the community. Children and young people can take part in new activities, make friends, learn new skills, become more independent and have fun. Children and young people can take part in new activities, make friends, learn new skills, become more independent and have fun.

Current access to Short Breaks should be available to any child or young person who is between 5-17 years of age, who has identified special educational needs and/or a disability; and who lives in Norfolk. Within the second year of the strategy (2023/24), we plan to widen the breadth of our offer from birth to 17 years of age, to allow for a fully inclusive and robust offer (see our three-year road map for details).

The following legislation is also in place to protect and support children, young people, and their families:

- The Children & Young Person's Act 2008
- The Short Break Regulations 2011
- The Equality Act 2010
- SEND Reforms 2014
- Children's & Families Act 2014



- Care Act 2014
- Chronically Sick & Disabled Persons Act 1970

2.2 Why have a commissioning strategy?

Norfolk is working towards four key priorities for children and young people with SEND, articulated through the Norfolk Area SEND Strategy.

Norfolk County Council has been providing Short Breaks for children, young people, and their families for many years. The service has evolved and changed over the years, adapting to the global pandemic, and working hard to support the community.

Whilst our offer is good, we are always seeking to improve our service. The demand on Short Breaks services is growing and we work closely with partners to listen, learn, and develop our offer. Reviewing allows us to be proactive, inclusive and grow our offer to support children, young people, and their families.

Feedback from our partners, colleagues and most importantly the children, young people and their families demonstrates: *the key to an outstanding service is to provide the right opportunities, at the right time, in the right place for the right groups and individuals.*

This Short Breaks Strategy sets out our vision, mission and 10 big key objectives that will be the driving force to improving our service. We are passionate and committed to providing an excellent service that is outcomes-focused, evidence-led and allows children and young people with SEND in Norfolk to Flourish.

2.3 The benefits of Short Breaks

In Norfolk, Short Breaks offer a range of services which give children and young people with SEND positive experiences that support their personal development, whilst, at the same time, giving their parent/carers a break.

Short Breaks can be provided in the family home, in the home of an approved carer, in a community setting, or in a residential home. Depending on eligibility, needs and interests, a Short Break can last from a few hours to a few days.

In Norfolk we want to support children and young people to have fun experiences, establish friendships, and develop confidence, independence, and the social and emotional skills to enable them to transition to adult life. Short Breaks enable parent/carers and siblings to have much needed time away, whilst knowing their child or young person is safe and having an enjoyable experience.



2.4 The current offer

Norfolk spends approximately **£3.5 million** per year on its extensive Short Breaks offer.

Full details of these current offers can be found on the [Short Breaks webpage](#). The Short Breaks offer stretches across the range of needs to deliver outcomes and improve the lives of children, young people, and their parent/carers, and aims to prevent or reduce crisis by offering as much community-based inclusive support as possible.

Within our Local Offer we have a dedicated team that works with community groups and schools to encourage a more inclusive approach in supporting families who wish to access local clubs and activities.

3 Our Demographics

Meeting the needs of the Norfolk community is a key priority of our commissioning strategy. Our Short Breaks offer is informed by our understanding of the number of children and young people with SEND, where they live and their individual needs.

To know what services we need to provide, we first need to understand the children and young people who are using the service. Using this information, we can apply an evidenced-based approach to commissioning services that better meet the needs of our community, allowing us to understand how our service needs to change over time.

In December 2022, 1,700 children and young people accessed Short Breaks. Out of this total, Social and Emotional Mental Health Needs (SEMH) was the highest primary need. This need is reflected among the growing number of children and young people who have an Education, Health, and Care Plan (EHCP) in Norfolk. In June 2022, 8,751 children and young people had an identified primary need of Social Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) (27.3%), closely followed by Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD) (27.1%). Out of approximately 123,233 school aged children in Norfolk in 2020, 13.1% accessed Special Educational Need (SEN) support and 3.8% had an EHCP.

The number of young people aged 0-25 with EHCPs (Education, Health, and Care Plans) in Norfolk has increased by around 21% (from 6,689 to c8,500) between 2020 and our current estimate, which is similar to the national increase.

Compared to national figures, in 2020 (our most recent data) Norfolk's young people with EHCPs or SEN Support:

- are less likely to be in mainstream education settings (35.4% compared to 43% nationally)
- are more likely to be awaiting provision (0.9% v. 0.4%) - are more likely to be educated at home (1.3% v 0.8%) - are less likely to be in a special school (31.1% v. 41%) - are more likely to be in alternative provision (2.5% v. 0.9%)

The number of children and young people with disabilities accessing Short Breaks is increasing nationally and locally. This is why our service needs to respond in a proactive way



to support families, prevent the escalation of need, and reduce the risk of families reaching breaking point.

3.1 Listening to children, young people, and their families

As a part of our ongoing commitment to listen to our community, we ask children, young people, parents and carers and wider service users to feedback to us regarding their experiences.

Over a thousand different families access our Short Breaks service. Through engagement events we continuously monitor and listen to their feedback. Here are some of the key messages that we have received.

Support to services to be more inclusive to:

- Enable children and young people to have a break without their parent/carers.
- Offer more services across various locations.
- Encourage mainstream schools to be more inclusive and provide support to do this.
- Provide a more flexible service.
- Provide more support to fill in forms and simplify forms.
- Improve the way we communicate about the services on offer.
- Support with improved access to services, including support with travel.

“Safe space for young people to meet up without being judged.”

“I want professionals to take us seriously and listen to our views.”

“More options for activities in North Norfolk. There's a gap between starting school and then being able to attend youth groups - more extra-curricular activities.”

“It's wonderful that my son has his own time supported by his two PAs. It also gives the family some respite. Thank you.”

“More employment and volunteering opportunities.”

“Thank you so much! This will help our daughter to develop her social skills, balance, coordination, and help me give her more enjoyable ways to help.”



Key areas of change requested includes:

- Increase the number and types of activities on offer.
- Improve the way we communicate and share information about our service and the activities on offer.
- Gradually extend the service to include children aged 0 to 5 with complex needs.
- Improve support for young people to transition to adult life, including further education, work, independent living etc.
- Provide a more inclusive offer.
- Parent/carers want the opportunity to be able to go on Short Breaks as a whole family.
- More learning visual aids for parents and carers supporting how to access Short Breaks.
- Opportunities for children and young people to develop their employability skills.

4 Delivering our Short Breaks strategy

4.1 Commissioning principles

Our Short Breaks strategy is aligned with Norfolk County Council's core commissioning principles. These are:

- Outcomes focused
- Leading an inclusive offer
- Early help intervention and prevention
- Safe and secure service
- Equality and diversity
- Working with key partners
- Co-production
- Embedding social value within our services
- Financially sustainable now and in the future

4.2 Outcomes focused

The Norfolk Children and Young People Partnership Strategy *Flourishing in Norfolk 2021-2025* sets out a shared ambition for children and young people to Flourish by achieving the following overarching outcomes:



Family and friends	Children and young people are safe, connected and supported through positive relationships and networks.
Learning	Children and young people are achieving their full potential and developing skills which prepare them for life.
Opportunity	Children and young people develop as well-rounded individuals through access to a wide range of opportunities which nurture their interests and talents.
Understood	Children and young people feel listened to, understood and part of decision-making processes.
Resilience	Children and young people have the confidence and skills to make their own decisions and take on life's challenges.
Individual	Children and young people are respected as individuals, confident in their own identity and appreciate and value their own and others' uniqueness.
Safe and secure	Children and young people are supported to understand the risk and make safe decisions by the actions that adults and children and young people themselves take to keep them safe and secure.
Healthy	Children and young people have the support, knowledge, and opportunity to lead their happiest and healthiest lives.

Outcomes for parent/carers:

- receive a break confident that their child is safe and having fun, whilst having their individual needs met.
- have improved wellbeing.
- are supported to continue to care or to do so more effectively.
- have some 'me time' – this can mean different things to different families, including resting and recharging, spending time with siblings and family members, following their own hobbies and interests, undertaking everyday household tasks.
- are assured that their child is being supported to experience various places and activities and develop relationships outside of their family.
- are assured that their child is experiencing things they cannot experience at home.
- see their child Flourish.



Our vision for Short Breaks...this was co-produced with key stakeholders, including Family Voice Norfolk

Providing opportunities for breaks where children and young people with disabilities can thrive, grow, achieve and have fun in the community with their peers, whilst supporting their families to have a break from caring.

Our mission for Short Breaks... this was co-produced with key stakeholders, including Family Voice Norfolk

Delivering an inclusive offer of community-based activities and respite breaks to children and young people with disabilities in Norfolk. Supporting them to have fun whilst providing a break from caring for their families.

4.3 10 Big Objectives... these were also co-produced with key stakeholders, including Family Voice Norfolk.

For us to deliver an outstanding service we have developed our 10 big objectives that we are committed to achieving:

Objective 1: Parent/carers, children and young people have the opportunity to access and choose more inclusive local provision across Norfolk, such as after school clubs, holiday clubs.

What is this objective about?

Through our engagement with partners, including families, it is clear that more inclusive local provision is needed. We have designed an inclusive element of our Short Breaks service that is working towards being accessible and inclusive for all.

How will we achieve this?

- Supporting mainstream schools and clubs to improve facilities to allow them to be accessible and inclusive.
- Introduction of a key role within the Norfolk County Council Childrens Services Commissioning team that will support the more inclusive local provision approach working with providers, mainstream schools, and wider stakeholders. Link the offer together, listening carefully to feedback and responding in a proactive manner.
- Engaging with providers of services to identify how their provision can be made more accessible for children and young people with disabilities.
- Providing more funds to support the development of existing providers within the local offer.



- Linking wider services such as Holiday Activity Fund, to providers allowing for support for all families.

Objectives 2: Parent/carers, children and young people can access a community Short Breaks clubs and activities offer, making friends and having their needs met enabling good outcomes.

What is this objective about?

In Norfolk there is a wide range of providers and opportunities for children and young people to access Short Breaks. As Norfolk is an exceptionally large rural county accessing some services is a challenge for some families due to the location of some services.

How will we achieve this?

- Addressing the unmet need in our rural communities through a range of creative commissioning.
- Developing new services and expanding existing services in rural communities.
- Listening to our parents/carers and young people accessing Short Breaks, allowing for an evidenced based approach to developing new and sustainable offers across the county.

Objective 3: Parent/carers can have a break in the knowledge that their child(ren) is safe and well-cared for by trained staff.

What is this objective about?

Keeping children and young people safe and well cared for by qualified trained staff is a key priority and commitment of Norfolk County Council. Listening to parents and carers we know that it is important for families to have the confidence and reassurance that their child or young person is having fun but is also secure and safe throughout.

How will we achieve this?

- Robust, consistent quality assurance.
- Clearer pathways for access to training for all settings.
- High quality training working with partners to deliver a child centred approach.

Objective 4: Providing community Short Breaks and respite for families at the right point in time, reducing escalation of need and reducing chances of families reaching crisis.

What is this objective about?



Short Breaks are vital in supporting families at the right time, when they are needed, in the right way. They are fun and engaging whilst also supporting de-escalation of pressure points.

How will we achieve this?

- Supporting families with the right service at the right time.
- Develop a new tool that assesses the individual needs of children & young people that is focused upon outcomes. (See Appendix A for the Short Breaks Complete Circle of Support)
- Being open and honest at all times.
- Signposting and linking families to wider services.
- Listening and responding to feedback.
- Always working on an evidenced based approach.
- Effective communication and links with partners and wider services.
- Commissioning more providers to meet identified needs.

Objective 5: Children and young people with disabilities are supported to become more independent, achieving positive outcomes moving into adult life, but recognising this will mean something different for every young person.

What is this objective about?

Outcomes are the changes we expect to see because of our Short Breaks Strategy. Our Short Breaks services currently support children from 5 to 17 years (up to their 18th birthday). It is crucial that the service supports children and young people to become more independent allowing for a positive transition into adult life.

How will we achieve this?

- Ensuring that our Short Breaks offer supports the development of life skills to prepare young people for adult life.
- Signposting families to a range of options that include further education, employment, and training to ensure a smooth transition.
- Improving information and support for parents and carers going through this transition with their young person. Listening to feedback and learning, making amends to our offer as needed.

Objective 6: Parent/carers, children and young people are communicated with effectively and feel involved in the application and review process.

What is this objective about?



Communication is crucial in the success of an outstanding service. Long unnecessary application forms can cause unnecessary stress and anxiety. As a service we are moving away from this to a simpler smarter system.

How will we achieve this?

- We are working hard to make key changes to our application and review process introducing a NEW online Parent carer portal.
- Development of a two-pathway application system avoiding long and unnecessary questions when some parts don't apply to everyone.
- Development of a traffic light review system allowing for quick changes to care plans.
- Development of key communication and support published at each stage to allow parents and carers to quickly seek help when needed.

Objective 7: Giving opportunities and support to access Personal Assistants or pre-paid cards through a Direct Payment scheme.

What is this objective about?

For some parent/carers the support of a Personal Assistant is vital in providing a much-needed Short Break. These will be accessible through our Direct Payment Scheme.

How will we achieve this?

- Clear communication and information given at point of application.
- Support through the process with a dedicated team.
- Families will be offered a direct payment / personal budget.

Objective 8: Families in need of more complex or specialist respite are supported to access provision that meets their needs, which may include overnight respite.

What is this objective about?

Families who are assessed by a specialist Children with Disabilities Social Worker as requiring complex or specialist provision such as overnight respite and Domiciliary Care (personal care).

How will we achieve this?

- Ensure high quality service and support is available for those children with the most complex needs.
- Seek to ensure a range of high-quality provision that allows families to have a choice of support and overnight respite that caters for their child or young persons' needs.



- Reviewing the demand for our service with a vision to meet the requirements of all our families.

Objective 9: Supporting families and siblings to enjoy activities that are fun and inclusive, providing a break for all.

What is this objective about?

Short Breaks are not only for the child or young person but for the whole family to enjoy. This may come in the form of allowing parents and carers a break away from their day-to-day caring responsibilities and or time with other children. It is an ambition to have a service that not only supports children and young people with disabilities but also siblings, allowing for a full family support package.

How will we achieve this?

- Introducing opportunities where siblings can attend specific events to enjoy activities that are fun and inclusive.
- Support the whole family to access the Short Break together e.g., UK (United Kingdom) family holidays, days out, weekends away.
- Actively seeking more activities in the community which is supported by our SBIC.
- Group activities with qualified and/or experienced staff that allows parents to have a break.

Objective 10: Creating opportunities for all children and young people with a disability to Flourish in Norfolk.

What is this objective about?

The Norfolk Children and Young People Strategic Partnership's Strategy [Flourishing in Norfolk](#) 2021-2025 sets out a shared ambition for children and young people to Flourish by achieving the following overarching outcomes (see p7/8).

How will we achieve this?

We will make sure that the outcomes for children and young people accessing our service promote Flourish outcomes:

- **Family** and friends
- Access to **learning**
- The **opportunity** to lead a good life
- Being **understood**
- Building **resilience**
- Respect for their **individuality**



- Feeling **safe**
- Being **healthy**

4.4 Key partners

Our Norfolk Short Breaks strategy cannot improve the experiences of children, young people and families who access our Short Break offer without working in partnership with a range of other agencies. To design this strategy, we have worked with key partners to develop a service that is responsive and coproduced. To implement this strategy, we will engage with these partners to encourage them to work alongside us and consider what more they could do to bring about improved outcomes. Key partners we will engage with are:

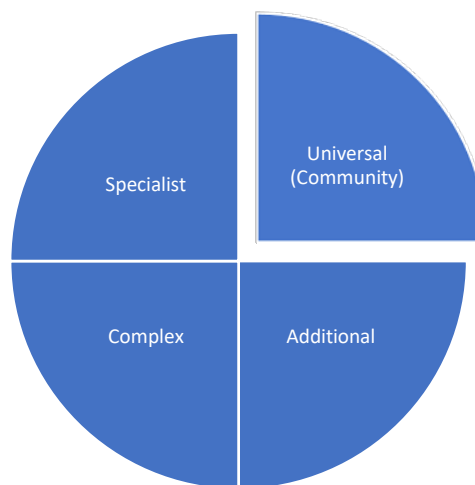
- Parents and carers
- Children and young people
- Health
- Education
- Social Care
- Providers of short breaks services
- Community services

4.5 Measuring impact and continuous improvement

Evidencing impact and continuously improving our Short Breaks service is crucial. We will use a range of data to measure whether the changes delivered by this Strategy are effective and impactful. We will know that we are seeing successful impacts when:

- Children and young people with disabilities are accessing appropriate community-based provisions as part of our Early Help offer. This will be evidenced through increased attendance of children accessing Short Breaks within the community. Short Breaks is aligned with other Norfolk County Council commissioned services that provides a holistic and inclusive offer of support.
- Parent/carers, and their children feedback confidence in the quality of our Short Breaks offer.
- Community providers feel supported in becoming more inclusive across the county.
- The offer is clear to services, practitioners, and families alike. Families report that they understand what the offer means for them.
- Individual outcomes for children and young people and families are delivered and progress is measured at their review.

Appendix A - Short Breaks Complete Circle of Support



Universal

Support to access a wide range of services within the community, from after school and summer clubs, weekend activities and prepaid card for families to use on specific activities.



Additional

Community activities as well as some respite offered. Combination of activities and personal prepaid card to support with a rounded additional offer to support families.



Complex

A variety of activities and respite offered to children and young people with complex needs. Social Care support within the package allowing for families to have access to tailored activities to support the family.



Specialist

Targeted support for children and young people with specialist support and care. Social Care support within the package allowing for families to have access to tailored activities to support the family.

This approach is used in other local authorities. The premise behind it is ensuring that the right level of support is identified for a child and their family. We conducted 12 cases studies of children currently receiving short breaks to look at the impact of moving to the circle of support could potentially have. In summary the circle of support had a more beneficial impact, which included:

- **Access to Short Breaks Inclusion Coordinator supporting providers to deliver a more inclusive offer.**
- **Wider choice of community-based provision.**
- **Clear evidence of outcomes being met.**



- More personalised activities
- Either the same or an increased budget of support

This new approach will have a phased introduction which will start in April 2024, for all new referrals into the short breaks' portal. All children currently getting short breaks will move across to the new model as and when their review is required.



Norfolk County Council

Short Breaks Strategy 2023-2026

Equality Impact Assessment – Findings and Recommendations

November 2023

Colleen Hubbard

Equality impact assessments enable decision-makers to consider the impact of proposals on people with protected characteristics.

You can update an assessment at any time to inform service planning and commissioning. For help or information please contact equalities@norfolk.gov.uk

1. The proposal Short Breaks Strategy 2023-2026

1.1 The proposal is to implement a new strategy for the delivery of Short Breaks within Norfolk during the period April 2023 to March 2026. The changes are designed to improve outcomes for children and young people by providing more inclusive community services. The goal is to grow the current market with more inclusive services as well as making existing services more inclusive. Changes include:

- Introducing a new accessible online portal system for parents and carers to apply for their Short Breaks funding online, with a paper version for those without internet access. Families who apply online will not be prioritised over families who apply on paper.
- The way in which Short Breaks support is identified moving from the existing Resource Allocation System to a new Circle of Support.
- How families can use their Short Breaks funding.
- A change to the age-range of who may access Short Breaks (currently from age 5-18 years moving to 0-18 years).
- Support for transition to adult life services, typically from 16 years upwards.

2. Legal context

2.1 Public authorities are required by the Equality Act 2010 to give due regard to equality when exercising public functions¹. This is called the 'Public Sector Equality Duty'.

2.2 The purpose of an equality impact assessment is to consider the potential impact of a proposed change or issue on people with protected characteristics (see Annex 1 for information about the different protected characteristics).

2.3 If the assessment identifies any detrimental impact, this enables mitigating actions to be developed.

2.4 It is not always possible to adopt the course of action that will best promote the interests of people with protected characteristics. However, equality assessments enable informed decisions to be made that take every opportunity to minimise disadvantage.

3. Information about the people affected by the proposal

3.1 This proposal will primarily impact on children and young people with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and their families supported by the Short Breaks Service in Norfolk. In 2022 this equated to approximately 1,700 children and young people aged 5-18 years and their families.

3.2 This includes people with a range of protected characteristics, in relation to disability, sex, gender reassignment, marital or civil partner status, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion/belief, age and sexual orientation.

3.3 NCC staff (approx. 6) working within the Short Breaks team will be affected by the new strategy because it will mean changes to the way applications are received (through a portal), a change in how provision is determined and amendments to other administrative procedures.

- 3.4 Some staff in existing community provision may be affected by the opportunity to receive additional training to enable them to provide a suitable service for children using their Short Breaks.
- 3.5 Some businesses may be affected by the opportunity to broaden the range of activities that they offer, to a wider group of children and young people, which may come with some financial support to enable them to do so.

4. Potential impact

- 4.1 Based on the evidence available, this proposal is likely to have a positive impact on a particular group of people with protected characteristics (those with disabilities and due to age).
- 4.2 This is because the availability of inclusive group-based community provision will be increased in local communities. A dedicated role of an Inclusion Co-ordinator will work with providers to ensure that more children and young people with Special Educational Needs or Disabilities (SEND) can access Short Breaks alongside their peers within community settings.
- 4.3 **Age** - The new strategy will continue to ensure that Short Breaks are available to children and young people with SEND from aged 5 years to 18 years. It will impact under 5's positively because from the second year of the strategy, the age at which applications can be made will begin to reduce.
 - 4.3.1 Young people aged 16 and 17 are likely to need and want to undertake activities that support their transition into adult life. The strategy will encourage providers to take this into consideration when supporting young people and their families through the service and a transition programme will be developed by the Short Breaks service.
- 4.4 **Disability** –There may be some children and young people who have exceptional/very complex needs who will not be able to attend the new community provision initially because staff will be required to attend training specific to an individual's disability or training that will be needed to support a number of children and young people.
 - 4.4.1 Full assessments of premises will be required to ascertain which parts are not fully accessible and to determine whether there are steps that can be taken to make the premises fully accessible for a child or young person.
 - 4.4.2 Parents may have learning disabilities themselves and may need assistance with Short Breaks applications. This should be identified by the Short Breaks Team and support provided where necessary.
 - 4.4.3 The new, more inclusive approach to Short Breaks needs to ensure that children/young people's individual support needs are considered when accessing Short Breaks, especially universal services in the community. For example, group-based activities in large community buildings with loud acoustics and bright lighting may not be suitable for some children and young people.

- 4.5 **Sex** – The service should have the same impact on children and young people and their parent carers regardless of their sex. It will be important to ensure that activities are available to boys and girls.
- 4.6 **Pregnancy and maternity** – the changes may affect parent carers who are pregnant or new mothers positively because they are more likely to be supported to have a break and have improved access services in their local community, reducing their travel time.
- 4.7 **Race** – the service should have the same impact on children and young people and their parent carers regardless of their race or ethnic group.
- 4.8 **Language** - providers may be required to provide information about the service in different languages and in different formats to meet individual needs e.g., where English is not their first language, braille.
- 4.9 **Sexual Orientation** - the service should have the same impact on children, young people and their parent carers regardless of their sexual orientation.
- 4.10 **Religion and Belief** - the service should have the same impact on children, young people, and parent carers regardless of their religion or beliefs. If a child or young person has specific needs relating to their religion or beliefs that need to be considered when accessing a service, then the provider will need to identify and meet them where possible.
- 4.11 **Marriage and civil partnership** - the service should have the same impact on children and young people and their parent carers regardless of their relationship status.

5. Conclusion

- 5.1 There is no legal impediment to going ahead with the proposal. It would be implemented in full accordance with due process, national guidance and policy. Similar proposals have been implemented elsewhere in the UK.
- 5.2 It is possible to conclude that the proposal may have a positive impact on some people with protected characteristics, for the reasons set out in this assessment. It may also have some detrimental impacts, also set out in the assessment.
- 5.3 Decision-makers are therefore advised to take these impacts into account when deciding whether or not the proposal should go ahead, in addition to the mitigating actions recommended below.
- 5.4 Some of the actions will address the potential detrimental impacts identified in this assessment, but it is not possible to address all the potential impacts. Ultimately, the task for decision-makers is to balance these impacts alongside the need to manage reduced resources and continue to target support at those who need it most.

6. Recommended actions

If your assessment has identified any detrimental impacts, set out here any actions that will help to mitigate them.

Number	Action	Lead	Date
1.			
2.			
3.			

7. Evidence used to inform this assessment

Reference any other evidence your analysis has drawn upon:

- [Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy](#)
- Demographic factors set out in [Norfolk's Story 2021](#)
- [Digital Inclusion and COVID-19](#) equality impact assessments
- Norfolk County Council [Area Reports](#) on Norfolk's JSNA relating to protected characteristics
- Business intelligence and management data, as quoted in this report
- Equality Act 2010 and Public Sector Equality Duty codes of practice

8. Further information

For further information about this equality impact assessment please contact Rebecca Doody, Strategic Commissioner, 01603 692471



If you need this document in large print, audio, Braille, alternative format or in a different language please contact **xxx** on **xxx** or **xxx** (Text relay)

Annex 1 – table of protected characteristics

The following table sets out details of each protected characteristic. Remember that people with multiple characteristics may face the most barriers:

Characteristic	Who this covers
Age	Adults and children etc, or specific/different age groups
Disability	<p>A person has a disability if they have a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.</p> <p>This may include but is not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People with mobility issues (eg wheelchair or cane users, people of short stature, people who do not have mobility in a limb etc) • Blind and partially sighted people • People who are D/deaf or hearing impaired • People with learning disabilities • People who have mental health issues • People who identify as neurodiverse (this refers to neurological differences including, for example, dyspraxia, dyslexia, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder, the autistic spectrum and others) • People with some long-term health conditions which meet the criteria of a disability.
People with a long-term health condition	People with long-term health conditions which meet the criteria of a disability.
Gender reassignment	<p>People who identify as transgender (defined as someone who is proposing to undergo, is undergoing, or has undergone a process or part of a process to reassign their sex. It is not necessary for the person to be under medical supervision or undergoing surgery).</p> <p>You may want to consider the needs of people who identify as non-binary (a spectrum of gender identities that are not exclusively masculine or feminine).</p>
Marriage/civil partnerships	People who are married or in a civil partnership. They may be of the opposite or same sex.
Pregnancy and maternity	Maternity refers to the period after birth and is linked to maternity leave in the employment context. In the non-work context, protection against maternity discrimination

Characteristic	Who this covers
	is for 26 weeks after giving birth, and this includes treating a woman unfavourably because she is breastfeeding.
Race	<p>Race refers to a group of people defined by their race, colour, or nationality (including citizenship) ethnic or national origins.</p> <p>A racial group can be made up of two or more distinct racial groups, for example a person may identify as Black British, British Asian, British Sikh, British Jew, Romany Gypsy or Irish Traveller.</p>
Religion/belief	Belief means any religious or philosophical belief or no belief. To be protected, a belief must satisfy various criteria, including that it is a weighty and substantial aspect of human life and behaviour. Denominations or sects within a religion can be considered a protected religion or religious belief.
Sex	This covers men and women. Also consider the needs of people who identify as intersex (people who have variations in sex characteristics) and non-binary (a spectrum of gender identities that are not exclusively masculine or feminine).
Sexual orientation	People who identify as straight/heterosexual, lesbian, gay or bisexual.

Document review

Reviewed and updated:	Reviewer
October and November 2016	Corporate Planning & Partnerships Manager
December 2017	Equality & Diversity Manager
October 2018	Equality & Diversity Manager
May and November 2019	Equality & Diversity Manager
May and November 2020	Equality & Diversity Manager
June and September 2021	Head of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

¹ The Act states that public bodies must pay due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Act;
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a relevant protected characteristic¹ and people who do not share it;
- Foster good relations between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and people who do not share it.

[The full Equality Act 2021 is available on legislation.gov.uk.](https://www.legislation.gov.uk)



Norfolk County Council

Consultation Findings Report, 15 August 2023

Your views on changes to the way we assess and deliver Short Breaks for Families

1. Introduction

In the last five years, there has been a 75% increase in applications for Short Breaks. To make sure we can continue providing Short Breaks against a significant increase in demand, we have been considering ways to improve and modernise our processes to ensure the Short Breaks service is sustainable and able to support all the children with Special Educational Needs (SEN) and their families who need it. This is in line with our ongoing plan to move to a more inclusive care approach for children and families.

We want to improve the range of activities on offer in all localities across the county as well as give more flexibility for families, if they so wish, to use their Short Breaks funding for activities they can enjoy together as a whole family unit. We have recruited some Short Breaks inclusion co-ordinators to help us develop this approach and we also want to better use our budget to support more children and young people with SEND closer to their homes in the face of growing demand.

We ran a consultation because we want to find out what families who use Short Breaks think about our proposal to change the way we assess the support the children and families need through Short Breaks; the potential impact of any changes to the support and associated budget families receive as a result, and feedback on plans to increase support for Short Break suppliers within the community.

The consultation asking for views on our proposals was open on 27 June and closed on 2 August 2023.

2. Methodology

An online consultation was developed which ran for five weeks, closing on the 2 August 2023. This was hosted on the County Council's Citizen Space consultation hub. Paper copies, large print copies and Easy Read copies were available to download from the online portal, and available on request by email and phone (with a Freepost returns process in place). We had one request for the consultation to be translated into Lithuanian. Children's Services emailed 1,642 service users and asked them to feedback to our consultation, they also wrote to 42 services users who did not have online access.

3. Promotion

To ensure as many service users and providers could take part we promoted the consultation as follows:

- Email briefing or letter to service users, 1642 received an email and 42 a letter
- Email briefing to Members
- Email briefing to our customer services team to ensure they could answer questions about the consultation
- Information on the Council's website www.norfolk.gov.uk

Members of our Children's Services team organised 8 events at libraries and one online event, giving parents the opportunity to meet officers, ask questions and find out more about our proposals. The events are timetabled below:

17 July	10:00 - 13:00	Fakenham Library
	15:00 - 18:00	Kings Lynn Library
18 July	10:00 - 13:00	Great Yarmouth Library
	15:00 - 18:00	North Walsham Library
19 July	10:00 - 13:00	Thetford Library
	15:00 - 18:00	Diss Library
20 July	9:30 - 12:30	Dereham Library
21 July	10:00 - 13:00	Millennium Library, Norwich

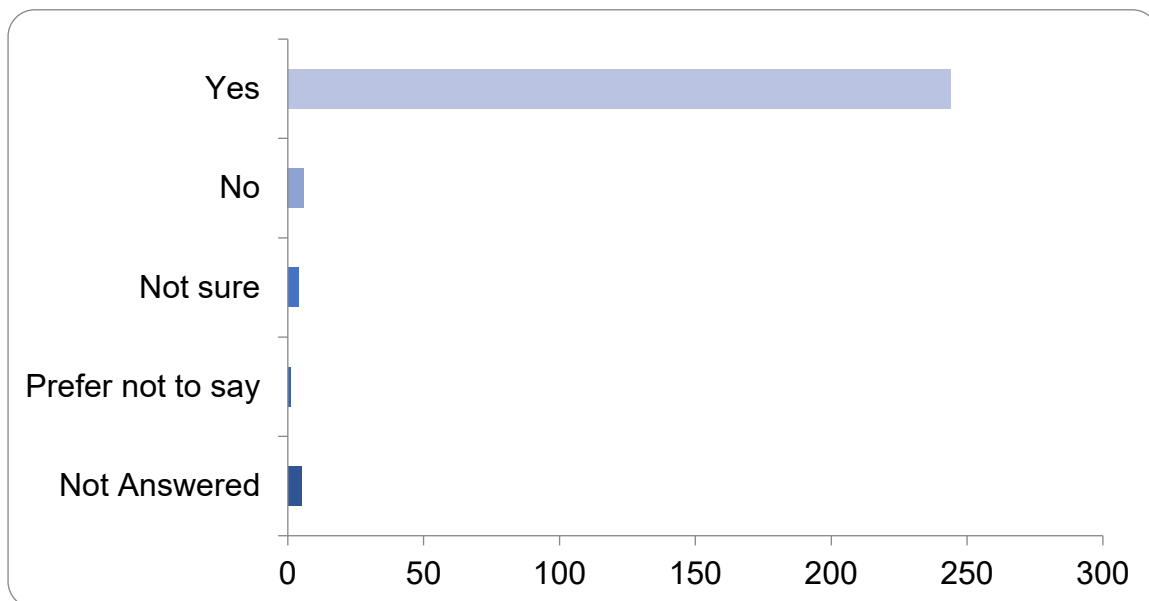
The online event took place on 27 July and was managed by officers from Children's Services with support from two Communications officers.

4. Results

For each open question, themes are shown in a table below a summary of findings. A sample of quotations (reported as written by the respondent) is included in the table. It should be noted that many of these quotations are long as families chose to give us detailed and personal feedback. We have redacted names to protect confidentiality.

Question 2: (Q1: was about confidentiality) Do you currently, or plan in the future, to receive funding from Norfolk County Council for Short Breaks for your child(ren)?

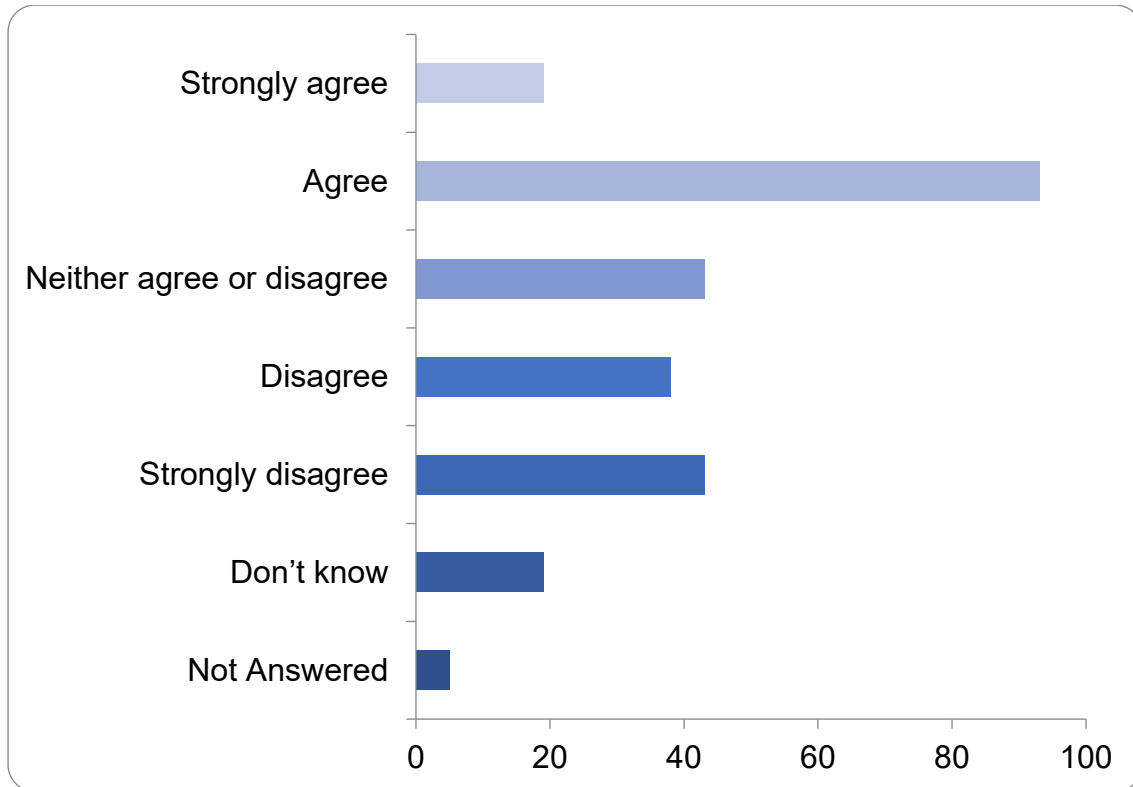
There were 260 answers to this question.



Option	Total	Percent
Yes	244	93.85%
No	6	2.31%
Not sure	4	1.54%
Prefer not to say	1	0.38%
Not Answered	5	1.92%

Q3: How far do you agree or disagree with our proposal to change the way families' needs are assessed?

There were 254 answers to this question.



Option	Total	Percent
Strongly agree	19	7.31%
Agree	93	35.77%
Neither agree or disagree	43	16.54%
Disagree	38	14.62%
Strongly disagree	43	16.54%
Don't know	19	7.31%
Prefer not to say	0	0.00%
Not Answered	5	1.92%

Q4: As a result of our proposals to change the way families' needs are assessed, the Short Breaks package could be delivered in a different way, which could result in direct payments for families potentially increasing, remaining the same or decreasing due to some services being paid for directly by the council. We aim to increase the availability of community activities which will be inclusive, lower cost or potentially free in a bid that families will be able to use their funding on a wider mix of activities closer to their homes.

How do you think this part of our proposal might affect you?

There were 240 responses to this question and a summary of themes is shown below. The top issues raised by families were:

- Concerns about moving to group settings which may not suit some children and could make negative impact.
- Conversely, respondents told us moving to a community setting could create a positive impact.
- Parents and carers told us it was important to have choice and flexibility around how activities were chosen for their children.
- Respondents were uncertain about the proposed changes.

Table 1: For question 4

Key themes	No.	Illustrative quotes (verbatim)
Negative impact of change to groups or community events #group	47	<p>"Children with ASD ADHD are not being given the support they need and I feel that the universal offer would make things worse rather than better. I also think making it from birth is unnecessary."</p> <p>"My son has high levels of needs and is not able to access any community offers. I feel that this is a terrible idea as people with no understanding of need will be grouping children together and each family should have the right to choose the support they need."</p> <p>"My children thrive on the current Short Breaks package and if changed it would have a very negative affect on our household."</p> <p>"My children are autistic, their preferred activities are not group based. This leads to distress and anxiety."</p> <p>"My daughter doesn't always like to do things with others and I don't want to be forced into it as she won't go. Like holiday club. She didn't go as hot to anxious."</p>

		<p>"My son has autism, shortbreaks has been wonderful for us being able to take him on days out (once we have prepared him on advance). The new system will not benefit him. He cannot cope with clubs, groups and activities so we would not be able to use this service. The current system means we can go on days out. The proposed system would put a stop to that."</p> <p>"I don't feel this proposal would benefit my daughter. She has tried to access mainstream group activities in the past with parent one to one support but she has struggled to the mix of children, size of group, setting, way activity delivered (information due to processing). For example brownies adaptations were with made with way information / activities were delivered to her and she had one to one support but she still could not cope. Swimming she found a group lesson overwhelming. She thrives in a one to one setting for example swimming lessons and gym activities. The SEN circus group she accesses she has struggled with the mix of children as some can really trigger her so even a SEN group isn't always flexible."</p> <p>"My child is unable to mix in groups of other children so her activities have to be done solo such as using a private swimming pool or private horse riding. So attending the group activities you talk about would not be an option."</p>
Positive impact of change #positive	42	<p>"I think this is a great idea and I hope the council use their size and buying power to be able to access activities at a fraction of the cost, hence more activities for children."</p> <p>"I strongly favour the community based activities (whether free or with minimum cost) as they could make it possible to enjoy short breaks within travelling accessibility, which parents like me are not able to do where the offers available are out of the reach of bus routes (making it expensive than the activity itself). Moreover, making short breaks need-based will be helpful in their best utilization for choosing suitable activities."</p> <p>"This is an excellent idea which would help families."</p>

		<p>"I think it would be beneficial to not just our family but many others."</p> <p>"It would be great if we were able to have more money on the card to help with new toys and equipment. Having a child with complex needs that also have servers behaviour issues as well as communication issues they tend to break things more than their peers meaning we have to replace toys ect more often. It's great that they recently changed it so we can now use it for the whole family and for a break on the UK. This has really opened up our family to be able to enjoy time together and not have the pressure that we have to stay all day and also means we can try things before committing to do doing it again when you don't know how your child will react. It gives us access to do "normal" activities with our children and their sibling as well."</p> <p>"As long as we still have some budget available to choose our own activities too, I think it would probably be quite good for us. If we were able to confidently leave our son at an activity it would certainly give us time to recharge our batteries as well as giving him a little independence from outside school."</p>
<p>Comments about the importance of, or concerns about flexibility and choice #choice</p>	34	<p>"We are already so limited in what he can do, so it would be a major concern for us – if we were to lose the flexibility to choose how best to spend his budget on him."</p> <p>"I would like to hope that I can continue to direct the short breaks funding as we see fit, some activities may not be suitable for every family so choice is still a must."</p> <p>"It would be handy to know which services / recreational providers would be suitable for my child and her needs. My one big worry is that we would lose the flexibility to trial different groups / providers for ourselves and only be allowed / encouraged to choose one advertised by yourselves. Sometimes you want your child to be in a mixed ability setting and other times you want them to go to an SEN session for something."</p>

Comments expressing uncertainty #unsure	24	<p>“I am not really sure as we don’t live near anywhere the activities are held and my son really struggles with group activities especially in warmer weather.”</p> <p>“The current system works well for us, the allocated amount works well. I am uncertain about changing this.”</p> <p>“It might be easier and more inclusive for the family.”</p> <p>“I am concerned that we will get even less funding. We have been told that the only way funding will increase is if we get a social worker.”</p>
Comments querying the rationale behind the proposal #critique	23	<p>“There is no detail in the plan of how funding will be allocated depending on needs of the child. At least the RAS methodology is clear as to what funding should be available relative to need. Does this make funding more subjective? What would happen if parents disagree with a change in their child’s allocation? Could they challenge the decision? Parents would want to know exactly how the funding would be calculated.”</p> <p>“I am wondering how some of the proposed plans would work for a very complex medical and disabled young person. As the main barrier to accessing most mainstream groups is personal care facilities and hoisting. I can’t imagine every group or activity will be installed with those type of expensive facilities!? We don’t have any PA s as we need highly trained medical staff so that also prevent my son from accessing mainstream groups without me which would increase his autonomy and independence.”</p> <p>“This is just a way of trying to cut costs as there is no money in the pot. Please don’t try to sell it as a positive.”</p>

<p>Comments about whether general (i.e. non-SEN specialist) providers will have skills, knowledge and experience to support children with SEN #SEN</p>	<p>2 2</p>	<p>"I would be concerned that clubs instead of chosen activities wouldn't provide enough personalised support for each child."</p> <p>"It would be good if there are more, and more inclusive providers. Our 'complex' daughter attended the [redacted] briefly but we stopped after two sessions it was obvious they could not look after her safely (on the most basic level, she came out of the second session hanging half out of her wheelchair). I am not sure how the council proposes to 'upskill' providers to be able to look after children with real complex needs."</p> <p>"Unfortunately doing a one hour training module on Autism or on learning difficulties will not equip a provider with the knowledge or know how they will need to be fully inclusive and offer provision to all those with specialist needs. If a child needs help with toileting I cannot see how any mainstream provider would be equipped to deal with this. At the moment, via the Big Norfolk Holiday Fun Scheme a number of providers say they are fully inclusive and can accommodate those with additional needs but this is simply not true. If a child is going to a specialist school to receive specialist education from teachers and teaching assistants who are trained in this to a degree and diploma level, there is no way this same level of support can be provided by mainstream or community holiday clubs and it's very degrading and humiliating to expect families to believe that it can. In addition I would like to know how on earth would you ensure the quality of provision in meeting needs, correct training, & ongoing support for staff, monitor and ensure safe guarding procedures for a cross complex multitude of needs across the whole of Norfolk."</p> <p>"In addition I would like to know how on earth would you ensure the quality of the provision in meeting needs, correct training, & ongoing support for staff, monitor and ensure safe guarding procedures for a cross complex multitude of needs across the whole of Norfolk."</p> <p>"Realistically many community activities cannot be made easily accessible for children with disabilities."</p>
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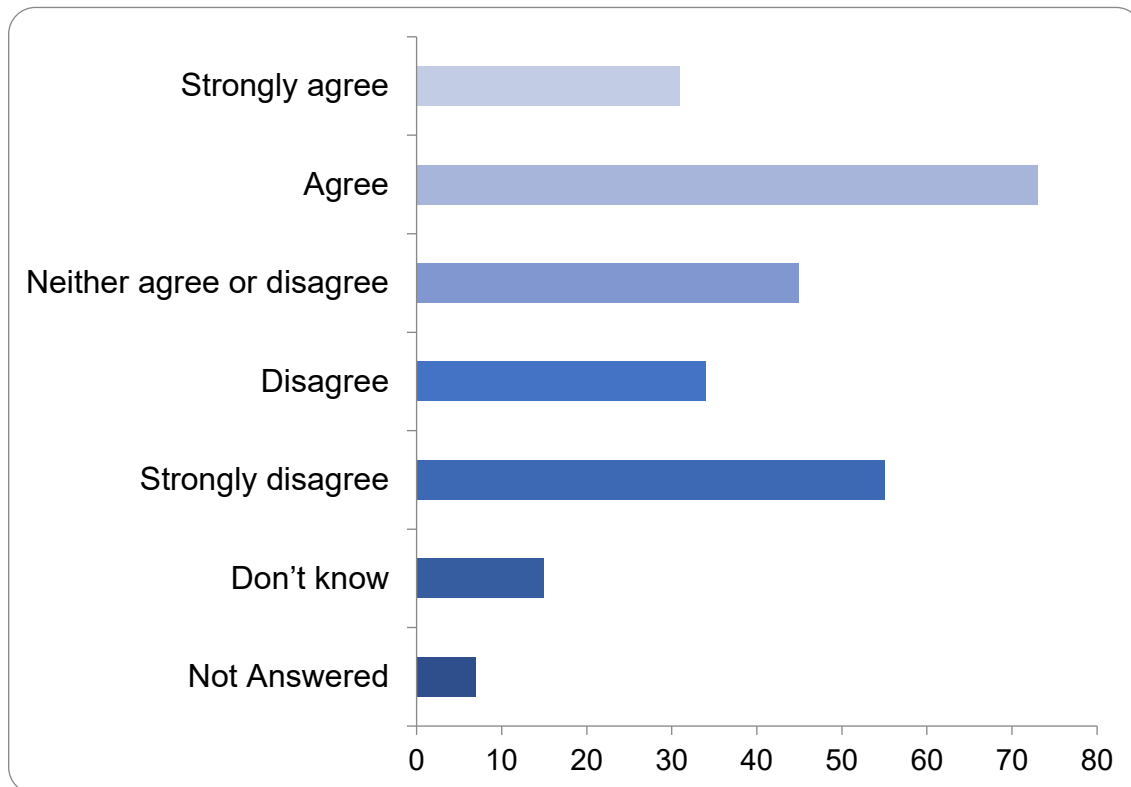
<p>Preference or need for tailored activities, #tailored</p>	<p>20</p>	<p>"My children are both teens now and prefer to do activities with only 1 or 2 others and wouldn't cope with universal services."</p> <p>"I feel that this could be restrictive. My child often requires bespoke activities or 1-1 support making group activities difficult to attend."</p> <p>"I am concerned that allowing autistic children to join mainstream activities may not work as even if they're accommodating it could be too noisy and busy. Local bespoke classes would be better. I also use the money for 1:1 swimming lessons. This will cost me £1000 next year so I rely on short breaks for that to be made possible."</p>
<p>Barriers to accessing activities #barriers</p>	<p>19</p>	<p>"As I live in a gap area, I would love for there to be more opportunity of after school clubs and activities. Though, many providers would struggle with my son due to his challenging behaviours and I find this the biggest barrier to him accessing activities as most providers won't be able to support him."</p> <p>"My concern is the ability of parents to be informed about what is available and to be able to request it. My experience of trying to access Short Breaks was that when I asked what was available I was told next to nothing. Information about respite in particular was difficult to come by, and still is 4 years later. I can find out fairly easily about getting direct payment card activities, but there is nothing at all about proper respite services like [redacted], [redacted] and others. How can parents request what they don't know about? I think it will perpetuate the current situation of the only the cheapest, most budget friendly activities being advertised or known about?"</p> <p>"It may well reduce the available amount of money given per year in funding but if the support matched my child's needs and they were able to access a different variety of activities rather than just one or two that they are currently doing because of transport or location then I think that would benefit them."</p>

Current or future availability of services #availability	17	<p>"I already find it difficult to find activities that my child enjoys and I live near Norwich where there is lots of choice. Unfortunately it's about what my child would like to do, rather than what's on offer."</p> <p>"I will be interested to see if there any new activities become available because so far I have not been offered any activity I had to find for my son. If the money will decrease but no free activity will be available I would find that disappointing."</p> <p>"It would definitely be more helpful to have a wider range of activities for SEN families. There is a very limited choice of support / activities throughout the holidays for SEN children especially those that have not yet been granted short breaks, due to the fact they don't turn 5 until late in the school year."</p>
Comments about respite care #respite	10	<p>"I also strongly feel siblings should get their own short breaks funding allowance as they are also young carers and have respite needs."</p> <p>"Within the personal budget allocated we often have some left over at the end of the year period – we would like to be able to used this as respite but we struggle to understand the process behind how we go about this."</p> <p>"I feel that respite is desperately needed away from the home for struggling parents. Many parents would need to attend clubs activities with a child with special needs, so the parents would not get a break."</p>
Accessing services in rural locations #rural	9	<p>"Our child would struggle with a lot of people at community activities plus we are rural and would have to travel."</p> <p>"I can't drive and live semi rurally, I wouldn't be able to transport my daughter to community activities unless they were very close by. I worry this would effectively mean she would be awarded provision she can't attend due to no transport and therefore would just have to miss out."</p> <p>"My son is currently excluded from local afterschool club due to not being toilet trained."</p>

		Clubs use “safeguarding” policies to exclude children with diabetes making it harder to attend mainstream activities. I also live in a village where access to clubs on the doorstep is minimal so accessing clubs will be difficult. Travel to clubs may be required due to be in a rural location and in situations where parents cannot drive my child either because of no car availability or other commitments such as work or sibling to care for.
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Q5: How far do you agree or disagree with the potential change in Short Breaks which could include an increased amount of inclusive, low cost or free community-based activities closer to home?

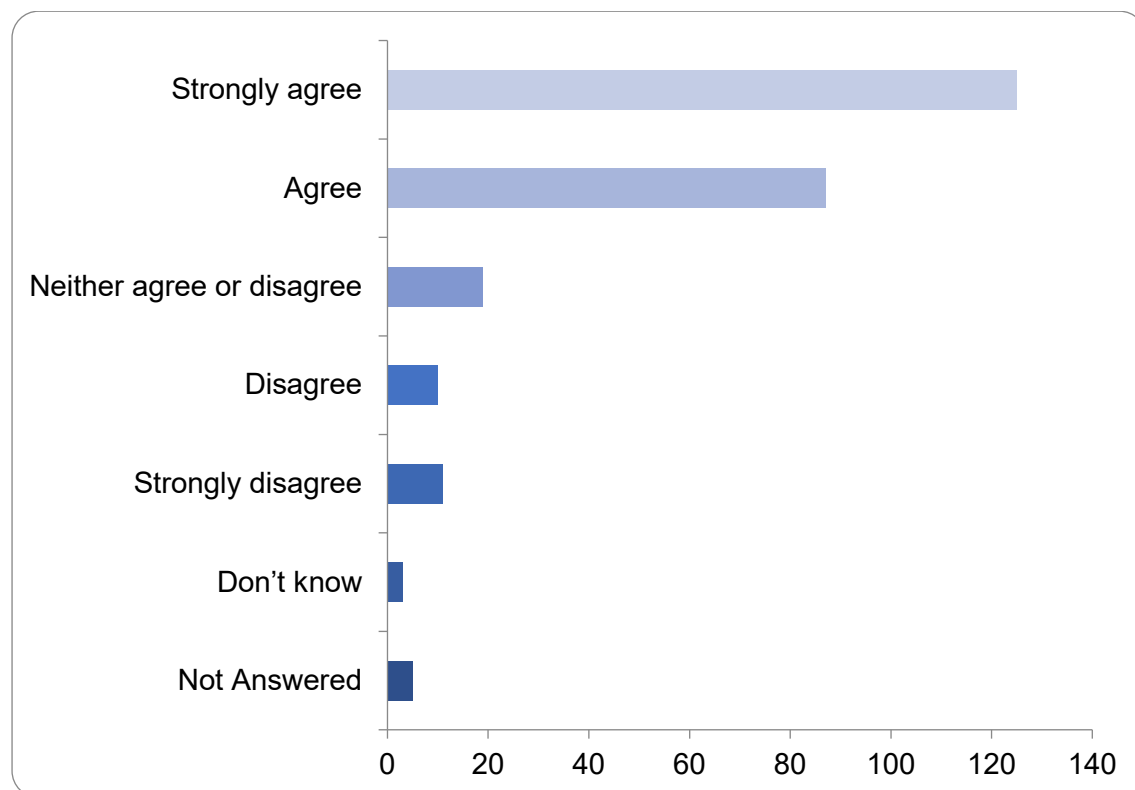
There were 260 responses to this question.



Option	Total	Percent
Strongly agree	31	11.92%
Agree	73	28.08%
Neither agree or disagree	45	17.31%
Disagree	34	13.08%
Strongly disagree	55	21.15%
Don't know	15	5.77%
Prefer not to say	0	0.00%
Not Answered	7	2.69%

Q6: How far do you agree or disagree with our proposal to give people the choice to use their Short Break funding to pay for other family members (adults or children) to attend activities alongside their child with special educational needs and disabilities?

There were 260 responses to this question.



Option	Total	Percent
Strongly agree	125	48.08%
Agree	87	33.46%
Neither agree or disagree	19	7.31%
Disagree	10	3.85%
Strongly disagree	11	4.23%
Don't know	3	1.15%
Prefer not to say	0	0.00%
Not Answered	5	1.92%

Q7: The second part of this question was *how do you think our proposal might affect you?*

There were 225 responses to this question and a summary of themes is shown below. The top issues raised by families were:

- Opportunity for more family time; parents and other siblings could spend more time doing activities together as a family.
- Moving to a community setting could make a positive impact and - once again - conversely many parents told us it could create a negative impact.
- Respondents told us they were querying our proposed approach and questioned our rationale.

Table 2: For question 7

Key themes	No.	Illustrative quotes (verbatim)
Families enjoying Short Breaks #familytime	63	<p>“To be able to use it for the family would actually make it useful for families like mine where all other provisions has been refused due to complex needs!! We can’t afford to pay the high price for activities with our low income unfortunately this means our children mostly miss out on experiences.”</p> <p>“Allowing every member of the household to benefit from the Short Breaks funding is a good idea, because the disabled child’s needs affect everyone living with them. It will also allow them to enjoy family life together and is a very good idea.”</p> <p>“It would be lovely to be able to pay for us parents to participate in activities which we could pay for out of short breaks as there are some things the boys would love to do but they need an adult to do with them and we can’t afford to fund ourselves.”</p> <p>“I think it will be great to allow family to do things together. I for one, have two boys that are 18 months apart, one receives short breaks, but their relationship can be rocky, so to be able to utilise the money to do things as a family would be awesome in building a bond between them.</p> <p>“I am hoping this would provide a wider range of activities for my son to access as he currently</p>

		<p>struggles to find activities that he enjoys and he is safe to attend. I would love for the funding to be able to be used for the whole family as I have another send child who is under 5.”</p> <p>“think being able to pay for our eldest son or the test of our family using the shirt breaks funding will have a positive impact. Currently we choose not to all go out as it can be very expensive and only one carer is given a discounted rate.”</p> <p>“If we access family days out we usually can pay for my daughter and carer ticket so we meet the cost of the rest of us. Family days out for example, theme parks or swimming are respite for us. It would be good if her sister could benefit and access activities.”</p> <p>“More quality time as a family.”</p>
<p>Positive impact of change #positive</p>	41	<p>“As above both my Send child and his younger sister can have fun together. Win Win for both.”</p> <p>“This would be helpful as a lot of times we would like to go somewhere but haven’t got the funds to go all as a family.”</p> <p>Having a child with SEN and now being unable to work, means that days out are very expensive. Prior to having a child with SEN my other children had many more opportunities and they definitely miss out. We were able to access these easier as not everything is inclusive and also funds are lower now. Getting funding for just our disabled child while appreciated doesn’t help us as a family unit. This new proposal will make a huge difference to many families.</p> <p>“As long as we still have some budget available to choose our own activities too I think it would probably be quite good for us. If we were able to confidently leave our son at an activity it would certainly give us a little time to recharge our batteries as well as giving him a little independence and fun outside school.”</p> <p>“It would be a more tailor made plan for us so happy to see what changes may happen.”</p>

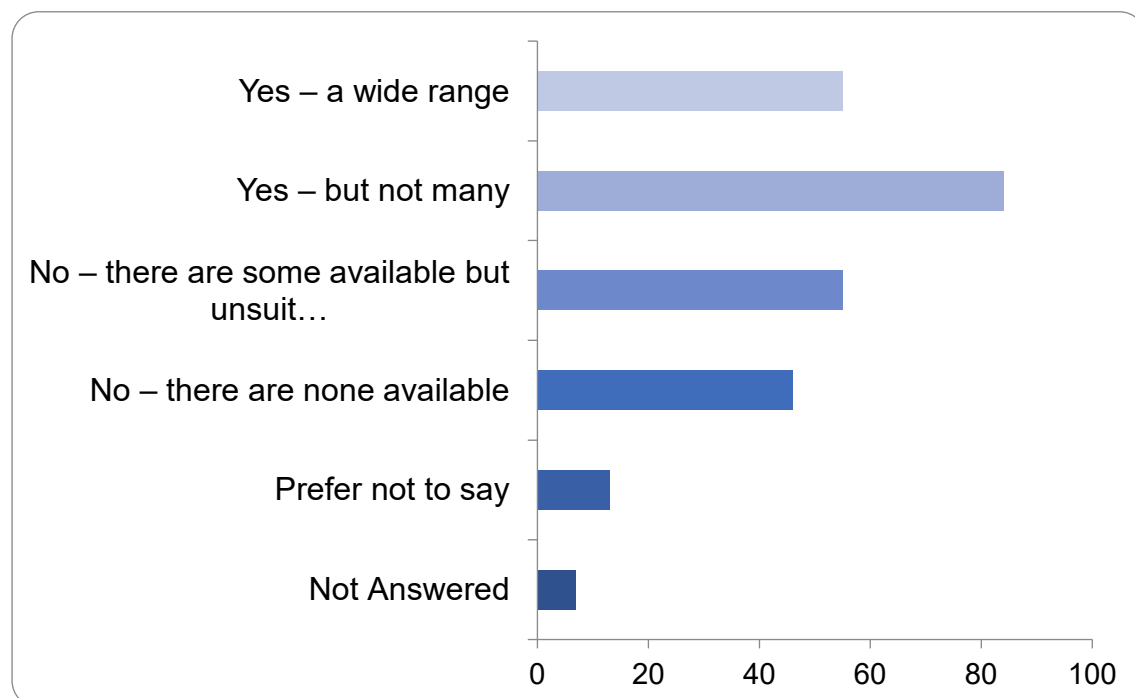
		<p>"[Redacted] disability is only physical so it will be better if he had more access to general community activities."</p>
<p>Negative impact of change #negative</p>	37	<p>"I think my daughter would no longer be eligible for the same level of support. I would struggle to find it myself. It gives me a 30 minute break a week and gives my child the opportunity to pursue a hobby that she enjoys where she doesn't have to worry about communication and gives here an opportunity for achievement that is not academic."</p> <p>"Our funding will be reduced meaning our child will not be able to do all the things they currently enjoy doing. Our family will not be able to spend as much quality time together as we currently do."</p> <p>"The new proposed packages would provide un accessible activities for my young person. It is extremely concerning."</p>
<p>Rationale behind the proposal #critique</p>	25	<p>"Whilst it is a nice idea to enable families to use funding to pay for family member to jointly do activities when funding is limited I personally feel it should be spent on the child. According to your consultation figure there are potentially thousands more children eligible for scheme than currently apply. Th new plan doesn't seem to me anywhere near detailed enough to address this basic funding gap. I am aware my answer above about group based services for the council may seem at odds with this but I genuinely think I would get my children to access those sort of activities, I cannot get them willing to join in Norfolk big holiday activities which are a similar nature for variety of reasons to de with their send."</p> <p>"Well obviously us as parents know our children and their needs better than anyone.... Some may be left upset by the new proposals or things within it!"</p> <p>"It worries me that the new system could be motivated by cost cutting rather than meeting the individual child's needs"</p>
<p>Importance of, or concerns about, flexibility and choice #choice</p>	22	<p>"We use most of our budget on a PA, so this new plan wouldn't work for us at all. We like the flexibility the budget gives us where we can choose where to spend the money depending our</p>

		<p>child's needs and interests. With the new system we would be much more restricted. This isn't giving our children the freedom of choice tht mainstream children have."</p> <p>"I am concerned that funding will be reduced, or the options for spending the funding will be restricted."</p> <p>"Fundamentally, this seems to me to be a limiting choice</p>
<p>Comments about cost of activities #cost</p>	21	<p>"It would be much better more affordable for us to join our son participating in some activities without worrying about cost."</p> <p>"It would enable us to do activities as a family instead of just my daughter & I mostly due to the cost of activities."</p> <p>"I think it's a brilliant idea that the whole family would be able to use the Short Breaks fund as it is very expensive to go on a day out as a family that would benefit us so much."</p>
<p>Comments about whether general (i.e. non-SEN specialist) providers will have skills, knowledge and experience to support children with SEN #SEN</p>	16	<p>It would be great in theory but for children with significant need there needs to be a higher level of expertise then most could manage. Most mainstream schools struggle with inclusion even though they have highly trained staff. One of the most special things at the [redacted] Centre and [redacted] activities is being like everyone else, everything is accessible, you don't need any special help. This is from a place of accessing mainstream education very successfully where support can be much more individual and flexible. Inclusive activities are possible with the prepayment card but a parent can make an informed decision based on speaking to the provider directly. I think there is also more of an issue for physically disabled children who could particularly miss out with this proposal. Will all buildings and resources be accessible and appropriate? As most are sports based will those who are physically disabled be able to join in all of the session?</p>

		<p>I think if there was better support for local small community groups to be inclusive for SEN children and be educated around the physical and mental disabilities then that is good. The provision for holiday clubs, SEN times at trampolining / soft play (always poor times such as dinner time, early mornings etc which is frankly an insult) and understanding ASD, ADHD etc is very limited when in mainstream groups. Anything to support this I am happy with. The fact that no child should be disadvantaged by this though. The council should be funding this IN ADDITION to the short breaks provision not at the expense of any children. Council lead schemes need to be exciting and offer a really good range of things to be value for money. It concerns me that my child may not want to do this but is forced to have it as part of their scheme and have their money reduced as such. That's unfair as the GOVTs policy is to allow parents to choose.</p>
<p>Comments expressing uncertainty #unsure</p>	16	<p>"I think if this is going to complicate things then I would rather not have the change. Parents with Sen already have so many issues to deal with & have to fight so hard for their children. A simple, kinder approach may be better which is inclusive of all sen children and there families."</p> <p>"My daughter is high support so would need extra staff at any local clubs and im not sure if this would actually happen."</p> <p>"My reservations are about ow a provider will be defined as 'inclusive', how this will be assessed and monitored. It sounds like it could potentially restrict families from accessing bespoke activities to meet the needs of their children."</p>
<p>Comments about respite care #respite</p>	15	<p>"It would be nice to have more activities on offer and support so our little boy can attend them and we can get some respite."</p> <p>"The name is Short Breaks. The original intention is to provide respite. Yes financially having money for days out as a family sounds nice. But that does not deliver respite or develop skills around independence for the SEN child."</p> <p>"I feel that respite is desperately needed away from the home for struggling parents. Many parents would need to attend clubs activities with</p>

		a child with special needs, so the parents would not get a break.” .
Comments about spending less on the service or doing less of it #less	8	<p>“I believe this to be a cost cutting measure first and foremost. It is likely that we will be able to access fewer activities as a result.”</p> <p>“I think it may affect quite a lot & will have to see if being decreased when we ill not access any services in the community with without proper thought through</p>
Comments about payment card working well / should be continued. #paymentcard	5	<p>“It is not always possible to transport children at given days and times during their free time which is why a flexible payment card works well.”</p> <p>“My son won’t go to any groups or clubs so pre paid card is still our best option.”</p>

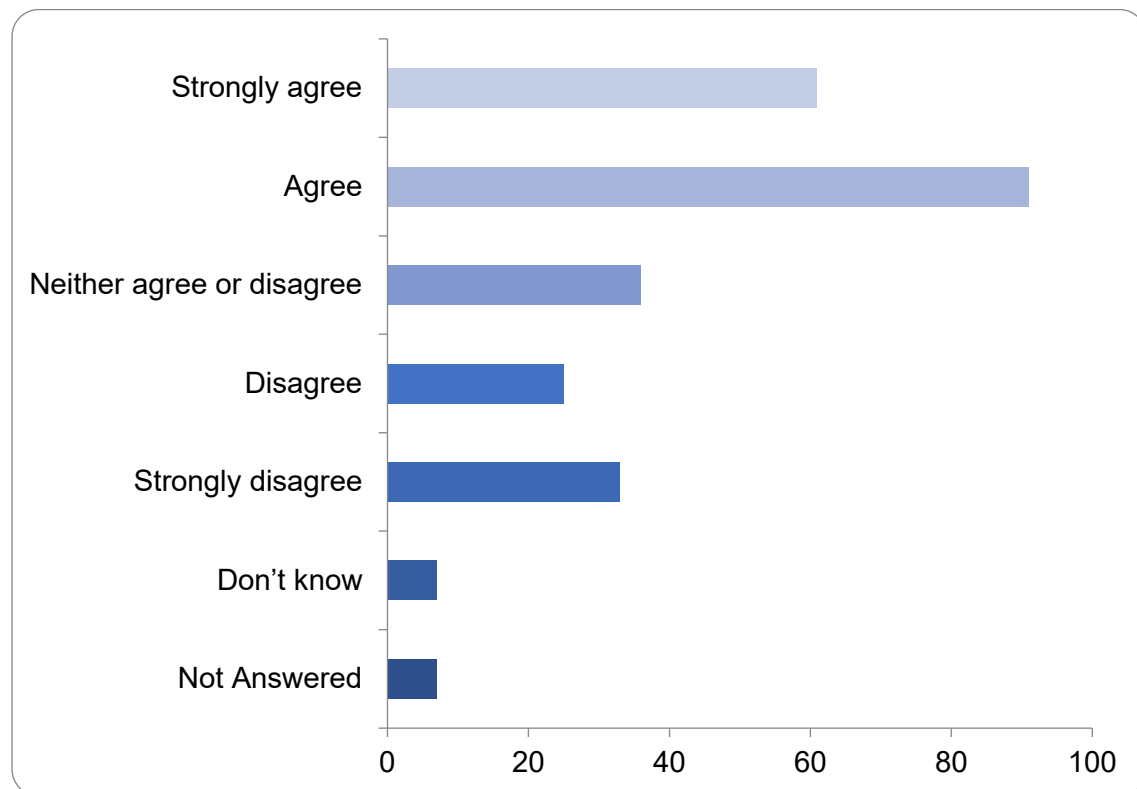
Q8: Are you able to access Short Break activities in a location close/convenient to your home currently?



Option	Total	Percent
Yes – a wide range	55	21.15%
Yes – but not many	84	32.31%
No – there are some available but unsuitable for my child	55	21.15%
No – there are none available	46	17.69%
Prefer not to say	13	5.00%
Not Answered	7	2.69%

Q9. How far do you agree or disagree with our proposal to offer increased support to community activity providers, so that they can be inclusive and children with special educational needs and abilities can attend?

There were 260 answers to this question/



Option	Total	Percent
Strongly agree	61	23.46%
Agree	91	35.00%
Neither agree or disagree	36	13.85%
Disagree	25	9.62%
Strongly disagree	33	12.69%
Don't know	7	2.69%
Prefer not to say	0	0.00%
Not Answered	7	2.69%

Q10: The second part of this question asked ‘how, if at all, do you think our proposal to might affect you?’

There were 199 responses to this question and a summary of themes is shown below. The top issues raised by families were:

- Concern about whether general providers were trained adequately or had enough facilities to care for SEN children. The tag #SEN also featured in open questions 4 and 7 (see pages 9 and 17), although this was the top theme for question 10.
- Once again, respondents told us about positive and negative impacts for community groups.
- Respondents told us they were uncertain about our proposals.

Table 3: For question 10

Key themes	No.	Illustrative quotes (verbatim)
Comments about whether general (i.e. non-SEN specialist) providers will have skills, knowledge and experience to support children with SEN #SEN	37	<p>“I wouldn’t feel confident leaving my complex needs child. She has severe needs and is not able to attend group activities without dedicated 1:1 support from someone who knows her well. Would these providers be able to administer medication and change nappies?”</p> <p>“It’s a good idea to make local provision more accessible because a lot of children could access local community based clubs with support of trained staff, however; a lot of children couldn’t (like mine). Some children are far too complex to access mainstream clubs/classes and it would be a huge concern if children with very complex needs were being “pushed” to socialise with able children under the false slogan of ‘inclusion’ . Sounds more like an idea of integration than inclusion and integration is segregation for many very complex children.”</p> <p>“My son is in a specialist educational setting and still requires 1-1 support at all times. I do not feel the level of support offered out to community activity providers will very enough to help them meet and support his individual needs.”</p>

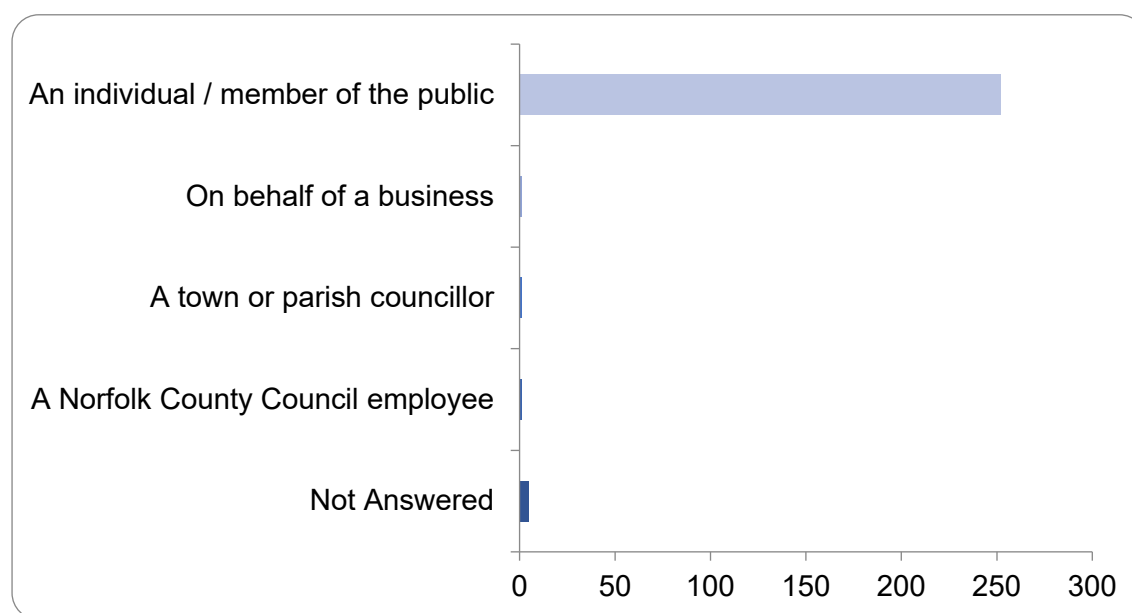
<p>Negative impact of change #negative</p>	<p>28</p>	<p>"Very adversely."</p> <p>"It sounds great but in reality with PDA and high anxiety that's no from our neurodivergent child."</p> <p>"As I have already said, NCC do not train taxi staff correctly so how would they even manage this. It's unreasonable and you have not provided enough on how this will be achieved."</p> <p>"my children in the mist cannot access community activities hence we use the funding to book private sessions which they can access."</p>
<p>Positive impact of change #positive</p>	<p>23</p>	<p>"We have 2 siblings and the youngest gets forgotten so it would be good if we could use the funding for both"</p> <p>"Massively. Especially if there are staff at the groups so we can drop children off and leave them. Their will further expand their socialising skills and make friends."</p> <p>"Get into more stuff so can do more."</p>
<p>Comments expressing uncertainty #unsure</p>	<p>21</p>	<p>"I'm not confident that the right activities will be available to meet the complex needs of our child."</p> <p>"All comes down to if my children would want to do what is on offer, my 2 Sen children are incredibly different in what they like doing and throwing my neurotypical children into is near on impossible to find something they all enjoy and can benefit from. Yes it may be closer but distance isn't a problem if it's working well like currently it is."</p> <p>"Unsure really as all very new to this' lots of reading/researching so would love my child to attend local activities' but just need to figure out how & location etc..."</p>

<p>Comments about families having a choice #choice</p>	<p>18</p>	<p>“positively. Assuming we are not obliged to use free groups that may be unsuitable or not as the child is used to. That would cause far too much disruption.”</p> <p>“My children prefer to access activities either as 1-1 or very small groups and this works well for them but they also enjoy spending time with family as they no they we do not judge them and they can just be them without masking.</p> <p>As they attend a specialist school and have to have transport, so accessing a school’s after club is not feasible. Or even activities straight after school as they sometimes need to wind down before going out and regulate themselves.</p> <p>As a shift worker I have to arrange things around my shifts (work have been accommodating but only to a point) and my other children’s activities – I cannot commit to group based activities – not having DP would make this more difficult and stressful. DP works best for us.”</p>
<p>Comments about the rationale behind eh proposal #critique</p>	<p>15</p>	<p>“The proposal very much reads that due to an increased local offering, of which we do not know yet what this may look like, it is possible our Children’s personal budget could decrease (it certainly won’t go up if more local services are provided- regardless of whether that is helpful to specific needs of our children or if they wish to attend the local offerings).</p> <p>“This will mean the critical money that we spend on holiday clubs to give our children a break from each other. Which in turn gives us parents a vital break from the triggering each sibling had on the other, Will no longer happen.”</p>
<p>Comments with a caveat #proviso</p>	<p>14</p>	<p>“If provision is local and is suitable this will be of benefit as long as long as the Short Breaks team can provide the information.”</p> <p>“It could be amazing if she could attend the activities that her peers and siblings attended but still receive a good level of understanding and support at the same time.”</p>

5. About you

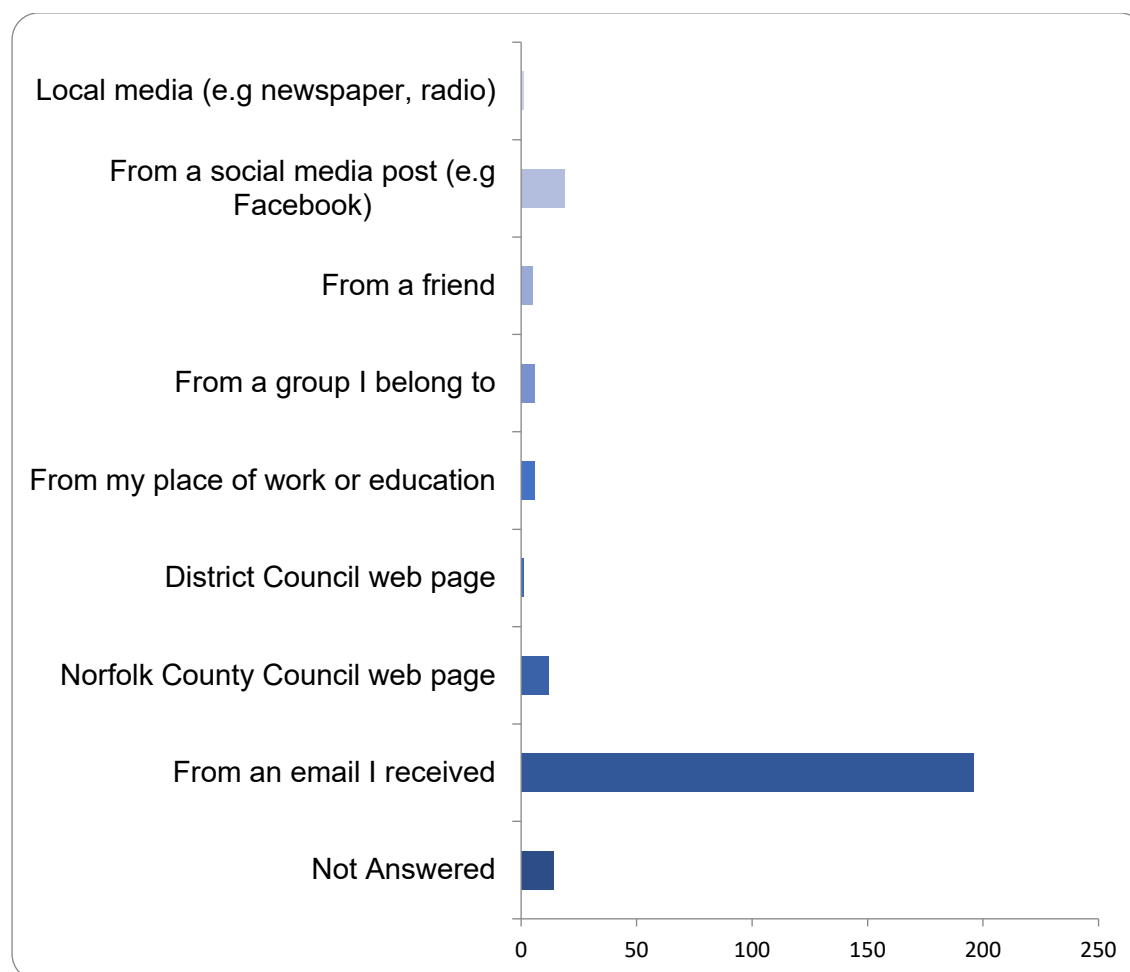
To make sure we are learning from a wide range of people we asked questions about individuals. These questions were optional and this information is helpful for us to understand who is responded to this consultation.

Q11: Are you responding as?



Option	Total	Percent
An individual / member of the public	252	96.92%
On behalf of a voluntary or community group	0	0.00%
On behalf of a statutory organization	0	0.00%
On behalf of a business	1	0.38%
A Norfolk County Council Councillor	0	0.00%
A district or borough councillor	0	0.00%
A town or parish councillor	1	0.38%
A Norfolk County Council employee	1	0.38%
Not Answered	5	1.92%

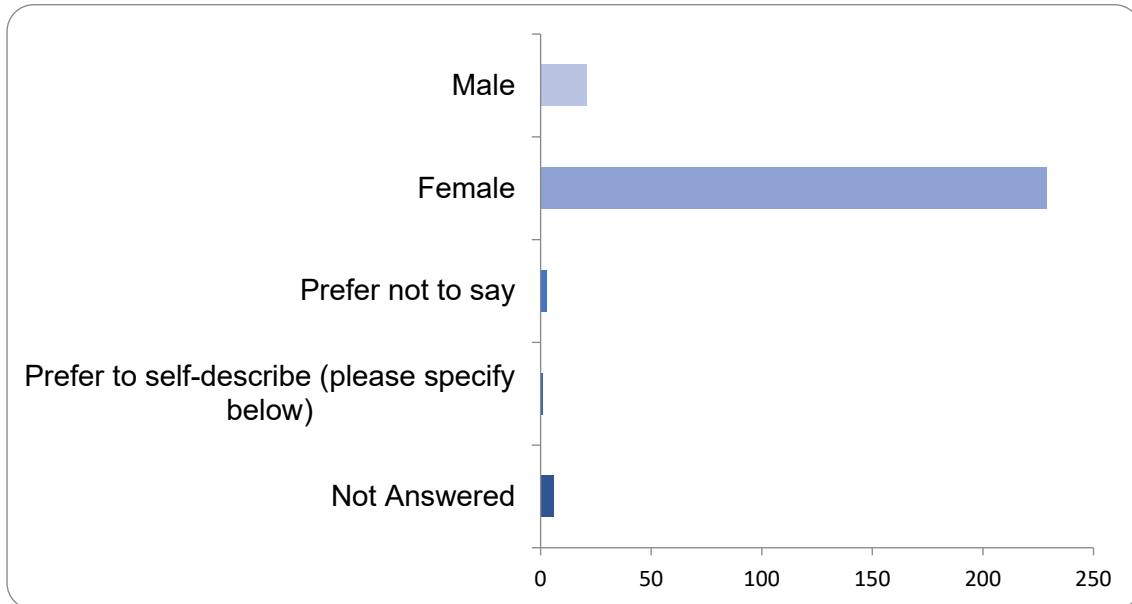
Q12: How did you hear about this consultation?



Option	Total	Percent
Local media (e.g newspaper, radio)	1	0.38%
From a social media post (e.g Facebook)	19	7.31%
From a friend	5	1.92%
From a group I belong to	6	2.31%
From my place of work or education	6	2.31%
The Norfolk Residents' Panel	0	0.00%
District Council web page	1	0.38%
Norfolk County Council web page	12	4.62%
My Parish Council	0	0.00%
From an email I received	196	75.38%
Not Answered	14	5.38%

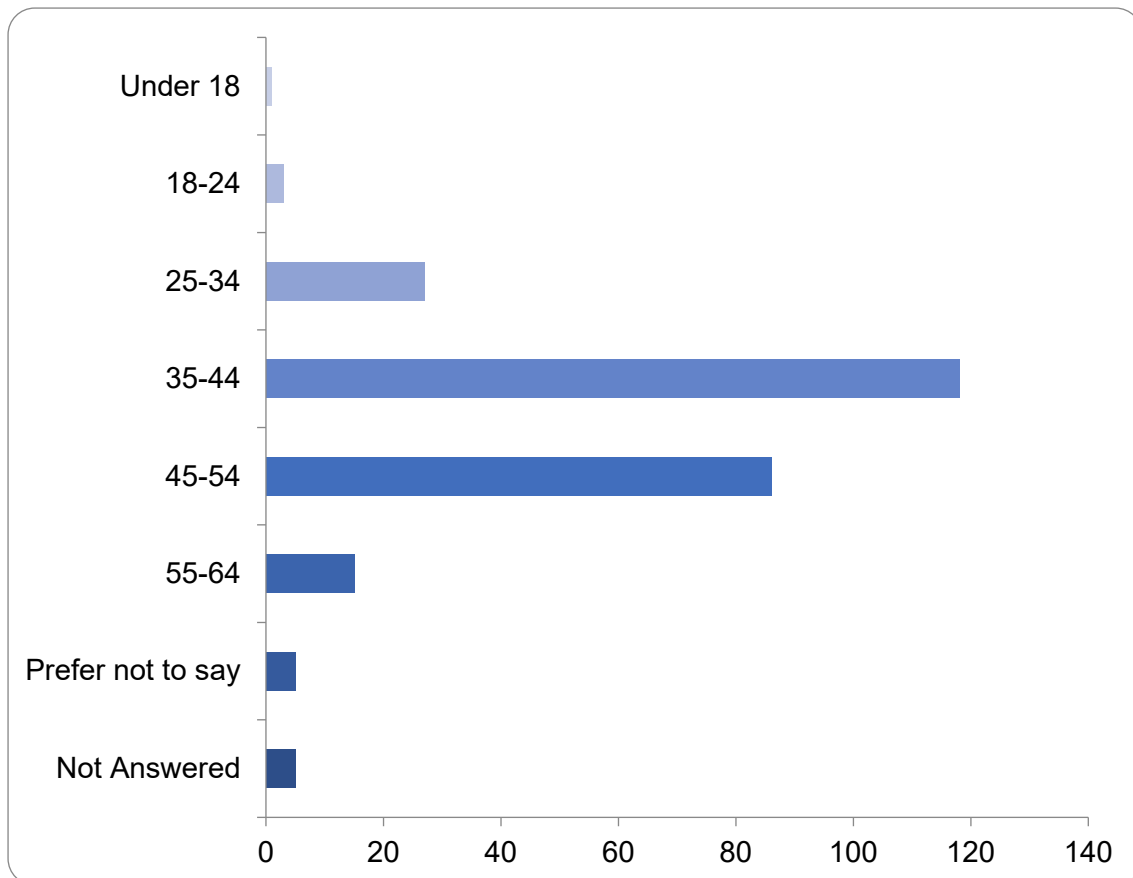
There were 260 responses to this consultation and **75.38%** of responses found out about our consultation via an email they received directly from Children's Services.

Q13: Are you?



Option	Total	Percent
Male	21	8.08%
Female	229	88.08%
Prefer not to say	3	1.15%
Prefer to self-describe (please specify below)	1	0.38%
Not Answered	6	2.31%

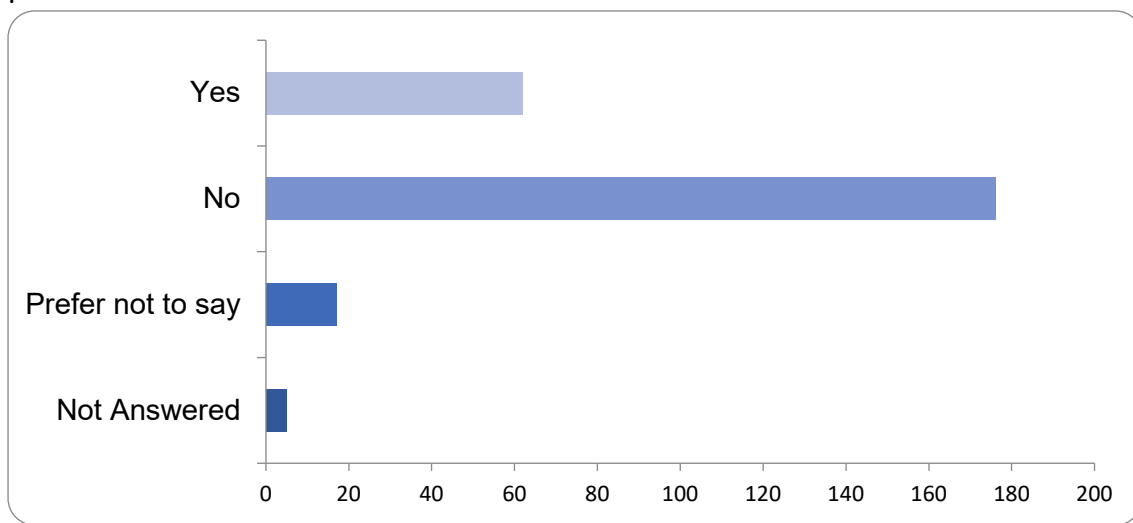
Q14 How old are you?



Option	Total	Percent
Under 18	1	0.38%
18-24	3	1.15%
25-34	27	10.38%
35-44	118	45.38%
45-54	86	33.08%
55-64	15	5.77%
65-74	0	0.00%
75-84	0	0.00%
85 or older	0	0.00%
Prefer not to say	5	1.92%
Not Answered	5	1.92%

Q15: Do you have any long-term illness, disability or health problem that limits your daily activities or the work you can do?

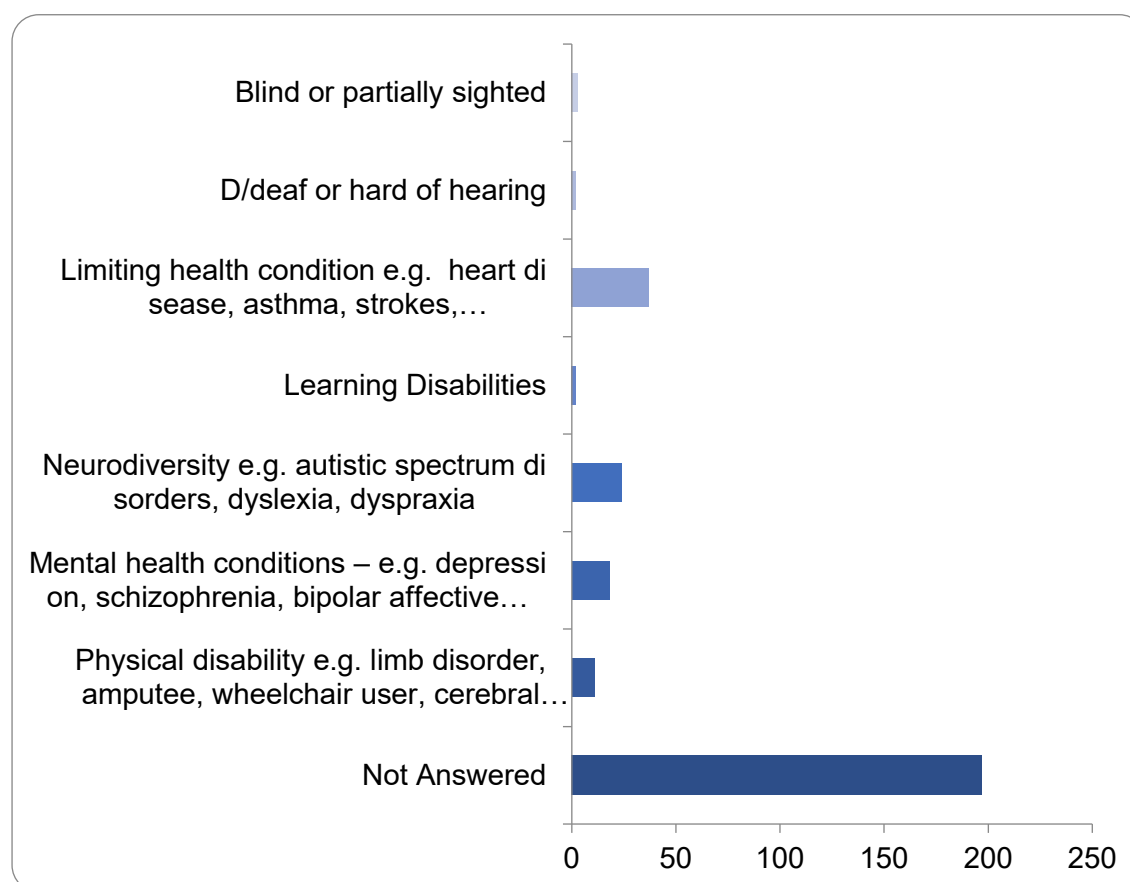
There were 255 responses to this part of the question



Option	Total	Percent
Yes	62	23.85%
No	176	67.69%
Prefer not to say	17	6.54%
Not Answered	5	1.92%

Q16: If yes which of the following best describes your condition or disability?

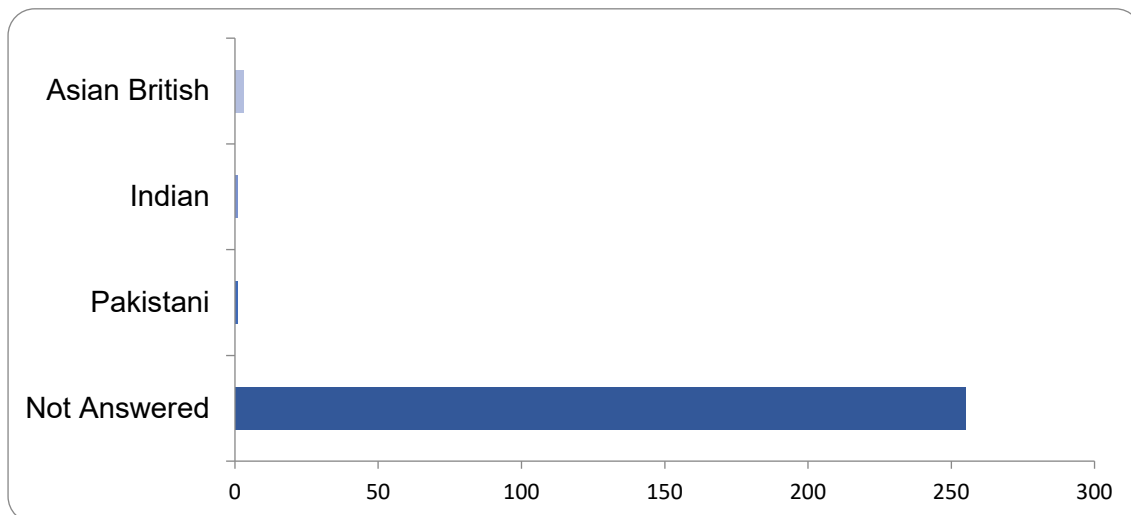
There were 63 responses to this part of the question.



Option	Total	Percent
Blind or partially sighted	3	1.15%
D/deaf or hard of hearing	2	0.77%
Limiting health condition e.g. heart disease, asthma, strokes, osteoarthritis, rheumatoid arthritis, fibromyalgia and myalgic encephalomyelitis (ME) etc.	37	14.23%
Learning Disabilities	2	0.77%
Neurodiversity e.g. autistic spectrum disorders, dyslexia, dyspraxia	24	9.23%
Mental health conditions – e.g. depression, schizophrenia, bipolar affective disorders, eating disorders, obsessive compulsive disorder	18	6.92%
Physical disability e.g. limb disorder, amputee, wheelchair user, cerebral palsy, motor neuron disease, muscular dystrophy	11	4.23%
Not Answered	197	75.77%

Q17: How would you describe your ethnic background?

There were 5 responses to this part of the question.



Option	Total	Percent
Asian British	3	1.15%
Indian	1	0.38%
Pakistani	1	0.38%
Bangladeshi	0	0.00%
Chinese	0	0.00%
Not Answered	255	98.08%

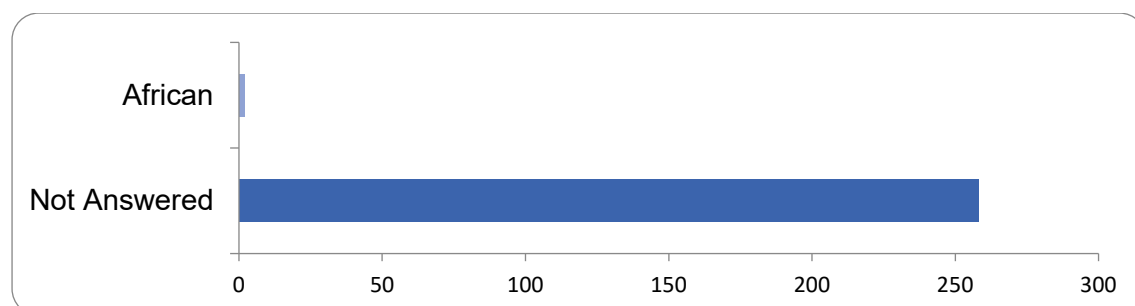
Any other Asian background, please describe her?

There were two answers to this part of the question.

Nepalese and Muraitian

Ethnicity Black/Black British/Caribbean?

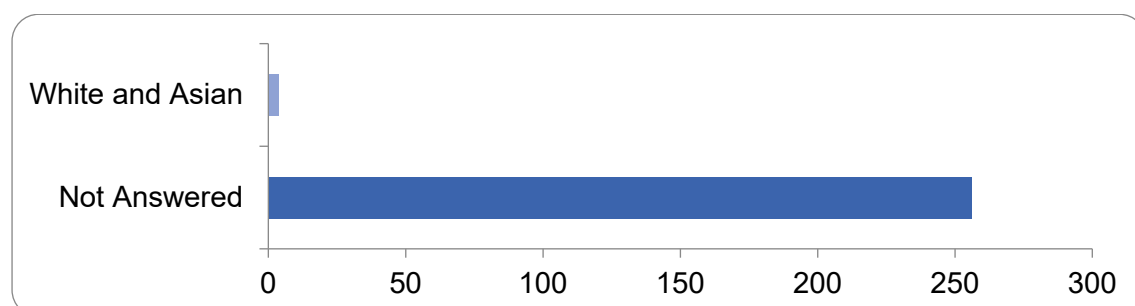
There were 2 responses to this part of the question.



Option	Total	Percent
Black British	0	0.00%
Caribbean	0	0.00%
African	2	0.77%
Not Answered	258	99.23%

Mixed ethnicity options?

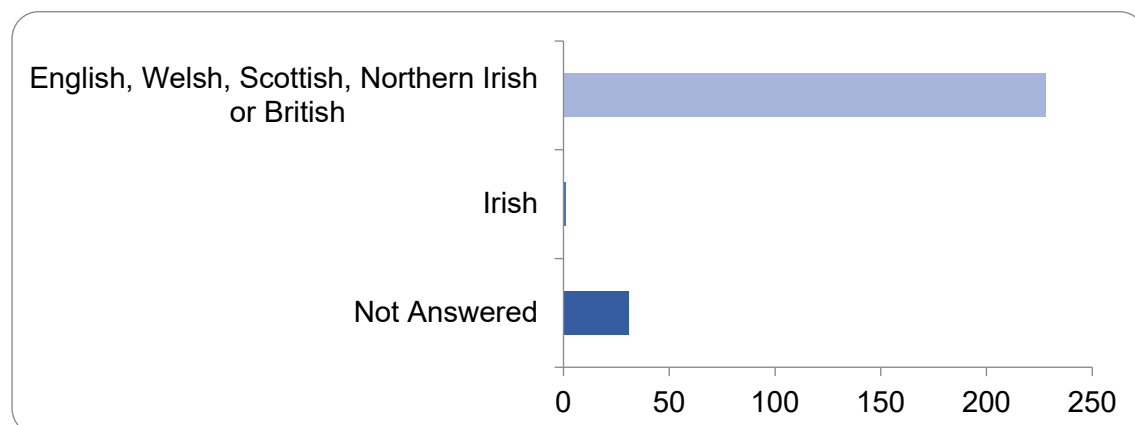
There were 4 responses to this part of the question.



Option	Total	Percent
White and Black Caribbean	0	0.00%
White and Black African	0	0.00%
White and Asian	4	1.54%
Not Answered	256	98.46%

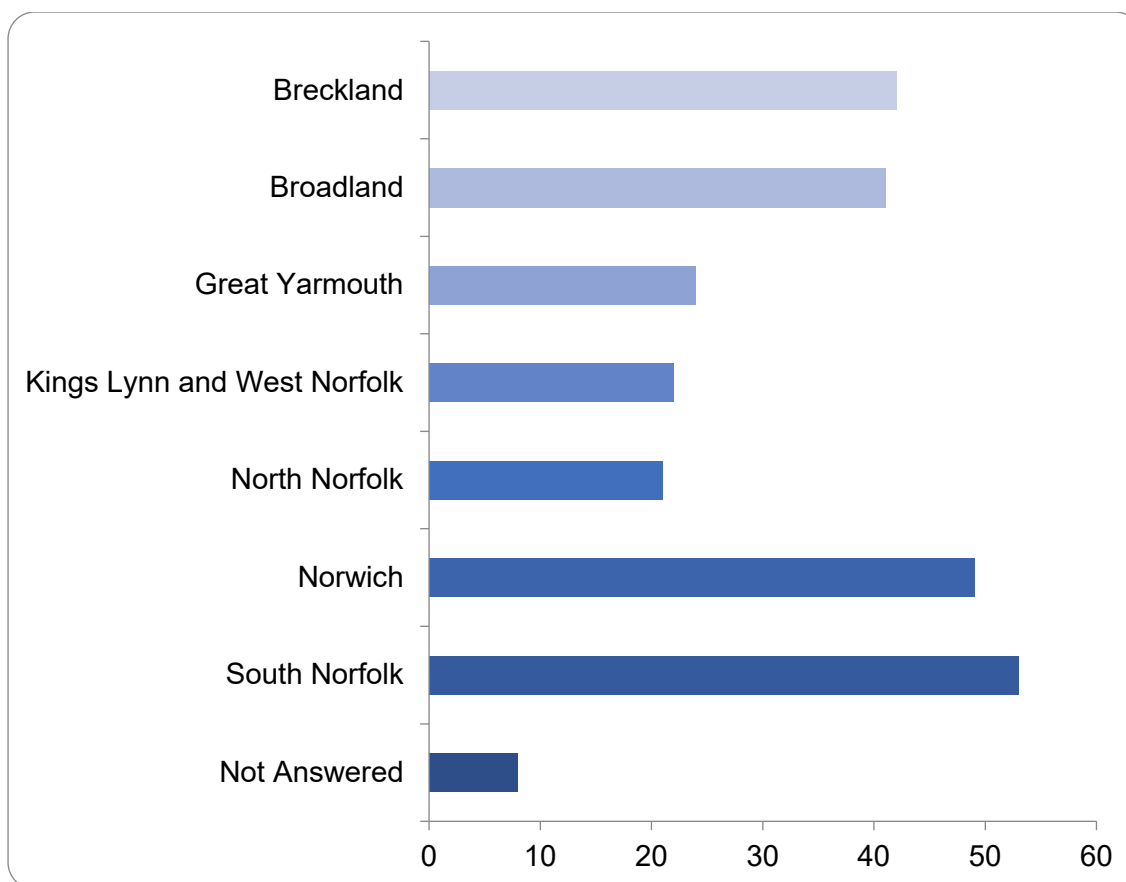
White ethnicity options

There were 229 responses to this part of the question.



Option	Total	Percent
English, Welsh, Scottish, Northern Irish or British	228	87.69%
Irish	1	0.38%
Gypsy or Irish Traveller	0	0.00%
Roma	0	0.00%
Not Answered	31	11.92%

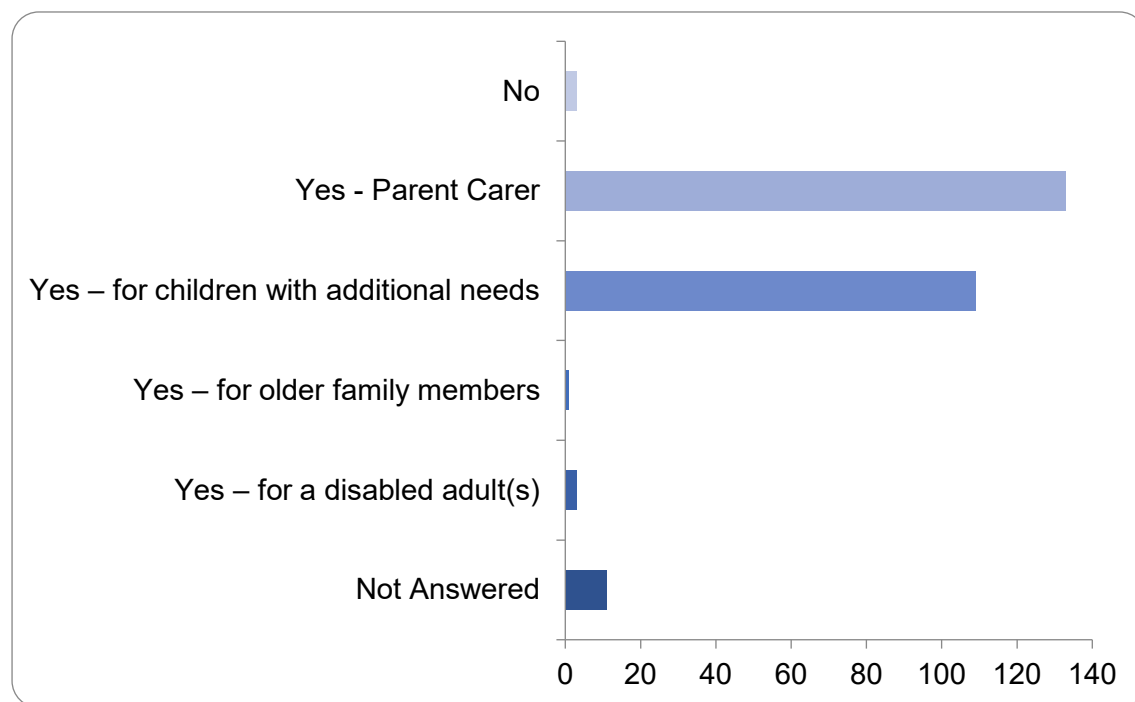
Q18: Which district/borough/city do you live in?



Option	Total	Percent
Breckland	42	16.15%
Broadland	41	15.77%
Great Yarmouth	24	9.23%
Kings Lynn and West Norfolk	22	8.46%
North Norfolk	21	8.08%
Norwich	49	18.85%
South Norfolk	53	20.38%
Not Answered	8	3.08%

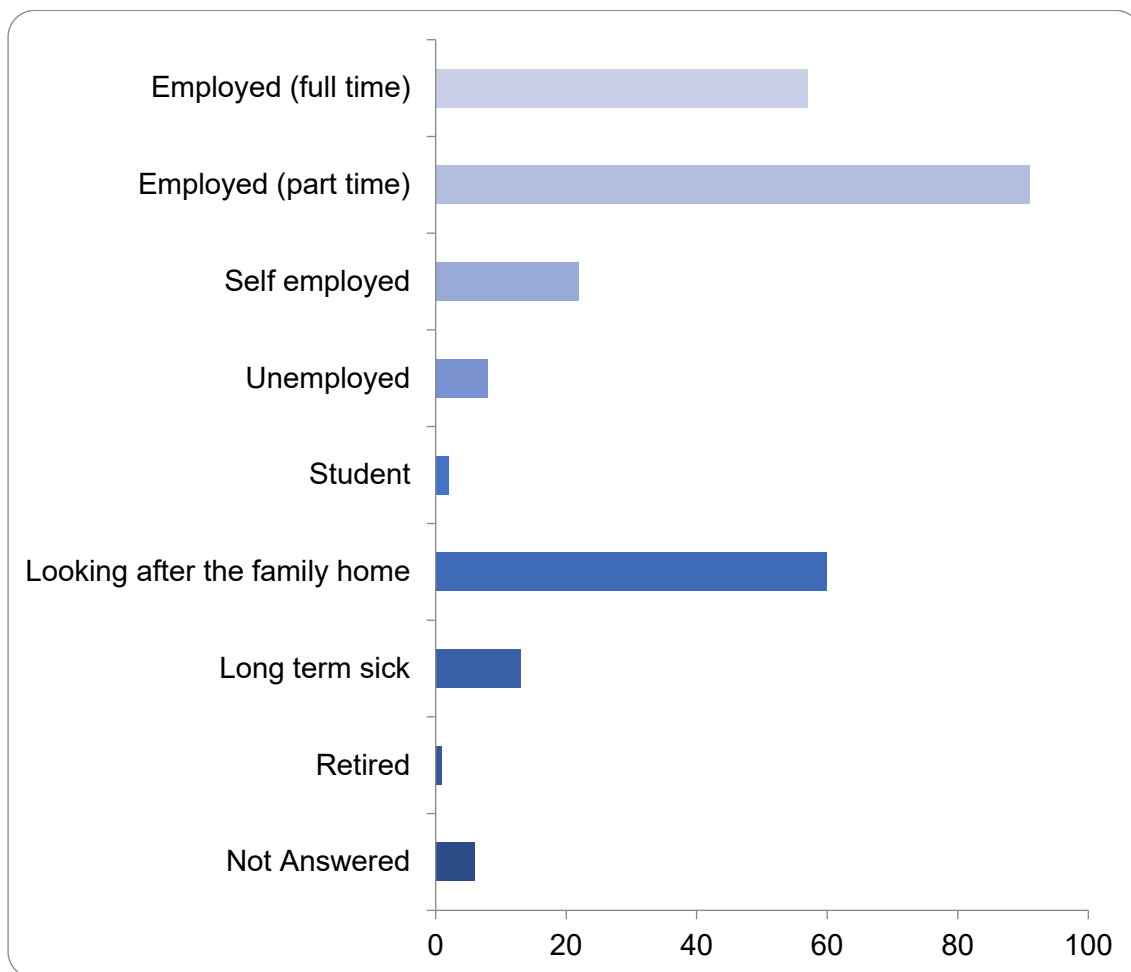
Q19: Do you have caring responsibilities?

There were 249 responses to this part of the question.



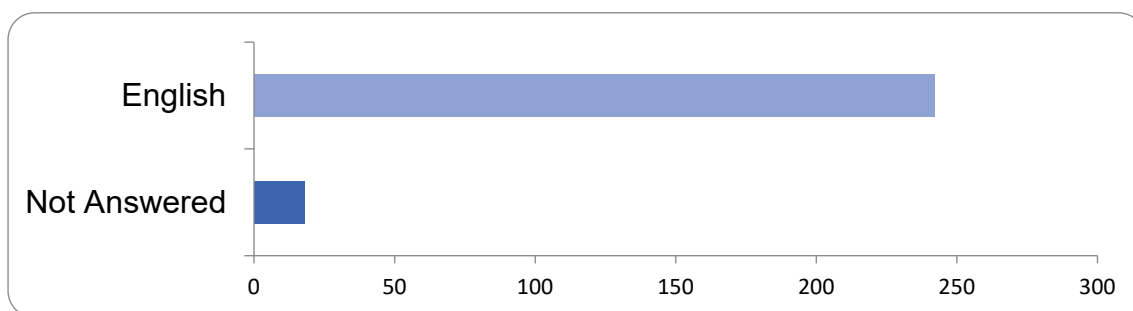
Option	Total	Percent	
No	3	1.15%	
Yes - Parent Carer	133	51.15%	
Yes – for children with additional needs	109	41.92%	
Yes – for older family members	1	0.38%	
Yes – for a disabled adult(s)	3	1.15%	
Not Answered	11	4.23%	

Q20: Which of the following best describes you?



Q21: What is your first language?

There were 242 responses to this part of the question.



Option	Total	Percent
English	242	93.08%
Not Answered	18	6.92%

Other languages spoken:

French
Russian
Lithuanian
Portuguese
Welsh
Polish
Punjabi, Urdu

6. EQIA

Information is collected from all consultation to inform NCC's equality, diversity and inclusion strategy and to assess possible impacts of our proposed changes, and to improve future consultation activities. For this consultation, the tag #EqIA was used when respondents commented on about the impact of our proposal on people with protected characteristics.

EQIA Table:		
Question 4	21	Illustrative quotes (verbatim)
1.		The interests of children change often, even more so in the case of children with SEN. Having to commit to a whole year of funding for something they may not want to do next week or may increase/decrease in price isn't ideal
2.		<p>My son is unable to attend Scouting as there are no Cubs for SEND children locally. He has just finished beavers recently. He is missing out, He is very sad about it.</p> <p>What is going well is we use a lot of funding for 1 to 1 swimming which really helps his sensory needs as he is not able to learn in a group at present. This will need to continue as it keeps him safe in water and he loves it.</p> <p>He also goes to the local holiday club because he is able to cope there and knows all the staff since young and they know his needs Not sure what will happen when he is too old.</p> <p>An odd family treat be good as his sister is a young carer and this not taken into consideration and you have to pay full price for her.</p>
3.		<p>This will be tricky for older children as there is very little "mainstream " available for them.</p> <p>It is very difficult to recruit a direct payments carer so many of our hours are unused.</p> <p>As a disabled parent it's very difficult to take my child to providers/ activities so we have relied on at home zoom events. Using the budget for a family is a great idea."</p>
4.		<p>we have two SEN children who have very different needs - one may benefit from the proposed changes (we use the money for swimming lessons) - but I suspect any improvement in services would be outweighed by loss of flexibility (eg finding lessons at times that fit in with the rest of the family and also where those lessons took place). We use the money for the second child predominantly on horse riding activities - the provider has been fantastic - primarily due to it being virtually one on one training -</p>

	large groups do not work for our child and so she would be dramatically affected by services being provided directly by the council.
5.	Our children won't access a lot of club type activities due to demand avoidance we book things privately to allow anxiety to be lower to improve chances of engagement by making them pick set amities provided as a group means they will no longer access them.
6.	I don't think this would benefit us as we use most of our budget for private pool hire. We are not able to use a public pool due to sensory needs and safety
7.	Yes My child is unable to mix in groups of other children so her activities have to be done solo such as using a private swimming pool or private horse riding. So attending the group activities you talk about would not be a option
8.	"We often use our short breaks on holiday so don't use it when we are in Kings Lynn or surrounding areas, so this would limit the amount of activities my son could do. We have also never had a review even though my sons condition has deteriorated over the years and things have got more expensive as has got older, so he gets a lot less for him budget."
9.	"My son won't go to any groups or clubs so pre paid card is still our best option. The needs of the family definitely need to be considered. I personally can't afford to pay for my sons sibling to come to an activity which means we can't go. It is also unfair that if there isn't a reduced rate for carer for entry somewhere then we are not allowed to pay adult price. I also strongly feel siblings should get their own short breaks funding allowance as they are also young carers and have respite needs. My daughter also has a rare genetic disorder which brings her own problems. I'm also registered disabled and a single mum so in circumstances like this I feel the budget should be bigger for us to be able to do more things together as every day life is extremely hard."
10.	"Due to my child's disability of autism he struggles and has barriers in social situations. We are grateful to the current short breaks for helping him in these struggles and he regularly attends Sen sessions in Norfolk. Unfortunately with autism it is not easy to change routines and to go to community activities (that would be paid by the council) this may cause him anxiety and distress. This is because my child needs flexibility when attending Sen sessions / activities. For example, one week he may choose to go to SEN swim at Riverside or instead he may go to a SEN session at UEA. My child autism also means routine is important and it's not possible to just change from the session/activities which he is used to to (and enjoys) to another community activity (as your proposal) paid for by the council. Depending on the activity/ session my child may not be able to attend at all, if its something not suitable, Therefore, whilst I can see where this proposal makes sense, unfortunately with my child's autism it is not so simple as it sounds and I feel he would miss out, if part of his budget would be used for council paid activities. This is because he may not be able to attend. Also travelling is a huge factor as my child can not tolerate travelling too far, so any council prepaid events would have to be nearby."
11.	I'm completely happy with the current budget for my Adopted Daughter, life is hard with a 13 year girl with very very complex needs. Tears are falling as I write this as the short breaks is the one positive in our lives. My Daughter will literally be over the moon when she finds out we are having a holiday this year, and the holiday club at UEA is something she looks forward too, to have change or more people involved in making decisions for my Daughter will cause huge anxiety, something people who don't have a child with special needs could never ever understand.
12.	"Our allocated money doesn't get used, our autistic son has trouble getting outside. As a disabled person myself (husband is my carer) days out are impossible."

13.	<p>"I am concerned that we will get even less funding. We have been told that the only way our funding will increase is if we get a social worker.</p> <p>Please do not means test this provision. Our child is already discriminated against as both parents work. "</p>
14.	<p>I think this would negatively affect my disabled son. His needs are so complex and as such, he attends a specialist school with only 6 children in his class. We are already so limited in what he can do, so it would be a major concern to us - if we were to lose the flexibility to choose how best to spend his budget on him. His needs are so high that he would not be able to cope in any group setting, therefore he would lose out if his budget was cut , due to that money being instead spent on other children accessing community provisions.</p>
15.	<p>"Community access to groups in law through legislative acts are already in place in theory, but in practice this doesn't happen. Your proposals are fine for those with very minor disabilities including those with late neurodiversity diagnosis who are largely independent and coping in mainstream environments, who may need a generic support worker to meet those needs in order to access appropriately, but for those children who have severe and multiple complex needs often from birth, and whom require intensive support to keep them safe, provide continence and feeding support with likely additional sensory and behavioural needs, have no chance in accessing such provisions, nor may it be in their best interests. My child does have multiple complex needs, including a Down Syndrome learning disability, double Incontinence, peg feeding, an eating disorder, difficulties in communication, sensory issues, and remains on the exceptionally long NDS waiting list for 3 years to assess for ASD/ADHD. She has multiple professionals including working alongside starfish for mental health and anxiety. She struggles immensely in group situations, which results in high anxiety, continual double Incontinence accidents throughout, refuses to eat the only food bread that she will orally eat, and it is an extremely distressing experience for everyone, I am also not understanding the rationale in spreading the budget even further to include under 5s. Under 5 provision is far better than what can be accessed in the gap between 5 to youth services, which is extremely lacking. There is a whole range of generic and specialist free or low cost services that can be accessed under 5, which you could use to signpost those parents to instead.</p> <p>In short we would not be able to access such community based provision. In addition I would like to know how on earth would you ensure the quality of the provision in meeting needs, correct training, & ongoing support for staff, monitor and ensure safe guarding procedures for a cross complex multitude of needs across the whole of Norfolk. You wouldn't be able to do that without investing a heck of a lot more money in order to even achieve this for the most less disabled children you have on your books, let alone more complex cases. This is a car crash scenario just waiting to happen, you will have kids escaping the provision environment, providers of provisions spending all their time managing behaviours that challenges, & not actually doing an activity, a large amount of time spent on personal care, toileting and changing soiled clothing, which by the way where do you propose to change such children, who may be immobile. I'm guessing the floor as usual!</p> <p>The best way your team could understand such implications is to leave the comfort of your typical lives, and step into our role 24/7 for a week with all the daily everyday challenges & round the clock caring responsibilities we have and try to access the provisions you are stating. All I can say is good luck with that & I can guarantee your outlook would drastically change. "</p>
16.	<p>It is very difficult to say. We have three children, two with disabilities and very different needs. One has very complex needs around a fairly profound physical disability, and one probably has ASD/ADHD alongside more mild physical disabilities. So we are a bit complicated. It would be good if there are more, and more inclusive providers. Our 'complex' daughter attended the Hamlet briefly but we stopped after two sessions</p>

	because it was obvious they could not look after her safely (on the most basic level, she came out from the second session hanging half out of her wheelchair). I am not sure how the council proposes to 'upskill' providers to be able to look after children with real complex needs. Currently that child has a PA, and that arrangement works OK, though we kind of miss seeing more of her ourselves. On that basis what would be helpful for the family is to have someone come and do the washing up/tidying/laundry/cooking so that we can spend time with our children. Last thought, the CoS approach in which a package is 'agreed' with parent-carers - what happens if there is a disagreement? Will a package of activities etc be forced on a family? It would be good to know how this situation might play out. Ah: Last, last thought: will the CoS approach include the needs of the family as a whole? Our family has a dad who just gave up work to be a full time carer, a mum who has acute and chronic anxiety/depression and isn't always able to help out with childcare/domestic tasks, a sensitive quadriplegic child who has little or no communication, an anxious child with ASD/ADHD, and a non-disabled child. It's not clear how any 'short breaks' approach could actually give anyone in the family a break! But if the whole family could be considered together instead of each child individually, that would seem to be a positive change.			
17.	The new approach to Short Breaks funding will not be inclusive for children with the highest and most complex needs. They need their budgets to be personal and flexible. My child will not be able to access community activities and I don't agree that cutting his budget will help him!			
18.	Due to my child's complex needs and severe learning disabilities the only thing we use the money on the prepaid card is for booking a slot at a private swimming pool. I would not want to see this changed to find a 'cheaper option' as it wouldn't work for our family.			
19.	I think we as a family it would be the same possibly. Our son doesn't like to do much if it means being away from us or for too long. My husband has a lot of health issues so as a result it is mainly just me and my son when we do things as usually my husband is either too ill or his wheelchair is not suitable.			
20.	My daughter is older (14) and I feel the funding locally would potentially work well for younger children, not sure there would be anything viable for ASD and anxiety for teens.			
21.	"This would mean a disaster for us. My son has to travel to the other side of the county to access school provision and we are often not home until 6.30pm as there is nothing suitable nearby. No doubt many of the group activities will be after school or weekends (he has school on Saturday too) so we would not be able to access those. We need something flexible we can pick and choose depending on a number of health factors and this won't be possible with organised group activities. He has a physical disability and already finds it impossible to fit in with traditional sen groups as he doesn't have learning needs the peers are not at a similar level to him. You can't assume that one box will fit all of our children. Short breaks was one of the very few services that recognises this and losing it will come at great cost to already struggling families. "			
<table><tr><td>Question 7</td><td>14</td><td>Illustrative quotes (verbatim)</td></tr></table>		Question 7	14	Illustrative quotes (verbatim)
Question 7	14	Illustrative quotes (verbatim)		
1.	My son has to miss out on things . If his older sister could go with him he can then enjoy more fun things as she can guide him as she knows his needs well. He looks up to her and will listen to her. Its important they can have fun together my son knowing his sister there for confidence and she will be 12 soon.			
2.	My children wouldn't be able to access many group activities which means they will miss out children with demand avoidance and high anxiety simply would be made			

	worse and behaviour likely to increase rather than decrease leading to more stress for the family
3.	<p>Clubs and societies are not for all Sen children. Some Sen children need to just have a one to one or a two to one. These children cannot do club activities due to neurological or physical disabilities. These children may have sensory needs. Just going on a bus or a train may be their idea of fun or their activity. This is not included in short breaks currently as it comes under transport rather than it being an activity. Short breaks is restrictive as it is a neuro typical persons idea of a short break not a Sen child's idea of a short break</p> <p>I see this proposal in affecting me as I will have to understand more jargon and waffle "circle of whatever" rather than RAS scoring, which I've just got familiar with.</p>
4.	<p>My son won't go to any groups or clubs so pre paid card is still our best option.</p> <p>The needs of the family definitely need to be considered. I personally can't afford to pay for my sons sibling to come to an activity which means we can't go. It is also unfair that if there isn't a reduced rate for carer for entry somewhere then we are not allowed to pay adult price.</p> <p>I also strongly feel siblings should get their own short breaks funding allowance as they are also young carers and have respite needs. My daughter also has a rare genetic disorder which brings her own problems.</p> <p>I'm also registered disabled and a single mum so in circumstances like this I feel the budget should be bigger for us to be able to do more things together as every day life is extremely hard.</p>
5.	If my son had part of his short breaks set aside for council paid activities, this would effect him greatly. Due to his autism he may not be able to attend these activities, through not fault of his own but due to his condition. He therefore would be missing out of this part of his budget which could be used for many different activities which he enjoys and is happy doing.
6.	<p>My youngest child has a PA, who takes her to places she knows and she benefits hugely from these experiences.</p> <p>You use the word 'choice', but you appear to be taking that away.</p> <p>There are SEND kids who can engage and enjoy attending group activities, My children's autism and own personal needs do not allow them to do so.</p> <p>By discriminating against those that can't and there for further enabling those that can, is in my view a breach of the equalities act, and probably more besides.</p>
7.	It will mean we will not be able to choose where to use our budget but be very restricted. Thus would cause so much damage to us as a family who are already in crisis.
8.	When the service was overhauled before we lost on a out a great deal of provision we could no longer afford the package of care we previously had with the budget given, as young people get older groups are not really suitable for my young person unless it was a Pokemon club or dungeons and dragons or war hammer I don't think my YP would be interested. When my YP is so vulnerable it's really difficult to see how you can make the service stretch to meet more need without a large financial injection thus causing stress and worry to families
9.	<p>My child gets a fair amount of short breaks funding and it is still not enough - it helps him to attend Scouts with his PA and to attend Scout camps.</p> <p>So what he currently does is everything you want short breaks to stand for - he is mixing with mainstream, he is gaining independence, especially at camps! We get respite, and he learns so many new skills.</p>

10.	My child would not attend a club or activity, therefore they would lose out. My health would prevent me being able to take/support them. I think it will isolate many families. We've heard all these theories before. It's a money saving exercise to cut budgets. Services will not improve		
11.	Allowing every member of the household to benefit from the Short Breaks funding is a good idea, because the disabled child's needs affect everyone living with them. It will also allow them to enjoy family life together and is a very good idea.		
12.	I think it would be detrimental to my son situation and reduce his opportunities to be included in and have the same access to opportunities as his peers.		
13.	It is really frustrating to watch systems designed for children with complex needs and disabilities keep shifting to meet and influx of children with lower level SEND who can still access sports groups, music etc. My child cannot access those things, he has escalating behaviours, epilepsy, low level of understanding, physical needs, minimal speech etc and the only place that can meet his need currently is woodfields club, and family with help of a PA.		
14.	<p>When we were awarded short breaks it stopped me from having to give up my job. I had just finished treatment for cancer and it was a lifeline. In a family of 3 where my husband and child are both disabled and I was chronically ill it was so so hard. We could not find childcare as his school hours and holidays don't meet the standard, anything SEN wasn't suitable as he was super bright and no learning needs but mainstream groups wouldn't accept him because he uses a wheelchair and they all insisted I needed to get 1:1 support for him.</p> <p>The combination of 1:1 and activity cost meant I was going to have to stop work as the only working member of the family. I was able to utilise some of the budget to pay for 1:1 avoiding this.</p> <p>He now uses it for activities and support for things he needs such as 1:1 childcare and support plus activities at a time he can actually attend (eg not the usual times the activities are held)</p> <p>Please don't push all of our children with vastly differing needs in to pigeon hole boxes to save money.</p> <p>Assess the cases of need and save money that way, some cases I am aware of people which huge wealth being awarded budgets so means test it if necessary, I don't mean just give it to people getting free school meals but include the working people who are the ones struggling the most. Reduce the spend on family and siblings. Remove the £250 toys / equipment allowance if you have no choice (although this has been a lifesaver for many) but to in order to meet need but leave us with freedom to spend the money on activities we need and can choose.</p>		
Question 10		10	Illustrative quotes (verbatim)
1.	It sounds great but it reality with pda and high anxiety that's a no from our neurodivergent child		
2.	This would not really benefit us as we are not able to do group activities due to ASD.		
3.	I think inclusivity can be beneficial but often other children can bully and make fun of SEND children so it may not be as helpful as it may intended to be.		
4.	Children with additional needs are not suited to a one size fits all approach and to treat them in this way would show Norfolk County Council lack of inclusivity and does not support the person centered approach they work to.		
5.	We have had several instances of activities for children with SEND that are still not accessible to my child. If there is not enough staff or toilet facilities, then we cannot access it. Some activities say fully inclusive, but actually are really only for those with		

	<p>moderate SEND, who can join in a group with a little adjustment. It feels like we are doubly discriminated against if we are excluded from a SEND friendly activity that we can't actually access. Helping providers to be fully inclusive is a very good idea.</p>
6.	<p>I am very concerned that this initiative is mainly motivated by the need for cost cutting rather than putting the individual's needs first. I totally disagree with changing the RAS especially when the current system is working brilliantly for so many people.</p> <p>I think the parents/carers themselves should have the biggest influence on how the budget is spent rather than being told they have the choice to access something in the community (which then results in their child personally being given less because something unsuitable/undesirable has been offered). This will be extremely unfair for disabled children with the most complex needs as it will massively affect the quality of their lives and reduce their enjoyment.</p>
7.	<p>No amount of working with these providers make them accessible. I've been working with these providers for twenty years they can not do it. Legally they are meant too be accessible and training and information is already available to these places largely for free too, so I'm not sure why they council want to take budget from individual children to give to these groups for something they should do and do already have access to. Not all children want to attend these groups, it's also inflexible to changing and variable medical needs when a child may be interest in something but then finds they don't enjoy it.</p> <p>Alot of Sen kids are severely bullied at school they don't want to be at these groups out of school with the same kids who test them badly or won't speak to them. It's a terrible idea and poorly thought out</p>
8.	<p>Groups should not paid to be inclusive the ethos should be inclusivity and children SEN should be shoehorned into certain groups they should be supported as access to amount of variety as their peers.</p>
9.	<p>As we have no support whatsoever (No family or friends to help) other than short break activities and PA, I worry that the new system may be diluted in order to cut costs, but may increase the cost to the participant as we would need to travel further afield to attend council arranged suppliers as we ourselves are in the middle of nowhere and have to travel already.</p> <p>Being the main carer for a mentally disabled child, I have had to give up work to e the main carer it is therefore vital for us to continue to receive support from Short breaks.</p>
10.	<p>I think community providers should be inclusive anyway and it's not the councils job to pay for this. The fact they are not is discriminatory and ridiculous</p>



Norfolk County Council



Short Breaks consultation

Summary of feedback

October 2023

We would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone who took the time to respond to our consultation on the Draft Strategy for Short Breaks.

Whether you completed the consultation online, by post, attended one of our 8 drop-in library events, or at our online event – **thank you**.

The consultation ran for five weeks from 27 June to the 2 August and focused on families who already receive Short Breaks or may receive them in the future.

The consultation was sent to **1,684 families** and promoted to the wider SEND community.

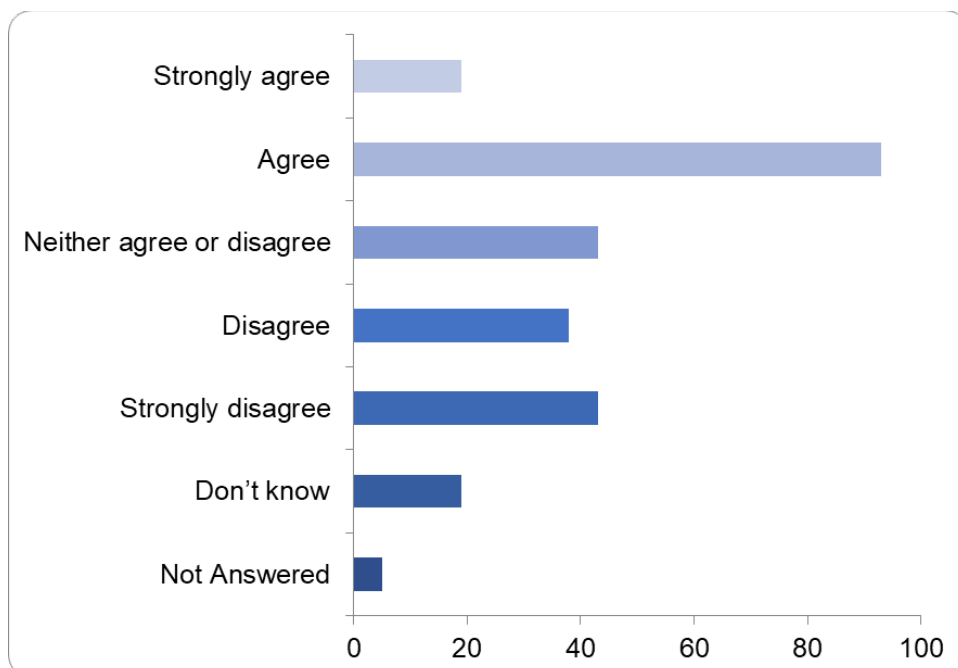
We received **264 responses**, which is a response rate of **16%**.

Your feedback is important to us, and we have used it to review our Draft Strategy.

This document summarises the main feedback and aims to address the main concerns raised.

Summary of feedback

43% of families **strongly agreed or agreed** with our proposal to change the way families' needs are assessed, compared to **31%** who **strongly disagreed or disagreed**.



Option	Total	Percent
Strongly agree	19	7.31%
Agree	93	35.77%
Neither agree or disagree	43	16.54%
Disagree	38	14.62%
Strongly disagree	43	16.54%
Don't know	19	7.31%
Prefer not to say	0	0.00%
Not Answered	5	1.92%

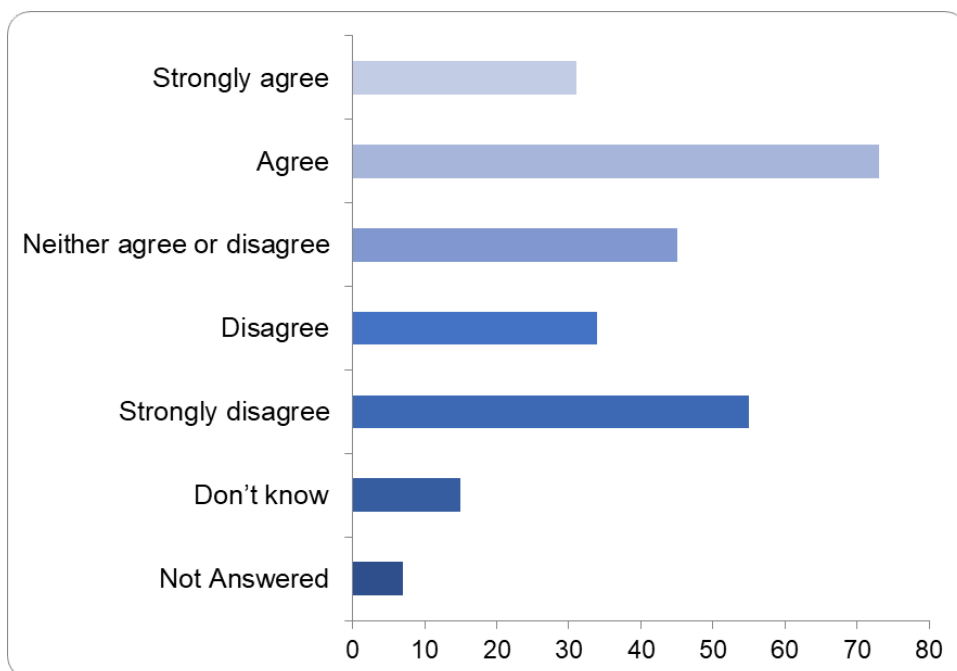
We asked families how our proposal to change the way families' needs are assessed might affect them. This included delivering their Short Breaks package in a different way, resulting in some direct payments potentially increasing, remaining the same, or decreasing due to some services being paid for directly by the County Council.

The **top themes** are below. Where a theme was a concern, we have included our response in the box on the right-hand side. We hope you find our responses helpful.

Theme	Our response
<p>Some families had concerns about moving to group settings which may not suit some children and could have a negative impact.</p> <p>Other families told us moving to a community setting would have a positive impact, giving them choice and flexibility around their Short Breaks.</p> <p>Respondents were uncertain about the proposed changes and how they would work in practice.</p>	<p>We want to provide more Short Breaks in the community (including group activities) where this is appropriate to meet the child's needs and outcomes. This will give families more choice and provide activities in a more cost-effective way.</p> <p>We want to reassure families that group activities will not be compulsory. Families will still be able to choose which Short Breaks they take part in, based on their child's needs and outcomes. We recognise that every child and young person is different and group activities may not be suitable for everyone.</p> <p>We understand families' concerns around uncertainty and will clearly communicate with families how it will work in practice.</p> <p>We plan to phase in the new approach when families set up a new Short Breaks Plan or renew their existing Plan.</p> <p>We will communicate with each family on an individual basis to ensure they understand the new approach, but want to reassure</p>

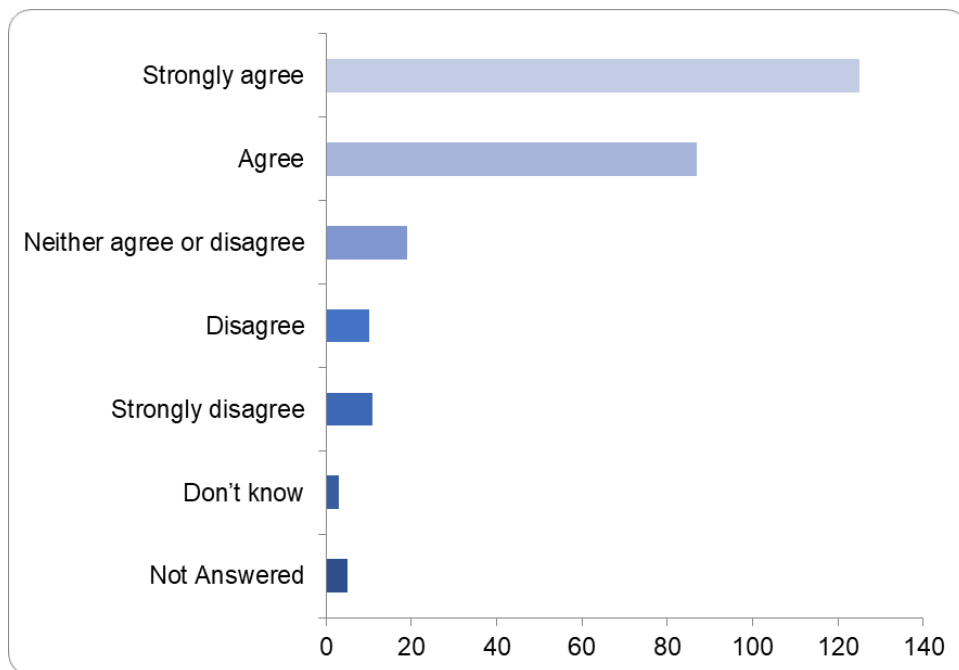
	families that they will still be involved in designing their child's Short Breaks package and will still have a choice around the type of Short Breaks they receive.
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40% of families **strongly agreed or agreed** with our proposal to include an increased amount of inclusive, low cost or free community-based activities closer to home. **34%** of families **strongly disagreed or disagreed**.



Option	Total	Percent
Strongly agree	31	11.92%
Agree	73	28.08%
Neither agree or disagree	45	17.31%
Disagree	34	13.08%
Strongly disagree	55	21.15%
Don't know	15	5.77%
Prefer not to say	0	0.00%
Not Answered	7	2.69%

A **majority of 82%** of families **strongly agreed or agreed** with our proposal to give people the choice to use their funding to pay for other family members to attend activities alongside their child with SEND. Only **8%** of families **strongly disagreed or disagreed**.



Option	Total	Percent
Strongly agree	125	48.08%
Agree	87	33.46%
Neither agree or disagree	19	7.31%
Disagree	10	3.85%
Strongly disagree	11	4.23%
Don't know	3	1.15%
Prefer not to say	0	0.00%
Not Answered	5	1.92%

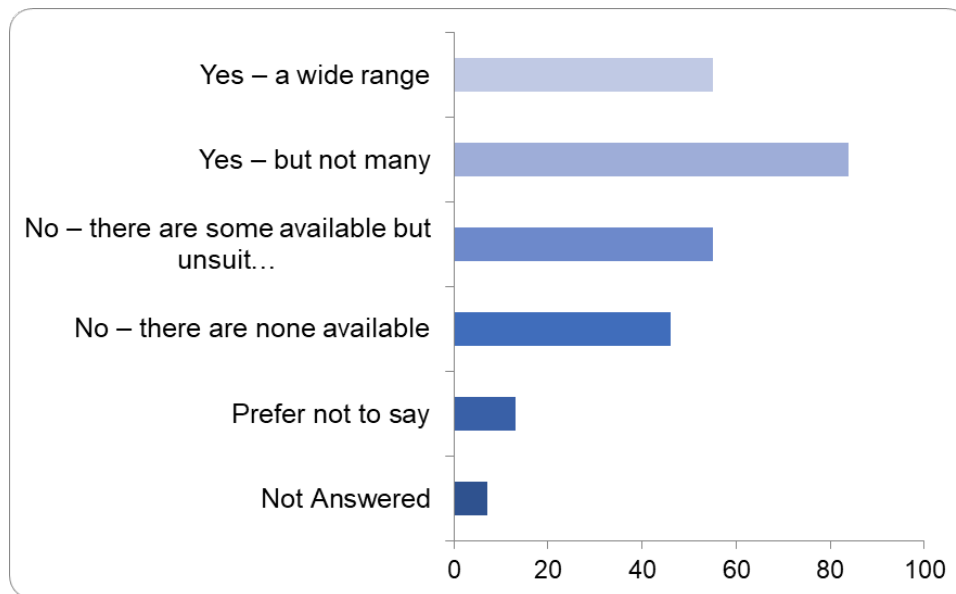
We asked families how, if at all, our proposal to give people the choice to use their funding to pay for other family members to attend activities might affect them.

The **top themes** are below. Where a theme was a concern, we have included our response in the box on the right-hand side. We hope you find our responses helpful.

Theme	Our response
<p>Some families were concerned that the proposal to allow families to use their short breaks funding to pay for other family members to join activities would limit their funding or choice of/access to activities.</p> <p>Some families had the view that funding should only be used for the child named in the Short Breaks Plan.</p> <p>However, others noted proposals could have a positive impact. Some respondents gave examples of opportunities for more family time with parents and other siblings being able to spend more time doing activities together as a family.</p>	<p>We want to reassure families that using Short Breaks funding to pay for other household members to attend activities is not compulsory.</p> <p>We recognise that every family is different. This change is an extension of our current offer with the aim to providing families with more choice and flexibility.</p>
Families asked how we could support services to be more	By 'inclusive' we mean aiming to provide equal access to opportunities and resources for

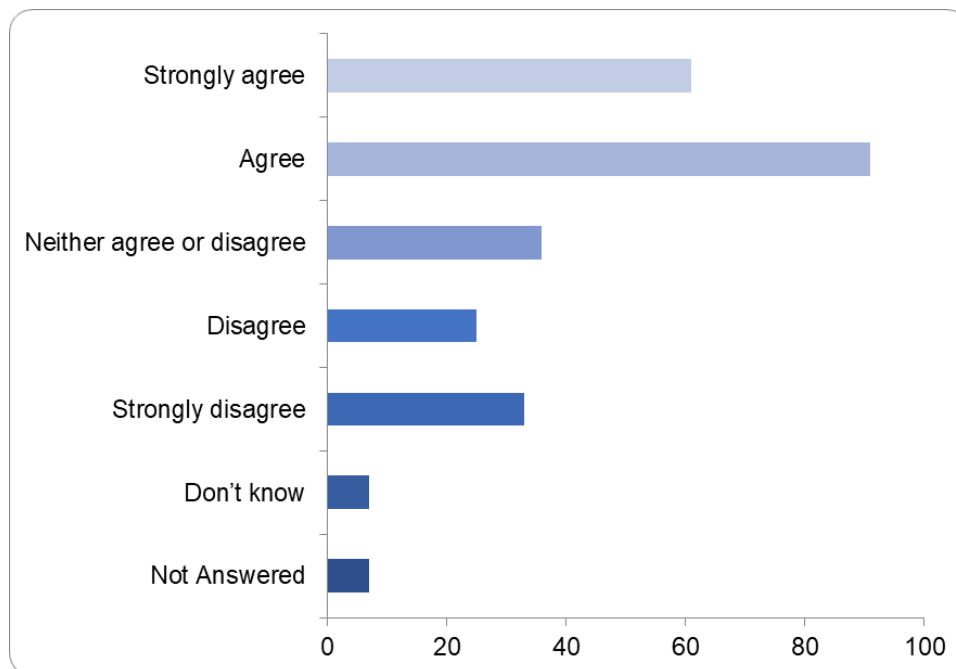
<p>inclusive and how we would define inclusive.</p>	<p>children and young people with SEND.</p> <p>Our two Inclusion Coordinators will continue to work with local community organisations to advise and support them to be more inclusive.</p>
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Half of families (53%) had activities in a location close/convenient to their home currently, compared to **39%** who **did not**.



Option	Total	Percent
Yes – a wide range	55	21.15%
Yes – but not many	84	32.31%
No – there are some available but unsuitable for my child	55	21.15%
No – there are none available	46	17.69%
Prefer not to say	13	5.00%
Not Answered	7	2.69%

58% of families **strongly agreed or agreed** with our proposal to offer increased support to community activity providers, so that they can be inclusive and children with SEND can attend. **22%** of families **strongly disagreed or disagreed**.



Option	Total	Percent
Strongly agree	61	23.46%
Agree	91	35.00%
Neither agree or disagree	36	13.85%
Disagree	25	9.62%
Strongly disagree	33	12.69%
Don't know	7	2.69%
Prefer not to say	0	0.00%
Not Answered	7	2.69%

We asked families how, if at all, our proposal to offer increased support to community activity providers might affect them.

The **top themes** are below. Where a theme was a concern, we have included our response in the box on the right-hand side. We hope you find our responses helpful.

Theme	Our response
Families had concerns about whether general providers were trained adequately or had enough facilities to care for children and young people with SEND.	<p>We monitor the Short Breaks providers that we contract with, which includes staff training, policies, procedures, and safeguarding.</p> <p>We do not monitor general providers in the community who we do not have a contract with. Parents are advised to check safeguarding aspects themselves as they would for any other activity in the community that a child might attend.</p> <p>Our Inclusion Coordinators will continue to work with general providers in the community to advise and support them to take a more inclusive approach.</p>
Families told us about positive and negative impacts of community groups.	
Families told us they were uncertain about our proposals.	We understand this and will make sure that we clearly communicate with families how it will work in practice when they either set-up a new Short Breaks Plan or renew their existing Plan.

Cabinet

Item No: 11

Report Title: Admission Arrangements for the School Year 2025/26

Date of Meeting: 10 January 2024

Responsible Cabinet Member: Cllr Penny Carpenter (Cabinet Member for Children's Services)

Responsible Director: Sara Tough, Executive Director of Children's Service

Is this a Key Decision? No

If this is a Key Decision, date added to the Forward Plan of Key Decisions: N/A

Executive Summary / Introduction from Cabinet Member

Recommendations:

To increase the number of preferences a parent can make from 3 to 4 and determine the Admissions arrangements for the school year 2025/26

1. Background and Purpose

- 1.1 Each year the County Council is required to determine the admissions co-ordination scheme for all schools and determine the admissions criteria for all Community and Voluntary Controlled schools, for which the Council is the admissions authority.
- 1.2 The co-ordination scheme has been developed following previous consultations over several years. The proposed scheme and timetable for the school year 2025/26 meet the requirements imposed by the School Admissions Code (2021) and associated legislation to ensure a fair and consistent process for parents.
- 1.3 Following a review of the admission process for September 2023 and the difficulties some parents experienced with not being offered a place at one of their preferred schools, Officers reviewed the current admission arrangements and consequently agreed to consult on an increase of the

number of preferences from 3 to 4 to help improve admission decisions for families. The School Admissions Code states that parents must be able to express a preference for at least 3 schools. The School Admissions code requires admission authorities to consult on changes for six weeks between 1 October and 31 January where changes are proposed. The consultation run by the Local Authority opened 31 October and closed 15 December 2023. Only one completed response was received, and the respondent supported the proposal.

- 1.4 Admission Authorities must determine their admission arrangements every year, even if these have not changed from previous years and a consultation has not been required.

2. Proposal

- 2.1 To change the current co-ordinated admission arrangements for all Norfolk schools which agree to be part of the scheme and to maintain the existing admission criteria for Community and Voluntary Controlled schools, increasing the number of preferences which parents can make to 4 for all admission applications. For reference the admission arrangements, timetable and over-subscription criteria are attached.

3. Impact of the Proposal

- 3.1 To ensure a fair and equitable process for all families seeking a mainstream school place and complying with the statutory requirements set out in the School Admissions Code (2021)

4. Evidence and Reasons for Decision

- 4.1 The co-ordination scheme follows the model set out in the School Admissions Code and admission criteria for Community and Voluntary Controlled schools have been developed to fully comply with requirements of the School Admissions Code
- 4.2 Norfolk County Council is under a statutory duty to determine admission arrangements by 28 February each year. If these cannot be determined, the Secretary of State has the power to impose arrangements.
- 4.3 Parents refused admission to a preferred school are entitled to appeal to an Independent Admission Appeals Panel. Since 2010, the Panel is required to consider the legality of admission arrangements as part of this process and where these do not comply refer Office of the Schools Adjudicator (OSA). No such referrals have been made.

- 4.4 Parents can refer to the Office of the School Adjudicator any concerns on the determined admission arrangements. This has not happened since 2014, when it was confirmed that the Council's arrangements were compliant. Parents dissatisfied with the outcome of an appeal can refer their concerns to the Local Government Ombudsman but again, no concerns have been expressed regarding the co-ordination scheme or admission criteria on such occasions.
- 4.5 The majority of parents gain a place at one of their preferred schools for their children but with increased cohort numbers and some local variations because of these numbers, offering an additional preference will help improve admission decisions for families.

5. Alternative Options

- 5.1 None

6. Financial Implications

- 6.1 The admissions function is funded from the Dedicated Schools Grant and all associated costs are covered by the grant. The proposed admission arrangements do not add further to the current costs.

7. Resource Implications

- 7.1 **Staff:** No changes to the current staffing is required.

- 7.2 **Property:** None

- 7.3 **IT:** None

8. Other Implications

- 8.1 **Legal Implications:** None

- 8.2 **Human Rights Implications:** None

- 8.3 **Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) (this must be included):** Admission Authorities must ensure that their arrangements will not disadvantage unfairly, either directly or indirectly, a child from a particular social or racial group

8.4 Data Protection Impact Assessments (DPIA): None

8.5 Health and Safety implications (where appropriate): None

8.6 Sustainability implications (where appropriate): None

8.7 Any Other Implications: None

9. Risk Implications / Assessment

9.1 There are no risk implications to the proposals in this paper.

10. Select Committee Comments

10.1 No comments made on this paper.

11. Recommendations

To increase the number of preferences a parent can make from 3 to 4 preferences and determine the Admissions arrangements for the school year 2025/26

12. Background Papers

12.1 Appendix A: Admission Round Co-ordination 2025/26

12.2 Appendix B: Admissions co-ordination timetable 2025/26

12.3 Appendix C: Norfolk's In Year co-ordination scheme 2025/26

12/4 Appendix D: Oversubscription rules for Community and Voluntary Controlled schools.

Officer Contact

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

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APPENDIX A 2025/26 Admission Round Co-ordination Scheme

Norfolk Admission Arrangement 2025/26

(First admission to Reception, Transfer to Junior School and Transfer to Secondary School)

1. Parents are offered the opportunity to express up to four preferences.
2. All Norfolk parents will complete a common application form either online or by a paper form which must be returned direct to us at Norfolk County Council.
3. Any parents seeking to apply direct to Foundation schools, Voluntary Aided schools and Academies must be provided with a common application form inviting four preferences which must be forwarded to the Local Authority.
4. For first admission to school, details of the application process will be sent to parents using data supplied by Norfolk health authorities and Early Year Providers in accordance with the published timetable. For transfers to Junior or Secondary school, application packs will be sent to parents of all Norfolk children attending Norfolk state funded schools and applications will be invited online. Application forms will also be available on the County Council's website.
5. Closing date for applications will be as per the published timetable.
6. The governing bodies for Foundation, Voluntary Aided schools, Free Schools and the Trust for Academies manage their own admissions. If an own admission authority school is oversubscribed, details of all preferences cast for the school will be forwarded to the governing body/trust so that their oversubscription rules can be applied. Parents will be advised to complete a supplementary application form or forward appropriate additional information as required by those own admission authority schools where this is required to apply their oversubscription rules.
7. The County Council applies the published admission rules in the event of oversubscription at Community and Voluntary Controlled schools to prioritise all applications.
8. Applications for school places in other Local Authorities will be forwarded to the relevant authority in accordance with our timetable. Other Local Authorities will forward their applications which will be considered by the relevant Norfolk admission authority.
9. Academies, Foundation schools, Voluntary Aided and Free Schools are required to return all applications sorted in rank order to the County Council as per the timetable.
10. Other Local Authorities notify Norfolk of potential offers for their schools and Norfolk notifies potential Norfolk offers for their applications.

11. Where more than one place could potentially be offered the single offer will be for the school that the parent has ranked the highest. Lower ranked preferences will be withdrawn. This process will be undertaken until all potential duplicate offers are resolved.
12. Where no preference can be met, the County Council will, whenever possible, allocate a place at the next nearest school with a space to ensure an offer is made to all parents living in Norfolk.
13. Norfolk County Council will post offers of school places for all Norfolk schools via our online system for applicants who applied online or by second class post for those who applied via a paper application as per the timetable.
14. Parents will be advised of their right of appeal against any refusal and to whom their appeal should be lodged for each preference that is refused.
15. Norfolk County Council will make the final allocation of school places to be notified on offer day on the date identified in the timetable. Any changes after this date will be considered in a “mini” admission round which will be undertaken after the initial offer of places, as per the timetable.
16. We will ensure all admission authorities maintain a waiting list until 31 December 2025 for all Norfolk schools and co-ordinate any changes which occur after the offer date. Waiting lists will be maintained in strict over-subscription criteria order for each individual school. No waiting lists will be maintained after this date.
17. Late applications are considered a lower priority than all on time applications when offers are made on the offer date and for the mini admission round. After these initial allocations, applications will then be prioritised solely on the basis of the oversubscription criteria.

APPENDIX B 2025/26 Admissions Co-ordination Timetable

Norfolk Admission Arrangements 2025/26

1. Admission to Reception classes

Round opens: 23 September 2024

Round closes: 15 January 2025

Applications forwarded to other admission authorities: 7 February 2025

Applications returned by other admission authorities: 14 March 2025

Data exchange with other local authorities 14 - 21 March 2025

Co-ordination scheme applied (no further changes until after offer day): 2 April 2025

National Offer day: 16 April 2025

Late application closing date: 9 May 2025

Mini admission round to consider changes: 20 May 2025

Appeals closing date: 26 May 2025

Late appeals closing date: 3 June 2025

Appeals hearings: June/July 2025

Waiting lists maintained until: 31 December 2025

2. Junior Schools

Round opens: 6 November 2024

Round closes: 15 January 2025

Applications forwarded to other admission authorities: 7 February 2025

Applications returned by other admission authorities: 14 March 2025

Data exchange with other local authorities 14 - 21 March 2025

Co-ordination scheme applied (no further changes until after offer day): 2 April 2025

National Offer day: 16 April 2025

Late application closing date: 2 May 2025

Mini admission round to consider changes: 14 May 2025

Appeals closing date: 26 May 2025

Late appeals closing date: 3 June 2025

Appeals hearings: June/July 2025

Waiting lists maintained to: 31 December 2025

3. Secondary Schools Timetable

Round opens: 11 September 2024

Round closes: 31 October 2024

Applications forwarded to other Local Authorities: 5 December 2024

Applications forwarded to other admission authorities: 5 December 2024

Applications returned by other admission authorities: 10 January 2025

Co-ordination scheme applied (no further changes until after offer day): 3 February 2025

Offer day: 3 March 2025

Late application closing date: 21 March 2025

Appeals closing date: 28 March 2025

Mini admission round to consider changes: 3 April 2025

Late appeals closing date: 22 April 2025

Appeals hearings: May/June 2025

Waiting lists maintained to: 31 December 2025

APPENDIX C 2025/26 Norfolk In-Year Co-ordination Scheme

Norfolk Admission Arrangement 2025/26

1. Parents seeking a Norfolk school place are offered the opportunity to express up to four preferences.
2. Parents will complete an in-year common application form that must be returned direct to the Admissions Team at Norfolk County Council.
3. Any parents seeking to apply direct to a school will be provided with an in-year common application form inviting up to four preferences which is then forwarded to the Admissions Team.
4. Closing date for applications will be as per the published timetable below.
5. Applications will be considered in advance of the published timetable where families can demonstrate that there are exceptional reasons why an earlier transfer is required. Where the Local Authority and the relevant admission authority accepts that there is sufficient evidence and all parties support an earlier transfer the application will be considered without delay.
6. Applications will be considered immediately when families have moved a distance which makes travel to the current school unreasonable (more than statutory walking distance from the current school and no existing home to school transport available to support continued attendance at the current school).
7. The Local Authority will contact preferred school(s) to check on availability of place(s). Where a Foundation school, Voluntary Aided school, Free School or Academy has more applications than places available details of the preferences will be forwarded to the school to prioritise the applications using their published over-subscription rules.
8. The published admission limit only applies to the intake year at a school. However, this number will be considered for in year admissions unless a school is significantly undersubscribed. In this situation schools will be considered full in a year group when they reach an appropriate operational limit within their existing class organisation.
9. Academies, Foundation, Voluntary Aided and Free Schools must return all applications sorted in rank order to the County Council within 10 school days of the request.
10. The County Council applies the published admission rules in the event of oversubscription at Community or Voluntary Controlled schools to prioritise all applications.
11. Where more than one place could potentially be offered the single offer will be for the school that the parent has ranked the highest. Lower ranked preferences will be withdrawn.
12. Where no preference can be met, and the child is not already attending a local school, a place will be allocated at a school in accordance with Norfolk's Fair Access Protocol.

13. Norfolk County Council will send out offers of school places for Norfolk schools by second class post as per the timetable.
14. Parents will be advised of their right of appeal against any refusal and to whom their appeal should be lodged for each preference that is refused.
15. One application will be considered each academic year unless there has been a material change in the pupil's or family's circumstances.
16. No waiting lists will be maintained by the Local Authority as part of the in-year co-ordination scheme.
17. Own admission authority schools are not required to take part in the in year co-ordinated admission scheme and parent/carers can apply direct to these schools. Those not taking part in the scheme are listed on the Council's website. These schools are required to confirm to the Local Authority applications received and the decision made.

Timetable for In-year Admissions:

We expect transfers to take place at the beginning of each school term and **will only consider applications which are received by the Admissions team on or before:**

- 31 October for a transfer at the beginning of the spring term (i.e., after Christmas)
- 28 (29) February for a transfer at the beginning of the summer term (i.e., after Easter)
- 31 May for a transfer at the beginning of the autumn term (i.e., after the summer holiday). Late applications will be accepted until 3 July for a transfer at the beginning of the autumn term (i.e., after the summer holiday)

Applications received after the specified dates will not be considered until the next closing date for admission.

APPENDIX D 2025/26 - Admission arrangements for Community and Voluntary Controlled schools

Norfolk Admission Arrangement 2025/26

Oversubscription criteria for Community and Voluntary Secondary Schools

If there are more requests for places than places available, the Authority will admit children in the following order of priority:

1. children with an Education, Health and Care Plan or Statement of special educational needs naming the school;
2. children in public care, have been adopted from public care or adopted from abroad who are due to transfer;
3. children who are due to transfer and live in the catchment area;
4. children who are due to transfer who have been allocated a permanent place at a Specialist Resource Base attached to the school (Places allocated by Norfolk County Council's Placement Panel);
5. children who are eligible for the service premium. A pupil is eligible for the service premium if:
 - a) one of their parents is serving in the regular armed forces (including pupils with a parent who is on full commitment as part of the full time reserve service);
 - b) they have been registered as a 'service child' on the January school census at any point since 2016;
 - c) one of their parents died whilst serving in the armed forces and the pupil receives a pension under the Armed Forces Compensation Scheme or the War Pensions Scheme.
6. children who are due to transfer and live outside the catchment area, who have an older brother or sister attending the school at the time of admission (but not the sixth form);
7. children who are due to transfer who live outside the catchment area and attend a feeder school at the opening date of the admission round i.e., 13 September 2024;
8. children of staff at the school
 - a) where the member of staff has been employed at the school for two or more years at the time at which the application for admission to the school is made, and/or
 - b) the member of staff is recruited to fill a vacant post for which there is a demonstrable skill shortage
9. children who are due to transfer and live outside the catchment area.

If all children within any of the above rules cannot be offered a place, the highest priority will be given to children living nearest to the school within that rule. To determine who lives nearest, distance will be measured on a straight line 'crow fly' basis, using Ordnance Survey data. If following the application of admission rules and distance two applicants cannot be separated for a final place at a school the authority will use random allocation to determine the priority for the remaining place.

Oversubscription criteria for admission to Reception classes in community and voluntary controlled schools for children due to start school in the school year 2025/26

If there are more applications for places than there are places available, the Local Authority will give priority to children living nearest to the school, according to the following rules in this order of priority:

Children who are due to start school and:

1. have an EHCP or statement of special educational needs naming that school
2. children in public care, have been adopted from public care or adopted from abroad who are due to transfer
3. live in the catchment area and who have a sibling attending the school at the time of their admission
4. live in the catchment area who have a brother or sister attending the feeder junior school
5. have a disability and live in the catchment area (Appropriate professional evidence will be required to confirm the disability)
6. live in the catchment area
7. have been allocated a permanent place at a Specialist Resource Base attached to the school. (Places allocated by Norfolk County Council's Placement panel)
8. children eligible for the service premium. A pupil is eligible for the service premium if:
 - a) one of their parents is serving in the regular armed forces (including pupils with a parent who is on full commitment as part of the full time reserve service);
 - b) they have been registered as a 'service child' on the January school census at any point since 2016;
 - c) one of their parents died whilst serving in the armed forces and the pupil receives a pension under the Armed Forces Compensation Scheme or the War Pensions Scheme.
9. live outside the catchment area who have a brother or sister with a statement of special educational needs attending the school at the time of their admission
10. live outside the area served by the school who have a brother or sister attending the school at the time of their admission
11. live outside the catchment area who have a brother or sister attending the feeder junior school
12. have a disability and live outside the catchment area (Appropriate professional evidence will be required to confirm the disability)
13. children of staff
 - a) where a member of staff has been employed at the school for two or more years at the time at which the application for admission to the school is made and/or
 - b) the member of staff is recruited to fill a vacant post for there is a demonstrable skill shortage
14. live outside the catchment area

If all children within any of the above rules cannot be offered a place, the highest priority will be given to children living nearest to the school within that rule. To determine who lives nearest, distance will be measured on a straight line “crow fly” basis, using Ordnance Survey data. The address will be measured from the post office address point on the property.

In the unlikely event that distance does not separate the final two or more pupils seeking the last remaining place, a random allocation will be used to determine who is offered the final place.

NOTE: Criteria 7 only applies to schools which have a Specialist Resource Base on site.

Feeder school priority will only apply in the first year of entry to the school.

Oversubscription criteria for pupils transferring to community and voluntary controlled junior schools (Year 3) for children in their last year at an Infant or First school.

If there are more applications for places than there are places available, the Local Authority will give priority to children living nearest to the school, according to the following rules in this order of priority:

1. children with an EHCP or statement of special educational needs naming that school
2. children in public care, have been adopted from public care or adopted from abroad who are due to transfer
3. children who are due to transfer, living in the catchment area who have a brother or sister attending the school at the time of their admission
4. children who are due to transfer, living in the catchment area who have no brother or sister connection with the school
5. children who are due to transfer and have been allocated a permanent place at a Specialist Resource Base attached to the school. (Places allocated by Norfolk County Council's Placement panel).
6. Children eligible for the service premium. A pupil is eligible for the service premium if:
 - a) one of their parents is serving in the regular armed forces (including pupils with a parent who is on full commitment as part of the full time reserve service);
 - b) they have been registered as a 'service child' on the January school census at any point since 2016;
 - c) one of their parents died whilst serving in the armed forces and the pupil receives a pension under the Armed Forces Compensation Scheme or the War Pensions Scheme.
7. children who are due to transfer, living outside the catchment area who have a brother or sister attending the school at the time of their admission
8. children who are due to transfer, living outside the catchment area and attend a feeder school at the opening date of the admission round.
9. children of staff
 - a) where a member of staff has been employed at the school for two or more years at the time at which the application for admission to the school is made and/or

- b) the member of staff is recruited to fill a vacant post for there is a demonstrable skill shortage
- 10. children who are due to transfer, living outside the catchment area served by the school who have no brother or sister or feeder school connection with the school.
- 11. children attending primary schools with a brother or sister at the junior school
- 12. children attending primary schools with no brother or sister at the junior school.

If all children within any of the above rules cannot be offered a place, the highest priority will be given to children living nearest to the school within that rule. To determine who lives nearest, distance will be measured on a straight line “crow fly” basis, using Ordnance Survey data. The address will be measured from the post office address point on the property.

In the unlikely event that distance does not separate the final two or more pupils seeking the last remaining place, a random allocation will be used to determine who is offered the final place.

Important Note

‘School’ is defined as the main school and not a learning support centre or nursery class attached to the school. This means that no priority would be given to a child from outside the catchment area who had either a brother or sister at the attached nursery class or in temporary or part-time attendance at the attached learning support centre. The address given on the application form will be used to decide the catchment school.

Children in their last year (Year 2) at an Infant will be considered due to transfer. Children attending a primary school are considered as not due to transfer and therefore their applications have the lowest priority for a place even if they live in the catchment area of the school.

Feeder school priority will only apply in the first year of entry to the school.

NOTE: Criteria 5 only applies to schools which have a Specialist Resource Base on site.

Cabinet

Item No: 12

Report Title: Risk Management Report

Date of Meeting: 10th January 2024

Responsible Cabinet Member: Cllr. Kay Mason Billig (Leader and Cabinet Member for Strategy & Governance)

Responsible Director: Harvey Bullen, Director of Strategic Finance

Is this a Key Decision? No

If this is a Key Decision, date added to the Forward Plan of Key Decisions: Not applicable

Executive Summary / Introduction from Cabinet Member

Risk management contributes to achieving corporate objectives, the Council's key priorities and strategy Better Together, For Norfolk, and is a key part of the performance management framework. The responsibility for an adequate and effective risk management function rests with Cabinet, supported by portfolio holders and delivered by the risk owners, reviewers, and the Risk Management Officer as part of the risk management framework.

This risk management report contains the reviewed and updated corporate risks, as at January 2024.

Recommendations:

For Cabinet to consider and agree:

- 1. The key proposed changes to corporate risks since the last report to October 2023 Cabinet (shown in paragraph and 2.2 and Appendix A)**
- 2. The corporate risks as at January 2024 (Appendices B and C)**

1. Background and Purpose

- 1.1 With Cabinet's ownership of the corporate risk register, the purpose of this report is to set out the latest corporate risks for Cabinet to consider and agree following officer review of the Council's corporate level risks. **Appendix A** provides a summary of the proposed changes to corporate risks following this review. **Appendix B** shows a heat map summary of the corporate risks set out on a 5x5 risk matrix, with accompanying table breaking down the risks by their Red, Amber, Green (RAG) status. Full details of the corporate risks are set out in **Appendix C**.

The Audit and Governance Committee are responsible for monitoring the adequacy and effectiveness of the systems of risk management and internal control, as set out in its Terms of Reference, which is part of the Council's [Constitution](#). There are Risk Management controls in place within the Council as per the Financial Regulations of the Council's Constitution.

2. Proposal

- 2.1 The key general corporate risk messages are as follows:

- That corporate risk management continues to be sound and effective, working to best practice, and continues to support the Council's strategic objectives.
- The review and updating of corporate risks has taken place with the input of risk owners and reviewers.
- This risk management report should be read in conjunction with the performance and finance reports.
- We are monitoring developing cyber risks associated with the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) given the increasing prevalence of AI in the working world.

2.2 The key specific corporate risk messages are as follows:

Proposed Risk Title Change

RM038 - Demand to manage statutory responsibilities

There is a proposal to amend the title of this risk from **Recovery from the Covid-19 Pandemic** to **Demand to manage statutory responsibilities**.

Proposed Risk Score Changes

- **RM031 - NCC Funded Children's Services Overspend**
There is a proposal to increase the score of this risk from 20 to 25, increasing the current risk likelihood from 4 to 5.
- **RM038 - Demand to manage statutory responsibilities**
There is a proposal to reduce the current score of this risk from 16 to 12, decreasing the current likelihood score from 4 to 3.

Proposed Risk Description Change

RM013 - Governance protocols for entities controlled by the Council

There is a proposal to incorporate the key new Local Authority Company Review Guidance 2023 within the risk description.

Proposed Risk Owner Change

RM027 – myOracle

There is a proposal to change the risk owner from the Director of Strategic Finance to the Director of IMT & Chief Digital Officer.

Further details can be seen in the proposed key changes summary in Appendix A, the risk in Appendix C, and the accompanying Financial Monitoring report.

3. Impact of the Proposal

- 3.1 Risk management plays a key role in managing performance and is a requirement in the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 (amended 2020). Sound risk management helps ensure that objectives are fulfilled, that resources and assets are protected and used effectively and efficiently. The responsibilities for risk management are set out in the Financial Regulations, which are part of the Council's Constitution.

- 3.2 Details of the proposals above in 2.2. can be viewed in **Appendix A**, offering further rationale and impact of the proposals.

4. Evidence and Reasons for Decision

- 4.1 Not applicable as no decision is being made.

5. Alternative Options

- 5.1 There are no alternatives identified.

6. Financial Implications

- 6.1 There are financial implications to consider, which are set out within the corporate risks at **Appendix C**. The budget for this financial year 2023-24 was set and agreed by Full Council in February 2023, following consultation and we are now working towards setting the budget for 2024-25. Mitigations supporting the controlled treatment of the risk of the potential failure to manage significant reductions in local and national income streams are set out in risk **RM002 - Income streams**, and the corporate risk covering the impact of rising inflation is covered in risk **RM035 - Adverse impact of significant and abnormal levels of inflationary pressure on revenue and capital budgets**.

7. Resource Implications

- 7.1 **Staff:** There are staffing resource implications to consider as part of risk **RM029 - Critical skills required for the organisation to operate effectively**.
- 7.2 **Property:** There is ongoing work to identify and implement opportunities to reduce our carbon footprint throughout our corporate property portfolio.
- 7.3 **IT:** The Council's Digital Services (previously Information Management) team are continuing to closely monitor cyber security threat levels with the current geo-political situation, and continue to roll out the technology advances that are helping Members and officers to carry out their duties effectively from home as well as Council offices.

8. Other Implications

8.1 Legal Implications:

There are no current specific legal implications to consider within this report.

8.2 Human Rights Implications:

There are no specific human rights implications to consider within this report.

8.3 Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) (this must be included):

There are none applicable.

8.4 Data Protection Impact Assessments (DPIA):

There are none applicable.

8.5 Health and Safety implications (where appropriate):

There are no new health and safety implications to consider.

8.6 Sustainability implications (where appropriate):

There are no specific sustainability implications to consider within this report other than to note the corporate risk **RM036 – Non-Delivery of the Environmental Policy** covering the risk of not delivering the key objectives of the NCC environmental policy, which incorporates sustainability.

8.7 Any Other Implications:

There are no other implications to report.

9. Risk Implications / Assessment

9.1 The corporate risk implications are set out in the report above, and within the risks themselves at **Appendix C**.

9.2 Following Cabinet risk management training held in August 2023, risk management training is also scheduled for all Select and Scrutiny Committees to take place in January 2024. The Risk Management Officer will host these training sessions to give Members of these Committees a further understanding of risk management and its application within Norfolk County Council.

10. Select Committee Comments

10.1 There are no recent risk-based comments from the Select Committee to report.

11. Recommendations

For Cabinet to consider and agree:

1. The key proposed changes to corporate risks since the last report to October 2023 Cabinet (shown in paragraph 2.2 and Appendix A)
2. The corporate risks as at January 2024 (Appendices B and C)

12. Background Papers

12.1 There are no background papers applicable.

Officer Contact

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

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Key Proposed Changes to Corporate Risks

Proposed Risk Title Change

RM038 - Demand to manage statutory responsibilities

There is a proposal to amend the title of this risk from **Recovery from the Covid-19 Pandemic** to **Demand to manage statutory responsibilities**. This sets the risk in a more current context.

Proposed Risk Score Changes

RM031 - NCC Funded Children's Services Overspend

There is a proposal to increase the current score of this risk from 20 to 25, increasing the current likelihood score from 4 to 5.

As at period 6, there is a reported in year cost pressure. The forecast overspend for social care placements and support is c. £6m, primarily due to the significant increase in the average unit cost for external residential and external supported accommodation, the demand continuing to be high for social care services (as seen and reported nationally), additional costs of supporting a small number of children and young people with very complex needs, as well as a significant increase in the demand for community short-break provision. Home to school transport cost pressures are also contributing to this in year cost pressure.

RM038 - Demand to manage statutory responsibilities

There is a proposal to decrease the current score of this risk from 16 to 12, decreasing the current likelihood score from 4 to 3.

Holding list numbers have continued to fall, with planning underway for reducing unallocated safeguarding cases on the holding list to zero ahead of assurance by Care Quality Commission (CQC).

Proposed Risk Description Change

RM013 - Governance protocols for entities controlled by the Council

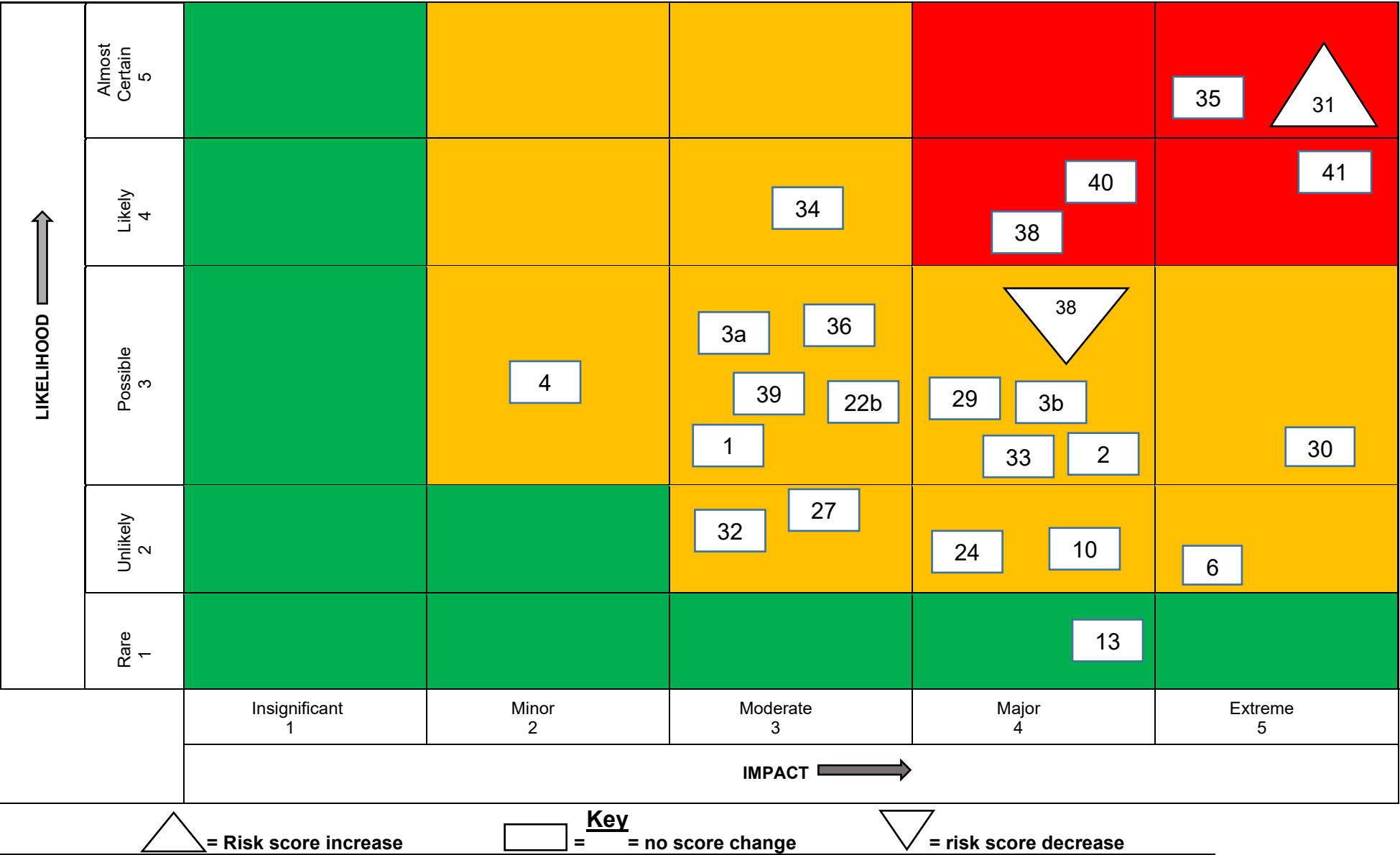
There is a proposal to incorporate the key new Local Authority Company Review Guidance 2023 into the risk description. This new guidance sets out the governance standards expected of us as a Local Authority and our controlled entities.

Proposed Risk Owner Change

RM027 – myOracle

There is a proposal to change the risk owner for this risk from the Director of Strategic Finance to the Director of IMT & Chief Digital Officer.

Corporate Risks - Heat Map



Each corporate risk is assigned a unique risk number to be able to easily identify it. These can be seen in the heat map above.

Red Rated Risks

Risk Number	Risk Title	Score
RM035	Adverse impact of significant and abnormal levels of inflationary pressure on revenue and capital budgets	25
RM031	NCC Funded Children's Services Overspend	25
RM041	Adult Social Services Supplier or Market Failure	20
RM040	ASSD assurance implementation	16

Amber Rated Risks

Risk Number	Risk Title	Score
RM030	Non-realisation of Children's Services Transformation change and expected benefits	15
RM002	Income streams	12
RM038	Demand to manage statutory responsibilities	12
RM003b	Information and cyber security requirements	12
RM033	Norwich Western Link Project	12

RM034	Supply Chain Interruption	12
RM029	Critical skills required for the organisation to operate effectively	12
RM006	Service Delivery	10
RM001	Infrastructure funding requirements	9
RM003a	Information compliance requirements	9
RM022b	Replacement EU Funding for Economic Growth	9
RM036	Non-delivery of the NCC Environmental Policy	9
RM039	ASSD financial, staffing & market stability impacts due to implementation of social care reform	9
RM010	Loss of key ICT systems	8
RM024	Great Yarmouth Third River Crossing (3RC)	8
RM027	myOracle	6
RM032	Capacity to manage a large or multiple incidents or disruptions to business	6
RM004	Contract management for commissioned services	6

Green Rated Risks

Risk Number	Risk Title	Score
RM013	Governance protocols for entities controlled by the Council	4

Risk Number		RM001				Date of update		17 November 2023		
Risk Name		Infrastructure funding requirements								
Portfolio lead		Cllr. Graham Plant				Risk Owner		Paul Cracknell		
Risk Description					Date entered on risk register			01 October 2022		
There is a risk of not realising infrastructure funding requirements to achieve the infrastructure ambition of the Business Plan. 1) Not securing sufficient funding to deliver all the required infrastructure for existing needs and planned growth leading to: • Congestion, delay and unreliable journey times on the transport network • A lack of the essential facilities that create attractive conditions for business activity and investment, and sustainable communities, including good connectivity, public transport, walking and cycling routes, open space and green infrastructure, and funding for the infrastructure necessary to enable the county council to perform its statutory responsibilities, eg education. Overall risk treatment: Treat										
Original			Current			Tolerance Target				
Likelihood	Impact	Risk score	Likelihood	Impact	Risk score	Likelihood	Impact	Risk score	Target Date	Prospects of meeting Target Risk Score by Target Date
3	3	9	3	3	9	3	2	6	Mar-24	Amber
Tasks to mitigate the risk										
1.1) Work with other county council officers and partners including government, local enterprise partnerships and district councils to compile evidence and the case for investment into infrastructure in order to achieve success through bidding rounds for capital investment. 1.2) Identify and secure funding including Pooled Business Rates (PBR) to develop projects to a point where successful bids can be made for funding through compiling evidence and cases for investment. 1.3) Engage with providers of national infrastructure – National Highways for strategic (trunk) roads and Network Rail for rail delivery – to ensure timely delivery of infrastructure projects, and work with partners on advocacy and lobbying with government to secure future investment into the networks. 1.4) Review Planning Obligations Standards annually to ensure the county council is able to seek and secure the maximum possible contribution from developers. 1.5) Continue to build the relationship with strategic partners including elected representatives, government departments, local enterprise partnerships, regional bodies such as Transport East (the Sub-National Transport Body) and other local authorities to maximise opportunity and work together in the most effective joined-up manner. 1.6) Periodically review timescales for S106, and other, funding contributions to ensure they are spent before the end date and take action as required. Periodic reviews for transport contributions and an annual review process for library and education contributions. 1.7) Manage risk RM033, Norwich Western Link.										
Progress update										

Progress update

on developing future programmes. Current focus on pipeline projects for RIS3 trunk road programme: A11 Mildenhall, A120 and A14 Copdock Junction

Met DfT officials 4 July to discuss current and potential future programmes

NWL (See RM033): Outline Business Case (OBC) submitted to DfT for approval at end of June 2021. (Addendum submitted Sept 2022.) Awaiting funding confirmation.

Long Stratton Bypass: OBC approved by government July 2021. Planning applications consented by S Norfolk planning committee 15 March 2023.

West Winch Housing Access Road: OBC being progressed.

A47/A17 Pullover Junction King's Lynn: Draft Strategic Outline Case received from WSP. Has been reviewed and progression to the next stage will now be the subject of member decision-making.

Working with partners: Continuing to work with Transport East, districts and other partners.

1.2) PBR funding secured for various projects including Norwich Western Link, West Winch Housing Access Road and A47/A17 Pullover Junction (see 1.1). County levelling-up bid for King's Lynn successful, drawing in circa £24m for measures at Southgates and the Gyratory system (January 23).

Facilitated bids for unspent DLUHC money for transport infrastructure with District Councils October

1.3) Legal challenge claims dismissed in judgement on Development Consent Orders for A47 Blofield to Burlingham, N. Tuddenham to Easton and Thickthorn 7 July

A47 Alliance meeting held 26 June. Advocacy being rolled out.

Responded to consultations on future direction of trunk road programmes on behalf of NCC and A47 Alliance 13 July

Continuing to work with partners on Norwich to London rail, Ely Task Force and East West Rail Main Line Partnership. Government confirmed commitment to EWR and preferred route alignment between Cambridge and Bedford May 2023. Working with Transport East on Transport East Rail Plan and advice on next trunk road programme (see 1.1)

Working with National Highways to deliver improvements at Harfreys Roundabout (now in construction) ahead of completing 3RC and on bringing forward Vauxhall Junction improvement post 3RC

1.4) The standards for 2023 were agreed by Cabinet in June and have been applied to NCC responses to planning applications from 5th June 2023. Work will begin on updating the standards for 2024 at the end of the year and officers are exploring the options to include school transport and review the monitoring fee.

1.5) Continuing to work with Transport East: Transport strategy now endorsed by Ministers. Working with TE on additional workstreams initiated following three-year funding settlement from DfT.

Liaising and attending various wider partnership groups including with DfT, Network Rail and National Highways on strategic road and rail schemes

Engaging with other authorities on Local Transport Plans

1.6) County Council published 2022 Infrastructure Funding Statement in November 2022 and will start preparing the IFS for 2023 in the autumn. Working with other departments such as Children's Services who collect housing data to develop a SharePoint hub to ensure NCC has as much up to date information to inform the collection of S106 payments. Planning Obligations database will be updated and shared with relevant departments to ensure invoices are raised for S106 payments on time.

1.7) See risk RM033, Norwich Western Link

Risk Number	RM002				Date of update		15 November 2023			
Risk Name	Income streams									
Portfolio lead	Cllr. Andrew Jamieson				Risk Owner		Harvey Bullen			
Risk Description					Date entered on risk register			01 October 2022		
There is a risk of failure to manage significant reductions to, or insufficient increases in, local and national income streams. This may arise from global or local economic circumstances (i.e. rising inflation), and/or government policy on public sector budgets and funding. As a result there is a risk that the Medium Term Financial Strategy savings required for 2023/24 to 2026/27 are not delivered because of uncertainty as to the scale of savings resulting in significant budget overspends, unsustainable drawing on reserves, and severe emergency savings measures needing to be taken. The financial implications are set out in the Council's Budget Book, available on the Council's website. Overall risk treatment:Treat										
Original			Current			Tolerance Target				
Likelihood	Impact	Risk score	Likelihood	Impact	Risk score	Likelihood	Impact	Risk score	Target Date	Prospects of meeting Target Risk Score by Target Date
3	4	12	3	4	12	2	4	8	Mar-24	Amber
Tasks to mitigate the risk										
Medium Term Financial Strategy and robust budget setting within available resources. No surprises through effective budget management for both revenue and capital. Budget owners accountable for managing within set resources. Determine and prioritise commissioning outcomes against available resources and delivery of value for money. Regular and robust monitoring and tracking of in-year budget savings by Executive Directors and members. Regular finance monitoring reports to Cabinet. Close monitoring of central government grant terms and conditions to ensure that these are met to receive grants. Plans to be adjusted accordingly once the most up to date data has been received.										
Progress update										

Progress update

County Council on 21.02.22 approved the 2022-23 budget and future Medium Term Financial Strategy 2022-26 taking into account the 2022-23 Local Government Finance Settlement.

The council's external auditors gave an unqualified audit opinion on the 2020-21 Statement of Accounts and were satisfied that the County Council had put in place proper arrangements to secure economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources for the year ended 31.03.2021. The External Auditor's opinion on the 2021/22 Statement of Accounts is currently expected to be finalised by the end of November 2023.

The absence of a multi-year funding settlement, coupled with continued uncertainty and the further delay of the significant planned reforms for local government finance, represents a major challenge for the Council in developing its Medium term Financial Strategy. Cabinet on 30.01.23 considered and agreed the 2023-24 Revenue Budget and Medium Term Financial Strategy 2023-27 and made recommendations to County Council. On 21.02.23 County Council agreed the 2023-24 Budget, level of council tax and future Medium Term Financial Strategy 2023-27 taking into account the 2023-24 Local Government Finance Settlement.

On 05.07.23 Cabinet considered the proposed approach to 2024/25 Budget Setting and agreed the target level of savings to be found within Departments. On 02.10.23 Cabinet considered the initial proposals identified to contribute to closing the Council's 2024/25 budget gap, and, following Scrutiny, began the process of public consultation. This supports the Council's robust approach to budget setting to deliver a balanced Budget for Council to consider in February 2024.

The Council will consider the Government's Autumn Statement on 22.11.2023 to inform budget-setting for 2024-25, and any updated Policy Statement, alongside the Provisional Settlement which is due to be announced by DLUHC in December.

Risk Number		RM003a				Date of update		14 November 2023		
Risk Name		Information compliance requirements								
Portfolio lead		Cllr.Kay Mason Billig				Risk Owner		Simon Wynn		
Risk Description					Date entered on risk register			01 October 2022		
There is a risk of failing to comply with statutory information compliance requirements (e.g. under GDPR, FOI, EIR) which could lead to reputational damage and financial impact from any fines or compensation sought, and operational inefficiencies within the organisation, and loss of cooperation with external partners (eg. NHS). Overall risk treatment: Treat										
Original			Current			Tolerance Target				
Likelihood	Impact	Risk score	Likelihood	Impact	Risk score	Likelihood	Impact	Risk score	Target Date	Prospects of meeting Target Risk Score by Target Date
4	3	12	3	3	9	2	3	6	Dec-23	Green
Tasks to mitigate the risk										
1. Mandatory Information Governance Training for all colleagues, with ongoing awareness of IG responsibilities for colleagues. 2. Information Governance Group and Steering Group occur bi-monthly 3. Detailed management information in place to monitor performance 4. Two-way relationship with ICO maintained to ensure positive working relationship 5. Focus on resource available / required to ensure consistency of service 6. Ongoing improvements underway to improve IG operational efficiency and effectiveness. 7. Working closely with Digital Services to exploit the technical opportunities as described in RM003b.										
Progress update										
Mandatory training for Information Governance (Data Protection Essentials) has a current completin rate of 95% in June 2023 following targeted communications. Monthly reminders are now being sent by IG until an automated myOracle solution is delivered which is due by end 2023. A workbook remains in place to match the online training for non-IT users. All NCC employees and anyone accessing NCC data receive IG training. Information Governance Group and the escalation Steering Group comprising the SIRO, DPO, Dir. Digital Services, Audit and Caldicott Guardians continues to meet, occuring bi-monthly to deliver a strong focus and accountability on information related matters. The Group also provides oversight on a number of key information related projects. Management information continues to be monitored to allow actions to be taken on activity within the IG team and resource to be appropriately allocated / requested. Performance remains strong in Freedom of Information Requests and Police disclosures. Subject Access Requests (SARs) has seen significant improvements since a single team was created in August 2022 and has seen a 40% reduction in open cases to date and a significant improvement in response times within statutory timescales. An update was provided to the ICO in NOvember 2023 following the ICO reprimand										

Progress update

in May 2023 relating to SAR response times and the ICO confirmed that they were pleased to see improvements and now consider the matter closed. The team has been fully resourced since August 2023 and there is a plan in place to ensure all SARs responded to in timescale and the backlog is eliminated during 2024. We continue to look for improvements to process where possible including working with Digital Service to deliver technology solutions to improve performance and reduce risk.

Positive relationship with the ICO in relation to data incidents and responses to subject access request complaints which helps demonstrate a good culture towards information in NCC.

In conjunction with Digital Services, the Electronic Storage Programme underway to reduce risk associated with unstructured information held on Fileshares with the first migrations complete. A schedule of migration and resource is in place to move departments over to the new storage, with retention labels being a key addition.

These activities will enhance many of the mitigations to a higher standard, reducing the likelihood of occurrence - the impact should anything happen would likely result in local or national media attention, depending on the severity of the issue.

Risk Number	RM003b					Date of update		09 November 2023		
Risk Name	Information and cyber security requirements									
Portfolio lead	Cllr. Jane James					Risk Owner		Geoff Connell		
Risk Description					Date entered on risk register			01 October 2022		
There is a risk of failure to comply with relevant information and cyber security requirements. This would incorporate Public Sector Network Assurance, NHS Data Security and Protection Toolkit, and Payment Card Industry -Data Security Standards which could lead to operational, financial and reputation impact. Overall risk treatment: Treat										
Original			Current			Tolerance Target				
Likelihood	Impact	Risk score	Likelihood	Impact	Risk score	Likelihood	Impact	Risk score	Target Date	Prospects of meeting Target Risk Score by Target Date
4	3	12	3	4	12	1	3	3	Mar-24	Green
Tasks to mitigate the risk										
1. Mandatory Training in place for all colleagues - ongoing. A wider phishing simulation will be delivered in 2023/24.										
2. Development and monitoring for breaches - ongoing										
3. Implementation of improved security measures - ongoing										
4. External networking to ensure best practice - ongoing										
5. Completing required accreditations - To gain PSN accreditation and Cyber Essentials by Q3.										
6. Cyber communications campaign to be rolled out from Q1 of 2023/24.										
Progress update										
- Regular extensive communications to NCC staff on remaining vigilant against cyber-attacks										
- Ongoing monitoring of compliance levels of mandatory training for all colleagues										
- Cyber communications campaign (e.g. lockscreen notifications) delivered										
- Regular involvement with the National Cyber Security Centre										
- Regular simulated phishing exercise delivered for the whole organisation to understand where weaknesses remain and staff directed to training required										
- PSN accreditation will continue while new Government standards are developed. PSN Health Check is complete, remediations identified and being applied and submission being prepared for recertification.										
- Zero Trust design for laptops is 100% deployed										
- NHS DSP Toolkit application for 2023 completed, valid 30 June 2024.										
- Regular security patches applied monthly										
Risk score of 12 at present due to a number of continual threats from the geo-political landscape. The impact should anything happen could result in significant operational and financial impact as well as local or national media attention, depending on the severity of the issue.										

Risk Number	RM004					Date of update		20 November 2023		
Risk Name	Contract management for commissioned services.									
Portfolio lead	Cllr. Andrew Jamieson					Risk Owner		Al Collier		
Risk Description					Date entered on risk register			01 October 2022		
There is a risk of failure to deliver effective and robust contract management for commissioned services. Ineffective contract management leads to wasted expenditure, poor quality, failure to achieve anticipated environmental or social benefits, unanticipated supplier default or contractual or legal disputes, and/or reputational damage to the Council. The council spends some £900m on contracted goods and services each year. Overall risk treatment: Tolerate										
Original			Current			Tolerance Target				
Likelihood	Impact	Risk score	Likelihood	Impact	Risk score	Likelihood	Impact	Risk score	Target Date	Prospects of meeting Target Risk Score by Target Date
3	4	12	2	3	6	1	3	3	Mar-24	Green
Tasks to mitigate the risk										
<p>1) New governance arrangements: Stand up the Commissioning and Procurement Leadership Group to add senior rigour to contract and category management across ASS, CS and PH. Ensure similar rigour is ensured for other contracts (ie Non-Light Touch Regime/Provider Selection Regime) via working groups and DLTs. Stand up a Commercial Board for escalation and to endorse significant strategies</p> <p>2) New route for procurement pipeline - annual process with additional ad-hoc plans as they arise Approval from new Commercial Board Endorsement from Corporate Board Agreement from Cabinet</p> <p>3) Segment all contracts into Gold/Silver/Bronze according to a defined framework. Also agree where certain categories should be promoted to a higher segment than that for individual contract. Record this on contract register</p> <p>4) Agree minimum contract management requirements for each segment. Ensure these are monitored regularly at departmental DLTs</p> <p>5) Ensure that staff managing contracts participate in relevant contract management training</p> <p>6) Procure and implement a new contract management system to automate the current manual processes, and to provide a single repository of contract information which is accessible to all relevant stakeholders across both procurement and departmental commissioners/contract managers</p> <p>7) Review arrangements between commissioning departments and procurement - escalation, role boundaries, informal vs formal mechanisms</p>										
Progress update										

Progress update

- 1) Governance structure agreed by Tom McCabe. Terms Of Reference, Membership, Meeting Frequency etc in place
- 2) To be agreed and implemented through the Governance groups described in (1) above
- 3) Contract segmentation tool finalised. Exceptions will be agreed by Commercial Board. Individual contract segmentation is recorded on contract register.
- 4) Corporate minimum standards headlines agreed. Next step is to embed across the organisation - this will be a big piece of work crossing all departments
- 5) Contract Management Pioneer Programme available for 10 free places in early 2023. NCC has been accepted onto the programme and delegates are part way through the programme with some due to finish in the next couple of months. Once complete (or maybe sooner) we will consider whether additional staff would benefit from the programme - we would need to pay for further places. Commercial Board has agreed that contract managers will complete the Foundation level of the GCC Contract Management Training
- 6) Commercial Board has agreed to implement the contract management module of In-tend: the system we already use for e-tendering. Project Plan under development. Implementation work to start early December 2023. The first stage will be to transfer our contract and grant register onto the new system, together with formal contractual documentation.
- 7) Detailed RACI conversations at CPLG have built a basis for process mapping. Process mapping work has begun, focussing on mapping required for CCIAF.

Risk Number		RM006				Date of update		15 November 2023		
Risk Name		Service Delivery								
Portfolio lead		Cllr. Kay Mason Billig				Risk Owner		Tom McCabe		
Risk Description					Date entered on risk register			01 October 2022		
There is a potential risk of failure to deliver our services within the resources available for the period 2023/24 to the end of 2024/25. The failure to deliver agreed savings or to deliver our services within the resources available, factoring in causation such as rising inflation, resulting in the risk of legal challenge and overspends, requiring the need for in year spending decisions during the life of the plan, to the detriment of local communities and vulnerable service users. Overall risk treatment: Treat										
Original			Current			Tolerance Target				
Likelihood	Impact	Risk score	Likelihood	Impact	Risk score	Likelihood	Impact	Risk score	Target Date	Prospects of meeting Target Risk Score by Target Date
2	5	10	2	5	10	1	5	5	Mar-24	Green
Tasks to mitigate the risk										
<p>'1) Clear robust framework, ' Better Together, for Norfolk - Business Plan' in place which drives the delivery of the overall vision and priority outcomes. The delivery of a council-wide strategy which seeks to shift focus to early help and prevention, and to managing demand.</p> <p>2) Delivery against the strategic service and financial planning, by translating the vision and priorities into achieved, delivered targets.</p> <p>3) A robust annual process to provide evidence for Members to make decisions about spending priorities.</p> <p>4) Regular and robust in-year financial monitoring to track delivery of savings and manage in-year pressures.</p> <p>5) Sound engagement and consultation with stakeholders and the public around service delivery.</p> <p>6) A performance management and risk system which ensures resources are used to best effect, and that the Council delivers against its objectives and targets.</p>										
Progress update										
<p>Regular budget and performance monitoring reports to Cabinet demonstrated how the Council has delivered against the 2022/23 budgets and priorities set for each of our services, with a balanced outturn position for the year being achieved.</p> <p>The Council has a robust and established process, including regular reporting to Members, which is closely linked to the wider Council Strategy, in order to support the development of future year budget plans taking account of the latest available information about government funding levels and other pressures. This process includes reviewing service budgets and taking into account financial performance and issues arising in the current financial year as detailed in the budget monitoring reports. There is financial monitoring of in-year cost, with monitoring of 2023/24 spend being reported to Cabinet on a monthly basis. Midway through the year, the forecast outturn for 2023-24 currently identifies the risk of a small overspend; work is underway to seek to mitigate this and deliver a balanced outturn position. The impact of the 2023-24 monitoring position will be taking into account in the preparation of the 2024-25 Budget. There has been an updated MTFs position reported to Cabinet within the year, and there will be a budget setting meeting of Full Council in February 2024, and monitoring reports taken to Cabinet in 2024/25. Savings from the Strategic Review are to be embedded in 2023/24 and work is underway to identify further proposals to contribute to closing 2024/25 gap.</p>										

Risk Number	RM010				Date of update		09 November 2023			
Risk Name	Loss of key ICT systems									
Portfolio lead	Cllr. Jane James				Risk Owner		Geoff Connell			
Risk Description					Date entered on risk register			01 October 2022		
<p>The risk of the loss of key ICT systems including: - Network connectivity; - Telephony; - Microsoft Office & all business systems. Loss of core / key ICT systems, communications or utilities for a significant period - as a result of a cyber attack, loss of power, physical failure, fire or flood,or supplier failure - would result in a failure to deliver IT based services leading to disruption to critical service delivery, a loss of reputation, and additional costs. Ransomware is currently the highest risk cyber security threat. While every effort is made to avoid such a security breach, it is also important to ensure we are able to recover as quickly as possible if we became infected. Overall risk treatment: Treat.</p>										
Original			Current			Tolerance Target				
Likelihood	Impact	Risk score	Likelihood	Impact	Risk score	Likelihood	Impact	Risk score	Target Date	Prospects of meeting Target Risk Score by Target Date
3	3	9	2	4	8	1	3	3	Mar-24	Green
Tasks to mitigate the risk										
<p>Implement Cloud-based business systems with resilient links for key areas</p> <p>Review and Implement suitable arrangements to protect against possible cyber / ransomware attacks including;</p> <p>Running a number of Cyber Attack exercises with senior stakeholders to reduce the risk of taking the wrong action in the event of a cyber attack</p> <p>We will hold a number of Business Continuity exercises to understand and reduce the impact of risk scenarios</p> <p>WFH has changed the critical points of infrastructure. Access to cloud services like O365 without reliance on County Hall data centres is critical to ensure service continuity.</p> <p>Keep all software security patched and up to date and supported. Actively and regularly review all software in use at NCC and retire all out of date software that presents a risk to keeping accredited to these standards.</p> <p>Continue to closely monitor security processes.</p> <p>Monitor and further understand cyber risks associated with Artificial Intelligence (AI).</p>										
Progress update										

Progress update

Ransomware remains the highest cyber security threat.

While every effort is made to avoid such a security risk by following best practice, it is also important to ensure we are able to recover as quickly as possible if we do become infected.

Cyber / Ransomware

We purchased and implemented a Microsoft Office 365 backup solution which has been implemented to ensure we can recover data in the event that our Microsoft Tenant is encrypted with ransomware. We have retained our old storage, isolated it and switched it off so we have a point in time offline backup copy of our most critical data that we use onsite.

Regular activities to protect us

We have completed another Phishing simulation across all of Norfolk County Council to reduce the risk of people being tricked into clicking on a link.

We quarterly scan our environment for vulnerabilities and when identified patch them

We operate a monthly patch night to apply updates to servers and software as patches

are released which has been completed every single month this year.

Future Network

We are now 80% of the way through implementing our new network which will reduce the complexity, improve security and remove complexity.

"Zero Trust" laptop design is 100% rolled out, removing reliance on County Hall infrastructure for all cloud services including Oracle and Office 365, enabling staff to work from anywhere and access cloud services even if County Hall data centres become unavailable.

Guidance

Procurement guidance (Cloud Principles) for purchasing cloud based services has been reviewed including cloud security has been refreshed

Monitoring and Improvement

We have moved our Domain Service (.gov.uk) to Jisc the UK digital, data and technology agency and moved all other domains to GoDaddy the world's fifth largest web host to help us protect against Denial of Service Attacks.

Artificial Intelligence (AI)

We are monitoring developing cyber risks associated with the use of AI.

Risk Number	RM013	Date of update		12 December 2023						
Risk Name	Governance protocols for entities controlled by the Council.									
Portfolio lead	Cllr. Kay Mason Billig		Risk Owner	Harvey Bullen						
Risk Description		Date entered on risk register		01 October 2022						
<p>The potential risk of failure of the governance protocols for entities controlled by the Council, either their internal governance or the Council's governance as owner.</p> <p>This incorporates the risk of failure of entities controlled by the Council to follow the new Local Authority Company Review Guidance 2023. This sets out the best practice that we as a Local Authority need to adhere to. The failure of governance leading to controlled entities:</p> <p>Non Compliance with relevant laws (Companies, subsidy control procurement, environmental or other)</p> <p>Incurring Significant Losses or losing asset value</p> <p>Taking reputational damage from service failures</p> <p>Being mis-aligned with the goals of the Council</p> <p>The financial implications are described in the Council's latest Annual Statement of Accounts.</p> <p>Overall risk treatment: Treat</p>										
Original			Current			Tolerance Target				
Likelihood	Impact	Risk score	Likelihood	Impact	Risk score	Likelihood	Impact	Risk score	Target Date	Prospects of meeting Target Risk Score by Target Date
1	4	4	1	4	4	1	4	4	Mar-24	Met
Tasks to mitigate the risk										

- 1) All controlled entities and subsidiary companies have a system of governance which is the responsibility of their Board of Directors.
The Council needs to ensure that it has given clear direction of its policy, ambitions and expectations of the controlled entities.
The Norse Group objectives are for Business Growth and Diversification of business to spread risks. Risks need to be recorded on the Group's risk register.
- 2) The shareholder committee should meet quarterly and monitor the performance of Norse. A member of the shareholder board, the shareholder representative, should also attend the Norse board.
- 3) The Council holds control of the Group of Companies by way of its shareholding, restrictions in the Norse articles of association and the voting rights of the Directors. The mission, vision and value statements of the individual Norse companies should be reviewed regularly and included in the annual business plan approved by the Board. Norse should have its own Memorandum and Articles of Association outlining its powers and procedures, as well as an overarching agreement with the Council which outlines the controls that the Council exercises over Norse and the actions which require prior approval of the Council.
- 4) To ensure that governance procedures are being discharged appropriately to Independence Matters. The Director of Strategic Finance's representative attends as shareholder representative for Independence Matters.
- 5) Shareholder representation required from the Director of Strategic Finance on both the Norse, and Repton Boards.
- 6) Understanding and implementing the Local Authority Company Review Guidance 2023 by actively seeking assurance that entities under the control of Norfolk County Council are compliant with this.

Progress update

- 1) There are regular Board meetings, share holder meetings and reporting as required. For NORSE, risks are recorded on the Norse group risk register.
- 2) The Norse Group follows the guidance issued by the Institute of Directors for Unlisted Companies where appropriate for a wholly owned LA company. The shareholder committee meets quarterly and monitors the performance of Norse. A member of the shareholder board, the shareholder representative, also attends the Norse board.
- 3) The Council has reviewed its framework of controls to ensure it is meeting its Teckal requirements in terms of governance and control. The Director of Strategic Finance is responsible for reviewing the ongoing viability of wholly owned entities and regularly reporting the performance of their activities, with a view to ensuring that the County Council's interests are being protected.
All County Council subsidiary limited company Directors have been approved in accordance with the Constitution.
- 4) The Director of Strategic Finance directs external governance.
- 5) There is Shareholder representation from the Director of Strategic Finance on both the Norse, and Repton Boards.
- 6) We continue to work towards achieving the standards set out in the Local Authority Company Review Guidance 2023 by seeking the required levels of governance assurance from the entities under our overall control.

Risk Number		RM022b				Date of update		01 November 2023		
Risk Name		Replacement EU Funding for Economic Growth								
Portfolio lead		Cllr. Fabian Eagle				Risk Owner		Paul Cracknell		
Risk Description					Date entered on risk register			01 October 2022		
There are two parts to this risk as follows; a) external funding and b) Norfolk businesses a) Risk RM14429 covers the closedown of the France (Channel) England INTERREG programme, managed by NCC. In terms of future external funding, we need to make a compelling case to Government for investment in Norfolk from the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF), which replaces EU funding. There is a risk of limited opportunity for future skills funding from the UKSPF that NCC needs to be able to achieve the objectives of the Norfolk Investment Framework. b) We need to understand the implications for Norfolk businesses of the Territorial Cooperation Agreement and work with partners to support Norfolk businesses to trade. Overall risk treatment: Treat										
Original			Current			Tolerance Target				
Likelihood	Impact	Risk score	Likelihood	Impact	Risk score	Likelihood	Impact	Risk score	Target Date	Prospects of meeting Target Risk Score by Target Date
3	3	9	2	3	6	2	3	6	Mar-24	Amber
Tasks to mitigate the risk										
a) Development of Norfolk Investment Framework to target the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (replacement for EU funding).										
b) Focussed support for business, in conjunction with LEP and Chamber of Commerce.										
Progress update										
a) The Levelling Up White Paper indicates that in the short-term SPF and LU funds will be delivered through Districts. Should a County Deal be agreed, this may change. There is a need to develop a County Deal in order to gain strategic control over key functions and funds, but also to work with districts to maximise strategic use of SPF.										
Feedback from Stakeholders confirms the need for a NIF. Approach endorsed by the Steering Committee (including Town Deal Board Chairs/Local Authorities/Business Reps/University & Research Institutes and Private Sector).										
The NIF will identify funding options for delivery from a range of options including SPF and LUF, other national funding pots as well as private sector investment. The NIF has now been developed for delivery themes, that consist of skills, public sector services, business development and climate change.										
b) There is growth in the economy, but rising inflation and rise of ‘cost of goods’ and energy pose a risk/ added pressure on businesses at present.										
Business advice provided by the LEP's Growth Hub, Norfolk Chamber and Federation of Small Business. While these bodies can provide advice, the challenge for businesses is to invest more resource										

Progress update

in producing the paperwork that is now required for the import/export of goods, and still generate a profit. Government has introduced measures to help secure more HGV drivers (to replace those lost due to both Brexit and the pandemic) and increase the number of seasonal agricultural workers who can work in the UK.

01/11/2023 With the change in Govt Policy, requiring LEPs to be brought into Local Authorities, we will have the responsibility and funding to deliver business support, growth and inward investment. We are working with Suffolk CC and the LEP Board to transition the work of the LEP into the 2 councils and where joint delivery is preferably, agree MOUs for the service. The County Deal is on the agenda for the Cabinet in December 2023 and as such funding linked to this i.e SPF, Rural grants as well as the potential of a 20m per year investment fund will be decided at this point in time. Should the vote be in favour of a County Deal, the risk will be negated and closed.

Growth & Investment are developing a strategy in horizon scanning for funding sources, not just for G&I but wider within NCC. Identified opportunities will be disseminated to the relevant directorate.

Risk Number	RM024					Date of update		05 December 2023		
Risk Name	Great Yarmouth Third River Crossing (3RC)									
Portfolio lead	Cllr. Graham Plant					Risk Owner		Grahame Bygrave		
Risk Description					Date entered on risk register			01 October 2022		
There is a risk of failure to construct and deliver the Great Yarmouth Third River Crossing (3RC) within agreed budget (£121m), and to agreed timescales (construction to be completed by end of 2023). There is a risk that the 3RC project will not be delivered within budget and to the agreed timescales. Cause: delays during statutory processes put timescales at risk and/or contractor prices increase project costs. Event: The 3RC is completed at a later date and/or greater cost than the agreed budget, placing additional pressure on the NCC contribution. Effect: Failure to construct and deliver the 3RC within budget would result in the shortfall having to be met from other sources. This would impact on other NCC programmes. Overall risk treatment: Treat, with a focus on maintaining or reducing project costs and timescales										
Original			Current			Tolerance Target				
Likelihood	Impact	Risk score	Likelihood	Impact	Risk score	Likelihood	Impact	Risk score	Target Date	Prospects of meeting Target Risk Score by Target Date
3	4	12	2	4	8	2	3	6	30.01.2023	Amber
Tasks to mitigate the risk										
<p>The project was agreed by Full Council (December 2016) as a key priority infrastructure project to be delivered as soon as possible. Since then, March 2017, an outline business case has been submitted to DfT setting out project costs of £120m and a start of work in October 2020. 80% of this project cost has been confirmed by DfT, but this will be a fixed contribution with NCC taking any risk of increased costs. Mitigation measures are:</p> <p>1) Project Board and associated governance to be further developed to ensure clear focus on monitoring cost and programme at monthly meetings.</p> <p>2) NCC project team to include specialist cost and commercial resource (bought in to the project) to provide scrutiny throughout the scheme development and procurement processes. This will include independent audits and contract/legal advice on key contract risks as necessary.</p> <p>3) Programme to be developed that shows sufficient details to enable overall timescales to be regularly monitored, challenged and corrected as necessary by the board.</p> <p>4) Project controls and client team to be developed to ensure systems in place to deliver the project and to develop details to be prepared for any contractual issues to be robustly handled and monitored.</p> <p>5) All opportunities to be explored through board meetings to reduce risk and programme duration.</p> <p>6) An internal audit has been carried out to provide the Audit Committee and management with independent assurance that the controls in place, to mitigate, or minimise risks relating to pricing in stage 2 of the project to an acceptable level, are adequate and effective and operating in practice.</p>										
Progress update										

Progress update

Progress against actions are: 1) Project board in place. Gateway review highlighted a need to assess and amend board attendance and this has been implemented. A gateway review was completed to coincide with the award of contract decision making - the findings have been reported to the project board (there were no significant concerns identified that impact project delivery). Internal audit on governance report finalised 14 August 2019 and findings were rated green. Further gateway review completed summer 2020 ahead of progressing to next stage of contract (construction). May 23 – Ongoing reporting to Board includes budget updates and programme reviews (see 3 below). November 23 - Board updates in recent period about ongoing delays to completion of works (now looking like end of year before works completed - subject to agreement with port authority) 2) Specialist cost and commercial consultants appointed and continue to review project costs. The Commercial Manager will continue to assess the project forecast on a quarterly basis, with monthly interim reporting also provided to the board. No issues highlighted to date and budget remains sufficient. A further budget review was completed following appointment of the contractor. The full business case was developed and submitted to DfT at end of September 2020 - the project is still at agreed budget. May 23 – Main project remains within original budget, however additional cost/budget implications of WW2 bomb explosion are being considered. August 23 - Review of WW2 bomb repair scope of works and cost ongoing (subject to non-material change to DCO). November 23 - Continuing to update budget based on extended programme. Some risk to overall budget reported, but subject to other risks occurring (being closely monitored). 3) An overall project programme has been developed and is owned and managed by the dedicated project manager. Any issues are highlighted to the board as the project is delivered. The start of DCO examination was 24 September 2019, with a finish date on 24 March 2020. The approval of the DCO was confirmed on 24 September 2020 (no legal challenge). Construction started on 4 January 2021 as planned. Nov 22 - Latest forecasting of completion is June 2023 (reported to Board). Feb 23 - Explosion on site of UXO has resulted in slight delay that is being assessed, but expect opening still by June 23.

March 23 - The major milestone of receiving delivery and lifting the bridge leaves into place was completed on 23 March. May 23 – Overall programme delayed due to works to complete bascule chambers. Summer 23 completion reported. August 23 - programme to bring bridge into operation for navigation Sept 23, with full opening early October. November 23 - Delays due to extended period for bringing the bridge into operation and completion of works on west side. Completion now looking like end of 2023. 4) Learning from the NDR the experience of commercial specialist support was utilised to develop contract details ahead of the formal commencement of the procurement process. Further work fed into the procurement processes (and competitive dialogue) with the bidders. The commercial team leads were in place from the start of the contract (January 2019) and continue in this role to manage contract administration. March 22 - Construction inflation is being closely monitored, but is not currently impacting the overall budget provisions. August 23 - Budget for main works remains on target, however cost of WW2 bomb repairs to quay wall and quay still being assessed. November 23 - Still assessing overall budget allowing for WW2 bomb implications. Main works remain within budget. 5) The project board receives regular (monthly) updates on project risks, costs and timescales. A detailed cost review was delivered to the board ahead of the award of the contract (following the delegated authority agreed by Full Council), and took into account the contractors tender pricing and associated project risk updates. The project currently remains on budget, however the programme to complete the works and open the scheme in early 2023 has been delayed slightly to June 2023. Feb 23 - The wider implications of UXO explosion on site are still being assessed, but main works continuing. March 23 - Completion of the bridge leaf installation removes a key risk for the project. May 23 – Main works to be completed in summer 23, however works package to repair quay wall also being developed and will take longer. November 23 - Main works completion now late 2023. Works to repair quay wall following WW2 bomb damage will continue into 2024.

6) The further internal audit has been concluded and a report circulated. Findings were green with only one minor observation (already actioned).

Risk Number		RM027		Date of update		12 December 2023				
Risk Name		myOracle								
Portfolio lead		Cllr. Jane James		Risk Owner		Geoff Connell				
Risk Description			Date entered on risk register			01 October 2022				
There is a risk of failure of the new Human Resources and Finance system whereby key operational processes don't deliver the required outcomes for the organisation and its' traded services customers. Cause: System build, incomplete process for implementation, inadequate training for self service and HR professional functionality. Event: Operational processes not delivering to the processes required. Effect: Not achieving the full value of the myOracle system. Potential reduced employee satisfaction. New employees not being onboarded quickly enough. Not fully delivering the myOracle and HR review savings. Overall risk treatment: Treat										
Original			Current			Tolerance Target				
Likelihood	Impact	Risk score	Likelihood	Impact	Risk score	Likelihood	Impact	Risk score	Target Date	Prospects of meeting Target Risk Score by Target Date
2	4	8	4	2	8	2	2	4	Jul-25	Amber
Tasks to mitigate the risk										
1) Strong HR subject expert engagement in the system configuration to ensure that myOracle meets the needs of the organisation. 2) Ensure that plans / workarounds are in place to mitigate any residual risks from any issues arising. 3) Ensure that we have the resource in place to be able to deal with any issues as they arise. 4) Increased cadence of senior stakeholder engagement to address any issues arising within operational areas. 5) Extend manager helpline until beyond April 2024.										
MyOracle reporting (analytics) is emerging as a specific risk given the high level of demand and the limited system capability combined with the specialist skill sets required to maintain an effective work-around. Tasks to mitigate include: •Upskilling of I&A staff and leverage commons skills (eg: Business Analysts) to manage delivery •Reconsideration/re-scoping of contract support. •Re-assess prioritisation of demand – improved requirements management.										
Progress update										

Progress update

- 1) The implementation of MyOracle is live (as of 13th April 2022) and any issues arising are being managed as a BAU exercise and myOracle multi-disciplinary improvement programme post mobilisation to address functional gaps.
- 2) Support team and business teams focused on the identified system and process fixes required and plans/workarounds in place to mitigate those risks - some of the more complex issues have taken longer than predicted to resolve, affecting technology exploitation
- 3) Team in place to rectify issues as they are reported and governance in place to manage business and supplier escalations as required
- 4) Completed procurement and on-boarding of Namos as 3rd party support partner call-off contract to add capacity and aid with specialist more complex areas.
- 5) Budget agreed and staffed for helpline. Moved to support model from 1st July 2023.

Integration has been finalised.

Reconsideration/re-scoping of contract support is underway.

The re-assessing of the prioritisation of demand – improved requirements management is underway.

SFTP “secure file transfer protocol” server located in County Hall Data Centre handles payment information from Highways system and LiquidLogic social care system into MyOracle.

Risk of failure of that server or County Hall Data Centre infrastructure would interrupt transfer of payment information into MyOracle. Most significant impact would be delay of Foster Carer payments.

Mitigation is that County Hall Data Centre services including the SFTP server are replicated to the Disaster Recovery site, which can be commissioned in under 4 hours of a disaster being declared.

Manual process is also possible to extract required information from LiquidLogic for direct upload into MyOracle.

Risk Number	RM029	Date of update		16 November 2023						
Risk Name	Critical skills required for the organisation to operate effectively									
Portfolio lead	Cllr. Kay Mason Billig		Risk Owner	Derryth Wright						
Risk Description		Date entered on risk register		01 October 2022						
There is a risk that a range of critical new/future skills are not available within NCC in the medium to longer term. The lack of these skills will create problems for, or reduce the effectiveness of service delivery. An inability or failure to consider/identify these until they are needed will not allow sufficient time to develop or recruit these skills. This is exacerbated by: 1.The demographics of the workforce (ageing) 2.The need for changing skills and behaviours in order to implement new ways of working including specialist professional and technical skills (in particular IT, engineering, change & transformation; analytical; professional best practice etc) associated with the introduction or requirement to undertake new activities and operate or use new technology or systems - the lack of which reduces the effective operation of NCC . 3.NCC's new delivery model, including greater reliance on other employers/sectors to deliver services on our behalf 4.Significant changes in social trends and attitudes, such as the use of new technology and attitudes to the public sector, which may impact upon our 'employer brand' and therefore recruitment and retention 5.Skills shortages in key areas including social work and teaching 6.Improvements to the UK and local economy which may impact upon the Council's ability to recruit and retain staff. 7.Government policy (for example exit payment proposals) and changes to the Council's redundancy compensation policy, which could impact upon retention, particularly of those at more senior levels and/or older workers. 8. Improvements in T&C in other sectors making the NCC employment deal less attractive/providing fewer points of difference e.g. more flexibility of work in other industries, greater gap on pay Overall risk treatment: Treat										
Original			Current			Tolerance Target				
Likelihood	Impact	Risk score	Likelihood	Impact	Risk score	Likelihood	Impact	Risk score	Target Date	Prospects of meeting Target Risk Score by Target Date
3	5	15	3	4	12	2	4	8	Mar-26	Amber
Tasks to mitigate the risk										

- *Identification of what new critical skills are required in services – using workforce planning process and toolkit. As each directorate makes their changes to make savings / manage demand.
- *Identification of pathways to enable employees to learn, develop and qualify into shortage areas – As each directorate makes their changes to make savings / manage demand
- *Creation of career families and professional communities, providing visible and clear career paths for colleagues.
- *Embedding a strengths based approach to performance management e.g. Recruit for strengths not just qualifications and skills and experience - supported by career families activity which will harmonise job descriptions
- *Explore further integration with other organisations to fill the gaps in our workforce
- *Develop talent pipelines working with schools, colleges and universities
- *Undertake market rate exercises as appropriate and review the reward package to support attraction and retention
- *Develop the use of apprenticeships and early career schemes; this will help grow talent and act as a retention tool
- *Work with 14 – 19 providers and Higher Education providers to ensure that the GCSE, A level and Degree subjects meets the needs of future workforce requirements
- *Implementation of new workforce strategy that will lead to improved workforce planning
- *develop our employee value proposition and employer brand to improve attraction of people with the skills we need

Progress update

1. Working with education providers to ensure subjects meet future workforce requirements and students see a career in local government as an exciting option
 2. Work has begun to make best use of the 'skills' facility in the new Oracle system. It will take time to understand how best to use the functionality but it is planned to help with finding people within NCC with skills not usually associated with their role, as well as providing easy reporting on professional registrations. This functionality is dependent on completion of career families work which is a long term project.
 3. Work on how to use the full Talent module in Oracle will commence during 23/24
 4. A digital skills learning and development strategy has been developed and resourced. This is a HR and Digital Services partnership activity. Activity has commenced and will continue to be delivered across 23-25.
 5. Mandatory training policy is live and has been socialised. Work is ongoing to enable notifications to be sent to employees that are due/overdue on their training to support compliance. A review of our approach to and prioritisation of mandatory training areas for focus in in development
 6. NCC careers website has been refreshed
 7. Workforce strategy has been agreed and delivery begun. It identifies a number of themes that will support recruitment and retention of employees with the skills we need to be a successful organisation including refreshing our employer brand and development of clear career families
 8. Changes to the organisational design and structure have been implemented. A governance approach to ensure this is maintained is under development
 9. Where a need is identified specific recruitment and marketing campaigns are developed and socialised to support attraction to hard to fill roles e.g. 'We Care' campaign
 10. Our reward offer is reviewed regularly to identify additional areas that would support attraction and retention. e.g. introduction of mileage loan, electric vehicle lease scheme.
 11. Work has begun on the career families and pay and reward review projects
 12. Wellbeing strategy has been agreed and actions to implement begun
- Target changed updated to reflect longer term projects

Risk Number	RM030					Date of update		17 November 2023		
Risk Name	Non-realisation of Children’s Services Transformation change and expected benefits									
Portfolio lead	Cllr. Penny Carpenter					Risk Owner		Sara Tough		
Risk Description					Date entered on risk register			01 October 2022		
There is a risk of the non-realisation of Children’s Services Transformation change and expected benefits, encompassing the risk that Children’s Services do not experience the expected benefits from the transformation programme. Outcomes for children and their families are not improved, need is not met earlier and the increasing demand for specialist support and intervention is not managed. Statutory duties will not be fully met and the financial position of the department will be unsustainable over time. Overall risk treatment: Treat										
Original			Current			Tolerance Target				
Likelihood	Impact	Risk score	Likelihood	Impact	Risk score	Likelihood	Impact	Risk score	Target Date	Prospects of meeting Target Risk Score by Target Date
4	5	20	3	5	15	1	5	5	Mar-24	Amber
Tasks to mitigate the risk										
1) A demand management and prevention strategy and associated business cases have been completed and a multi-year transformation programme has been established covering social care and education, with 5 key strategic themes: Inclusion, Prevention and Early Intervention, Effective Practice Model, Edge of Care Support and Alternatives to Care, and Transforming the Care Market. 2) Significant investment has been provided to delivery transformation including c. £2m pa transformation investment fund since 2018-19 and £120m for capital investment in Specialist Resource Bases and Specialist Schools 3) A single senior transformation lead, operational business leads and a transformation team have been appointed / aligned to direct, oversee and manage the change 4) Regular governatnce structures in place through the Cabinet Member chaired Transformation and Benefits Realisation Board to track and monitor the trajectories of the programme benefits, risks and issues 5) Services from corporate departments are aligned to provide support to transformation change e.g. HR, Comms, IT, Finance, Information and Analytics, Innovation, etc 6) Interdependencies with other enabling transformation programmes e.g. Smarter Working will be aligned to help maximise realisation of benefits.										
Progress update										

Progress update

Scoring rationale - Risk impact relates to outcomes for children and families not being met, a key county council objective and financial loss of benefits over £3m therefore scored 5. Risk likelihood has reduced from "probable" prior to programme being initiated to "possible" as the transformation programme is seeing initial success after first 48 months of the programme, therefore scored 3.

November 2023 update:

- The investment in transformation has proved successful since 2018/19 having met existing targets for specific schemes albeit in the context of overall dept overspends
- Overall programme broke even in April 2021 and has delivered gross savings of £67m, net savings of £50m up to 2022/23. Target for 23/24 stands at £16m
- Programme has helped to mitigate the cost pressures for 2022/23 that resulted due demand related pressures for Transport and Placement budgets
- Core indicator of number of Children in Care is broadly stable. Unit costs are under considerable pressure due to the cohort with the very highest and most complex needs

continuing to grow as a proportion of all children looked after. The pandemic continues to have a substantial impact e.g. delays in the court system and the impact of hidden harm on CYP. Examples of other factors are; lack of supply of placements, worsening of emotional wellbeing and mental health amongst children, young people and parents, impact of inflation on families and services such as transport, ongoing shortages of staff in key professional specialisms. A number of existing transformation projects are in train to support these young people more effectively and reduce unit costs over the medium term.

- A 3-5 year strategy and financial plan to outline the next phase of transformation is under development, including the implementation of Children's Social Care Reform, alongside the development of a strategic sufficiency business case, including a whole council focus on the recruitment and retention of foster carers. A paper was presented to Informal Cabinet on 4 September, with agreement to bring a final business case back in the New Year.

Risk Number	RM031					Date of update		17 November 2023		
Risk Name	NCC Funded Children's Services Overspend									
Portfolio lead	Cllr. Penny Carpenter					Risk Owner	Sara Tough			
Risk Description					Date entered on risk register			01 October 2022		
There is a risk that in-year pressures from service demand and other external factors beyond the department's control materialise and lead to a significant overspend. Risk Treatment: Tolerate										
Original			Current			Tolerance Target				
Likelihood	Impact	Risk score	Likelihood	Impact	Risk score	Likelihood	Impact	Risk score	Target Date	Prospects of meeting Target Risk Score by Target Date
5	5	25	5	5	25	3	5	15	Mar-24	Amber
Tasks to mitigate the risk										
<p>1. Transformation programme in place that targets improvement to operating model, ways of working, and placement & sufficiency to ensure that intervention is happening at the right time, with the right children and families supported, with the right types of support, intervention & placements. This will result in improved value for money through ensuring that money is spent in the right places, at the right times with the investment in children and families resulting in lower, long-term costs.</p> <p>2. Improved monitoring system implemented to identify, track and respond to financial challenges.</p> <p>3. Cohorts will be regularly analysed to ensure that all are targeted appropriately and to develop new transformation initiatives to meet needs cost effectively.</p> <p>4. Further recognition of underlying budget pressures, including pandemic-related additional budget pressures, within recent NCC budgets and within the MTFS, including for front-line placement and support costs (children looked after, children with disabilities and care leavers), operational staffing, and home to school transport for children with SEND.</p> <p>5. Local First Inclusion programme in place (supported by the Safety Valve deal) that has planned for additional spend in mainstream schools to support children with high level SEND to remain within them, where it is appropriate for them to do so, and enabling the achievement of good outcomes. This investment acts as a key driver to the long-term aim of returning the DSG to an in-year balanced budget and, subsequently, to repay the cumulative deficit, through mitigating the need for further expansion of special schools (above planned increases) or independent provision.</p>										
Progress update										

Progress update

Scoring rationale - Risk impact relates to financial impact of over £3m, therefore scored 5. Risk likelihood has increased from "probable" to "almost certain" following the forecast as at Period 6 (end of September 2023) showing a £9.8m overspend, partially mitigated by (£1m) use of ear-marked reserves

November 2023 update:

- Improved monitoring systems and financial oversight have become embedded
 - Multiple Transformation projects been successfully delivered over the past 5 years that will contribute to mitigate this risk
 - Children Looked After numbers have reduced significantly since January 2019 through to 2022, which resulted in reduced overall placement costs. However, unit costs have been under considerable pressure due to external market forces, significant inflationary and National Living Wage increases. There are a number of transformation projects aimed reduce unit costs over the medium term.
 - The LA has been more successful at supporting families to stay together and keeping the number of children looked after remained stable for much of 22-23, with the exception of unaccompanied asylum seeking children for whom the LA receives additional Government funding; this bucked the national trends, though there was a small increase seen at the end of the year that will be kept under close review for 23-24
 - There are a wide range of factors that have impacted on the financial pressures faced by Children's Services nationally, including unit costs are increasing significantly due to the cohort with the very highest and most complex needs continuing to grow as a proportion of all children looked after. The pandemic continues to have a substantial impact e.g. delays in the court system and the impact of hidden harm on CYP. Examples of other factors are; lack of supply of placements, worsening of emotional wellbeing and mental health amongst children, young people and parents, impact of inflation on families and services such as transport, ongoing shortages of staff in key professional specialisms.
 - As at period 6, there is a reported in year cost pressure
- e. The forecast overspend for social care placements and support is c. £6m, primarily due to the significant increase in the average unit cost for external residential and external supported accommodation, the demand continuing to be high for social care services (as seen and reported nationally), additional costs of supporting a small number of children and young people with very complex needs, as well as a significant increase in the demand for community short-break provision. The first full Home to School Transport forecast for the year is a £4.8m overspend despite the additional budgeted resources provided for 2023-24. The persistent inflationary increases for fuel and the cost of vehicles, along with the rises in National Living Wage, has seen increases in the cost of tenders awarded for transport routes
- Action is under way to positively impact transport related costs, both the demand-side and the supply-side factors. On the supply-side, there is a piece of focussed work underway in conjunction with the officers from across the council to look at the transport provision market and any additional levers that could be developed to have a beneficial effect. Much demand-side activity is already delivering benefits and is continuing to be pursued and expanded, including a focus on supporting young people to be travel independent (such as the TITAN Travel Training programme) and the initial impacts of Local First Inclusion in reducing the distances that have to be travelled for those attending new provisions.
 - Children's Services continues to undertake a substantial transformation programme to both improve outcomes for children and young people as well as delivering financial savings e.g. Placement Sufficiency strategic plan. These aim to mitigate risks and pressures that emerge and accompanies management action within the department that continues to be taken to reduce these risks and cost pressures wherever possible.
 - The department has also put in place cost pressure mitigation and analysis plan, to identify proposals to mitigate in-year cost pressures.

Risk Number	RM032					Date of update		05 December 2023		
Risk Name	Capacity to manage a large incident or multiple incidents or disruptions to business									
Portfolio lead	Cllr. Jane James					Risk Owner	Sarah Rhoden			
Risk Description					Date entered on risk register			29 October 2021		
NCC is affected by an internal or external incident/emergency that impacts on the authority's ability to deliver critical services. This could be internal threats such as loss of IMT or power or external impacts such as supporting the countywide response to Norfolk's Highest risk such as Coastal flooding or pandemic flu. There is a risk of a large scale incident or series of incidents that cause potential negative impacts on the reputation, resources or financial stability, that affect NCC's ability to deliver it's services. There are a number of ongoing situations which are compounding this risk. 1. Energy providers issue of reasonable worst case scenario for power national power outages. 2. Seasonal weather risks. Overall risk treatment: Tolerate.										
Original			Current			Tolerance Target				
Likelihood	Impact	Risk score	Likelihood	Impact	Risk score	Likelihood	Impact	Risk score	Target Date	Prospects of meeting Target Risk Score by Target Date
4	4	16	3	2	6	3	2	6	31.03.24	Met
Tasks to mitigate the risk										
1) Maintain the Corporate Resilience Plan. 2) Maintain a robust Business Continuity process, including training and exercising. 3) Having the appropriate groups in place to be able to support and manage any response to an incident causing business disruption. 4) Supporting and embedding of Business Continuity looking at best practice to support the operational delivery of services. 5) Further training planning for both BC and Emergency Planning. 6) Active engagement and participation in the Norfolk Resilience Forum. 7) On going review of winter risks 8) Member of the NRF and attendance at weekly Norfolk Risk Intelligence Group (RIG)meetings 9) NRF Plans and procedures in place, including training and exercising										
Progress update										
The BC process and emergency response mechanisms are in place and enabled within NCC, support is in place from the Resilience team who deliver 24/7 response support. Current BC stats = 81% of NCC plans reviewed and 78% plans have been exercised. For situational awareness the Norfolk Resilience Forum (NRF) has in place weekly Risk Intelligence Group (RIG) meetings. Due to global and national uncertainty, pre-emptive planning is on going to look at the risks that NCC and Norfolk will face, these will include: seasonal weather - surface flooding. Health issues- pressure in care systems, outbreaks, re-emergence of COVID, Hospital roof collapse and care home failure. Cost of living impacts. Disruption to power or communications systems, Industrial Action, Animal Health outbreaks, Cyber attacks. Current weather related risks are seasonal weather and still some localised flooding in the Norfolk Broads area. Current Score at 6 due to available mitigation measures under our remit being implemented to control the current risks.										
This risk should remain on the risk register due to the potential of unknown future risks that may impact on the authorities ability to deliver it core services.										

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Risk Number	RM033		Date of update		20 November 2023					
Risk Name	Norwich Western Link Project									
Portfolio lead	Cllr. Graham Plant		Risk Owner	Grahame Bygrave						
Risk Description			Date entered on risk register		01 October 2022					
There is a risk that the NWL project could fail to receive funding approvals from the Department for Transport (DfT), and/or statutory approvals necessary within the necessary timescales to achieve the Orders to construct the project (related to planning consent, land acquisition, highway orders) to enable the Norwich Western Link (NWL) project (at £251m) to be delivered to the agreed timescales (target opening by late 2025). Cause: Objection to the project (particularly related to environmental impacts) that results in either DfT or Secretary of State failing to provide the necessary approvals for the funding/Orders. Event: The scale of the project and the funding requirement from DfT (at 85%) is such that without their funding contribution, it will not be possible to deliver the project. Without the necessary Orders in place, it will not be possible to deliver the project. Effect: The benefits that the project would bring in terms of traffic relief, accommodating growth in housing and employment, economic recovery and journey time savings would not be achieved. If ultimately the project does not get constructed there is the possibility that any funding already provided by DfT would need to be repaid and that the capital expenditure up to that stage could need to be repaid from revenue funds (as there would be no capital asset to justify the use of capital funding). Overall risk treatment: Treat										
Original			Current			Tolerance Target				
Likelihood	Impact	Risk score	Likelihood	Impact	Risk score	Likelihood	Impact	Risk score	Target Date	Prospects of meeting Target Risk Score by Target Date
3	4	12	3	4	12	1	4	4	Sep-24	Amber
Tasks to mitigate the risk										
1. Work closely with DfT to resolve any queries related to the OBC approval. 2. Ensure programme dates for statutory approvals are achieved and submission details are legally checked. 3. Develop strong team resource to ensure well developed submissions for statutory processes (including public inquiry) are provided. 4. Provide regular updates to the project board to ensure any issues related to programme, cost and risk are reported. 5. Monitor scale of expenditure prior to Secretary of State approval to ensure any potential financial implications can be accommodated within the NCC financial envelope.										
Progress update										

Progress update

1. OBC submitted to DfT for approval at end of June 2021. Awaiting funding confirmation, but timescale to be confirmed. July 2022 - Report approved by Cabinet (includes revised timescales and budget - 85% DfT contribution retained in OBC addendum submitted to DfT (approval ongoing). Feb 23 - DfT funding approval still awaited, but no further requests for info received from DfT. March 23 - No funding announcement in March Budget Statement. May 23 - Still no decision from DfT, but no further work required to OBC. Awaiting outcome of Treasury review of funding nationally. Aug 23 - Still awaiting Treasury review outcome and DfT announcement. Nov 23 - DfT confirmed approval of OBC on 13 November. 2. Programme being reviewed to ensure realistic timescales for pre-planning application consultation and planning submissions are in place (to be agreed by the project board). July 2022 - Timescales updated in Cabinet report and agreed. Sept 22 - Govt mini-budget on 23rd Sept set out fast-tracking of projects, including NWL. Details awaited to understand any implications. Jan 23 - No further details from (different) government re fast-tracking. Feb 23 - Timescales for planning application submission will be updated in Spring 23 Cabinet report (date TBC). May 23 - Awaiting OBC decision is continuing to delay planning application process (and Cabinet approvals). Report to be taken to Cabinet asap following OBC decision. Aug 23 - Report taken to Cabinet in July setting out reduced activity on project whilst awaiting DfT funding decision. Nov 23 - Report to be taken to December Cabinet setting out latest position of project and seeking approval to submit planning application early in 2024. 3. Resource review in progress to ensure the team structure is suited to the next phases of the project. July 2022 - Team struc

ture in place with some gaps in resource being resolved, but very challenging employment market conditions. Sept 22 - maintaining resources on project is proving challenging. Ongoing recruitment and discussions with WSP. Feb 23 - Resourcing remains challenging, but is an issue within construction sector generally. Aug 23 - Continuing resource issues, notably at Engineer/Project Engineer level. Nov 23 - Need to procure additional resource now project OBC confirmed. 4. Project board meetings in place and risk, programme, cost regularly reported. July 2022 - All details updated in Cabinet report and cost, risk and programme will be monitored by Board based on Cabinet report. Sept 2022 - Board closely monitoring budget including inflation/economic implications. May 23 - Delays to project OBC decision reported to project board. Implications will continue to be considered and reported to Cabinet. 5. Section 151 officer updated on expenditure to date at project board and is comfortable that any potential cost/budget implications could be accommodated within the NCC financial envelope. July 2022 - Details in Cabinet report agreed with s151 officer and budget recommendation and implications accepted by Cabinet and Full Council on 19 July. January 2023 - Still awaiting DfT OBC approval (following November 2022 budget statement). Feb 2023 - Still no decision from DfT. March 2023 - Still no DfT decision. April 2023 - Report to be presented to Cabinet June 2023 to update on project (also to address DfT funding position). May 23 Report now planned for July 2023 Cabinet, to consider implications of ongoing delay to DfT OBC approval. August 23 - Report agreed by Cabinet, reducing activity whilst awaiting OBC approval. Nov 23 - OBC approved and report update to Cabinet in December to reinstate full delivery activity.

Risk Number		RM034		Date of update		07 November 2023				
Risk Name		Supply Chain Interruption								
Portfolio lead		Cllr. Kay Mason Billig		Risk Owner		Al Collier				
Risk Description				Date entered on risk register		01 October 2022				
There is a risk of a supply chain interruption, which could affect any of the Council's supply chains. This could take the form of either a sudden or gradual interruption, affecting the ability to deliver one or more services effectively. Cause: Examples of sudden interruptions include; loss of power; loss of supplies due to panic-buying (fuel being the prime example with knock-on effects); supplier insolvency; inability to replace critical components. Examples of gradual interruptions include; a gradual inability to recruit key in-demand staff (e.g. drivers & care workers); a gradual material shortage (e.g. construction materials); inflation; industrial action; staff absence owing to Covid-19 / seasonal flu, gradually contracting labour markets. Event: The materialisation of a sudden or a gradual interruption or degradation of a NCC supply chain. Effect: Different causes will generate different effects, but the common effect would be a disruption to service delivery stemming from the interruption of the supply chain involved. This could have knock on effects to other services depending on the interconnectedness / scale of the supply chain. Overall risk treatment: Tolerate (treating with general mitigations)										
Original			Current			Tolerance Target				
Likelihood	Impact	Risk score	Likelihood	Impact	Risk score	Likelihood	Impact	Risk score	Target Date	Prospects of meeting Target Risk Score by Target Date
4	4	16	4	3	12	3	2	6	Mar-24	Amber
Tasks to mitigate the risk										
For loss of power: 1) Understanding power resilience of County Hall 2) Understanding failover if we lost County Hall power 3) Reviewing plans for simultaneous loss of power or gas to multiple sensitive sites, e.g. care homes. 4) Thinking through command and control in case of widespread power loss For fuel: 5) Sending out a de-brief form to all involved in the fuel disruption (NCC) and the Resilience team will collate the returns. This will inform changes to the NCC approach and potentially update the Corporate plan. Our work will feed into the wider NRF de-brief to the NRF plan. For food: 6) Consideration of academies and our role with free school meals. 7) Maintain good relationships with key suppliers. For supplier insolvency: 8) Formalising tiering of contracts For critical spares: 9) Work with providers to ensure there is adequate support to just in time (JIT) deliveries (contingency stock of critical spares). For IT: 10) Ensure IT refresh is considered and appropriate stock pre-ordered. General mitigations against sudden major disruptions include: Early warning and trigger points Supply diversity Supplier relationships Public sector resource pooling Effective plans										
Progress update										

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Progress update

For loss of power:

- 1) Power resilience understood.
- 2) Resilience of Disaster Recovery site understood.
- 3) This is being looked at via normal BAU winter preparedness. Resilience Reps and DMT's are supported by the Resilience Team to review BC plans.
- 4) Command and control will follow existing processes. Any issues to be reported by department and escalated to appropriate response level (Silver/Gold) to manage the NCC response. If beyond NCC the NRF will be activated to respond.

For fuel:

- 5) Resilience Team have sent out a de-brief form to all involved in the fuel disruption (NCC) and has to critical services and have created a BC exercise for services to work through their fuel issues and supply needs.

For food:

- 6) Work to be carried out with providers to ensure they think about support to just-in-time deliveries (contingency stock of basics).
- 7) Close communication and good relations being upheld with key suppliers of food.

For supplier insolvency:

- 8) Tiering of contracts being formalised.

For critical spares:

- 9) Ongoing work with providers to ensure adequate support is available for JIT deliveries.

For IT:

- 10) Laptops for next round of IT refresh pre-ordered and in supplier's warehouse.

Further detail of the wider resilience work being undertaken to help prevent supply chain interruption can be seen in risk RM032.

Risk Number	RM035					Date of update		15 November 2023		
Risk Name	Adverse impact of significant and abnormal levels of inflationary pressure on revenue and capital budgets									
Portfolio lead	Cllr. Andrew Jamieson					Risk Owner		Harvey Bullen		
Risk Description					Date entered on risk register			01 October 2022		
There is a risk that significant and abnormal levels of inflationary pressure persist for an extended period of time with a negative impact on both the Council's revenue budget and capital programme. Unusually high levels of inflation across various sectors are being experienced, driven by a number of economic and other factors which are entirely outside the council's control. Forecasts are increasingly suggesting that this situation is likely to persist for a protracted period. There is a risk that this level of inflation will have very significant impacts across several areas of the council including: - Increasing demand for a range of support and services including hardship funds as the cost of living and inflationary pressures impact on wider society. - Direct impact of inflationary pressures on revenue pay budgets - pay awards for 2023-24 and 2024-25 in excess of the level which has been assumed in the budget / MTFS. - Direct impact of inflationary pressures on non-pay revenue budgets including energy and fuel costs. - Direct impact of inflationary pressures on the Capital Programme including the cost of construction for various schemes. This is significantly reducing the Council's purchasing power and creating significant challenges for programme management and scheme delivery. Risk Treatment: Tolerate (overall levels of inflation are outside of the Council's control), but treating the aspects that the Council is in a position to control.										
Original			Current			Tolerance Target				
Likelihood	Impact	Risk score	Likelihood	Impact	Risk score	Likelihood	Impact	Risk score	Target Date	Prospects of meeting Target Risk Score by Target Date
5	5	25	5	5	25	5	3	15	May-23	Green
Tasks to mitigate the risk										
1) Close budgetary control 2023-24 - Monitoring budgets and emerging pressures during the financial year, reviewing activity levels and pressures in order to mitigate and minimise these as far as possible as part of regular budget monitoring and management processes. Where pressures cannot be avoided / mitigated, identifying alternative off-setting savings and / or funding (such as from business risk reserves) to deliver a balanced budget position for 2023-24.										
2) Setting 2024-25 Budget - Developing the 2024-25 Budget to provide as far as possible for known and unavoidable cost pressures, and identifying further income or off-setting savings initiatives to ensure that a robust and achievable Budget can be considered by Full Council in February 2024.										
3) Reviewing capital programme - Review of cost estimates, forecasts and profiling of major projects. The Council will monitor this risk and review the potential pressures on the capital programme and proactively manage the schemes, deferring some schemes where possible to minimise the impact of inflation and continue to deliver the capital programme within the budget available. The impact of cost pressures on the capital programme forecast will be picked up as part of the regular capital monitoring process during 2023-24 and as part of setting the 2024-25 Capital Programme.										
4) Articulating the financial challenges faced by the Council to Government and other stakeholders - The Council's work to ensure that sufficient funding allocations are provided / available will include responses to Government consultations, funding announcements, discussions about the 2023-24 pay award, and other engagement.										

Progress update

- 1) Budget monitoring and reporting of variances, risks and mitigations to Cabinet is underway in respect of 2023-24. Inflation in 2023-24 is beginning to show signs of decreasing, with the October CPI of 4.6% representing a decrease from 6.7% in September.
- 2) Budget process is underway for 2024-25 including identification of saving proposals considered by Cabinet in October 2023. Further savings required to close forecast budget gap and work ongoing to identify and validate cost pressures in order to develop a robust and deliverable Budget.
- 3) Monitoring of Capital Programme underway in respect of 2023-24 and reported to Cabinet. Review of capital programme profiling is continuing at pace and resulting in deferral of borrowing to later years of the programme. The development of new schemes for 2024-25 programme is being considered in context of wider position, but there is likely to be very limited scope for additions funded from borrowing.
- 4) Ongoing engagement including formal consultation responses and ad-hoc opportunities.

Risk Number		RM036		Date of update		07 November 2023				
Risk Name		Non-Delivery of the Environmental Policy								
Portfolio lead		Cllr. Eric Vardy		Risk Owner		Al Collier				
Risk Description				Date entered on risk register		01 October 2022				
There is a risk of not delivering the key objectives of the NCC environmental policy. This could stem from not achieving the key objectives within our control to deliver. These include; achieving Net Zero Across the County Council Estate by 2030, working in partnership across the County, especially through the Norfolk Climate Change Partnership on the delivery of; the Climate Action Plan, major environmental infrastructure projects; sustainable travel projects; the 1 Million Trees for Norfolk project; the Pollinator Action Plan as well as continued roll out of LED streetlighting upgrades and implementation of the EV strategy. Event: Non-delivery of the key objectives. Effect: This could lead to greater potential for increased damage to the local and global environment. Overall risk treatment: Treat										
Original			Current			Tolerance Target				
Likelihood	Impact	Risk score	Likelihood	Impact	Risk score	Likelihood	Impact	Risk score	Target Date	Prospects of meeting Target Risk Score by Target Date
4	4	16	3	3	9	2	2	4	Mar-25	Green
Tasks to mitigate the risk										
1) Achieve Net Zero across NCC Estates by 2030. 2) Develop and deliver Climate Action Plan through Norfolk Climate Change Partnership. 3) Delivery of major environmental infrastructure projects for example Wendling Beck. 4) Delivery of all of the major transport infrastructure projects including ZEBRA. 5) Delivery of the 1 Million Trees for Norfolk project. 6) Delivery of the Pollinator Action Plan. 7) Rollout of 15k LED lights by the end of 2023 8) Rollout of electric vehicles										
Progress update										
Regular reporting cycles are already established for each of the key objectives. 1) Digital dashboard established and strong delivery against scope 1 and 2 emission targets. 2) Development work ongoing with Norfolk Climate Change Partnership. A number of strategic workshops are taking place in the third quarter of 22/23 which will inform the direction and content of the climate action plan. 3) Strong progress to date with all key environmental infrastructure projects on schedule. 4) Sustainable transport projects progressing well and major investment in ZEBRA scheme and cycling and walking programmes secure. 5) Delivery of 1 Million Trees project progressing positively with plan in place to accelerate planting plan following Covid-19 impact on planting programme. Current scoping work ongoing regarding new partnerships and approaches to increase planting. 6) Pollinator Action Plan approved by Cabinet and under delivery - no major issues to report. 7) We have currently replaced 3.7k lights. 8) We are currently developing metrics for the fleet of NCC electric vehicles. With the sign-off of the NCC Climate Strategy, we are now in the process of incorporating this into this risk going forward.										

Risk Number		RM038		Date of update		05 November 2023				
Risk Name		Demand to manage statutory responsibilities								
Portfolio lead		Cllr. Alison Thomas		Risk Owner		Rob Mack				
Risk Description				Date entered on risk register		14 March 2022				
If there is insufficient time and staffing resource in operational teams to focus on recovery actions, then the risk of harm to service users will be unaddressed with the associated adverse impact to staff wellbeing & retention, increased complaints & LGSCO findings; and reputational challenge from Members/the Council and from the public. Overall risk treatment: Treat										
Original			Current			Tolerance Target				
Likelihood	Impact	Risk score	Likelihood	Impact	Risk score	Likelihood	Impact	Risk score	Target Date	Prospects of meeting Target Risk Score by Target Date
4	4	16	3	4	12	2	4	8	Apr-24	Amber
Tasks to mitigate the risk										
<p>15.7.22</p> <p>clear governance with backlogs position reported to DLT via recovery and oversight group. Recovery monitoring through finance and accountability meetings.peripatetic assessment team focussing on holding list reduction.Duty teams responding to urgent and crisis needs</p> <p>8.11.22 All Places have recovery plans in place - weekly monitoring in place</p> <p>18.08.23</p> <p>Whole department approach to supporting recovery (progress report to DLT weekly)Dedicated leadership in placeRecovery plans developed for each Community Care TeamSAFE event delivered. Improvement Cycles introduced to support & review performance progress & outcomesPartner provider procured to deliver additional assessment capacity for 12 months. Connecting Communities ways of working supporting focus on outcomes. Implement a centralised recruitment approach.</p>										
Progress update										
<p>17.07.2023</p> <p>Connecting Communities Environment for Social Care ways of working now rolled out to all Community Care Teams (older people and people with physical disabilities)Weekly recovery and locality learning cycles embedded and reviewing performance metrics including holding list reduction3/5 Community Care teams now have holding lists lower than in November 2021Short term bed workshop and proposed immediate workplan focus to be discussed at DLT w/c 17/7 as part of discharge paperMobilisation of external provider project under way with planned go live from 24/7Continued monitoring of unallocated safeguarding referral numbers through recovery learning cycle (significantly reduced number)New Finance and Performance Boards launched in July</p> <p>18.08.2023</p> <p>Social Care Community Engagement (SCCE) team, Norfolk First Response Service and Community Care teams have now all adopted new ways of working delivered through the Connecting Communities programme – supports focus on improvement cycles and outcomes for people.Holding list – current Older People/Physical Disability holding list is 2088 people, this is the lowest number since November 2021 (data not available before this date). The % reduction in people on holding lists since 01/12/22 is Norwich 33%; East 67%; North 25%; West 47% and South +45%). Revised trajectories show recovery to manageable levels on holding list push out to November 2024. This is influenced by winter pressures, short term bed pressures & current performance experience.New Power BI dashboards published to support managers to manage their service performance. Partner provider has started taking trusted assessment work from w/c 7/8/23. Plan is up to 1000 assessments over a 12-month period.Principal OT writing strategic paper for future OT model and recovery of OT holding list (currently 670 people waiting OT assessment)Temporary additional staff recruited to support reduction in people waiting in short term beds following a hospital stay/currently in a community hospital.Service Development plans written or being developed for SCCE, NFR and each Community Care team to confirm local plan & focus for caseload management & embedding Connecting Communities ways of working over the next 9 months. Legacy planning progressing as Connecting Communities programme enters next transitional phase (sustaining) where NCC solely lead the programme & deliverables.</p>										

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Progress update

13/09/2023: - Continuation of legacy planning for the Connecting Communities programme leading to September Programme Board decision making on next phase of programme and offboarding of Newton Europe.

- Learning Cycle governance embedded and driving recovery actions
- Finance & Performance Boards held monthly to track Vital Sign KPIs
- focus on recovering performance following summer leave staff absence impact

Holding list at 2053 (as of 12/09/23)

- Xyla Health & Social Services (external provider) project on track to deliver 1000 assessments on behalf of NCC within 12 months

02/10/2023

Xyla Health & Social Services (external provider) project - some recruitment difficulties meaning workflow back into NCC is slower than anticipated. SRO reporting to DLT w/c 02/10/2023 with update. This has not affected the volume of work transferring to the provider. Newton Europe have now offboarded (29/10/2023) and will now support NCC with a series of performance and KPI health checks over the next 8 months. Service Development Planning and revised trajectories with Community Care teams to be developed and agreed. Norwich locality - undertaking a Holding list focus week (16/10) to reduce holding list further. South locality - focused action (data cleansing, rapid intervention) to reduce holding lists and reducing Care Act completion times

01/11/2023

Holding list reduction continues with unallocated cases on the Holding list reducing to below 2000 for the past 3 weeks (currently 1878 for Community Care teams). Challenges particularly with increasing OT referral numbers. Positive outcome is Norwich focus week, East and West locality sustaining performance and reductions in North and South too. Xyla Health & Social Services (external provider) project - have now taken 235 cases from the Holding list and completed 60 with 135 allocated. They continue to experience some recruitment challenges, but plans in place and monitored by Senior Responsible Officer (Michaela Hewitt). Planning for reducing unallocated Safeguarding cases on the holding list to zero underway ahead of Assurance by CQC inc. involvement of specialist safeguarding team and Director of Community Social Work. Recovery learning cycles happen fortnightly with DLT recovery summary presented on a weekly basis to ensure grip and focus. Connecting Communities ways of working supporting focus on outcomes for people in addition to reduction in numbers. Current recovery targets of moving the Holding lists to manageable levels take to November 2024. Trajectories are currently under review with locality Operational Directors.

Risk Number	RM039		Date of update		10 November 2023					
Risk Name	Financial, Staffing & Market Stability impacts due to implementation of Social Care Reform (now October 2025)									
Portfolio lead	Cllr. Alison Thomas		Risk Owner	Sonia Kerrison						
Risk Description			Date entered on risk register		19 July 2022					
<p>Financial Risk There is a risk that the Government will not provide sufficient funding to support the implementation of Social Care Reform and that we (NCC) will not have any monies to fill any shortfalls or additional costs. There is a risk that the Government has hugely underestimated the cost to implement Social Care Reform and therefore there will be a shortfall in funding to Local Authorities. Added to this, NCC does not have any additional monies to fill any shortfall from the Government or any other additional costs (related to additional cases, more service users that require more input into costs, support & maintenance for Care Accounts etc) associated with the Social Care Reform implementation. Resourcing/Staffing Risk There is a risk that there will be insufficient resources both internally and to recruit externally to meet the new demands of the social care reform. we will not have sufficient resources (SW, Finance and Brokerage) to process the increased care act and eligibility checks as more self funders request LA to purchase care on their behalf or reach the £86,000 cap. In addition we may not be able to recruit the necessary additional staff externally due to lack of social workers both regionally and nationally. We are struggling to recruit for vacancies we have now. Market Stability Risk There is a risk that there will be insufficient capacity in the market to meet the new demands of the social care reform. The implementation of 18(3) whereby self funders can request Local Authorities to purchase care on their behalf, has a destabilising impact on our already fragile care market. In addition the level of provider failures/contract handbacks are really worrying and may impact our ability to provide suitable care or alternatives to those who can no longer afford first and third party top ups once they reach the cap. There also may not be sufficient care in the market for us to provide suitable lower price alternatives if first party and third party top ups are required. Overall risk treatment: Treat</p>										
Original			Current			Tolerance Target				
Likelihood	Impact	Risk score	Likelihood	Impact	Risk score	Likelihood	Impact	Risk score	Target Date	Prospects of meeting Target Risk Score by Target Date
4	4	16	3	3	9	2	2	4	Oct-25	Amber
Tasks to mitigate the risk										
<p>Social Care Reform has been delayed by 2 years to October 2025. The SCR Programme will continue working through the Modelling and Impact analysis to understand the impact and plan for implementation.</p> <p>The programme is :Developing the Target Operating Model to deliver Reform, including:</p> <p>How we will approach assessments in the future so that we can better meet demand (proportionality, whether we get partners involved in carrying out some assessments (trusted assessor model), whether we introduce self assessment, self service, and optimising the use of technology).</p> <p>Implementation of changes within reform to Charging and the creation of Care Accounts.</p> <p>Market sustainability and Fair Access to Care.</p> <p>Working with customers, carers and partners to plan and shape the Transformation required to deliver Social Care Reform.</p>										
Progress update										

Progress update

Programme is currently defining detailed activities and scope for each workstream which will determine what products will be due from each workstream.

Review of Programme completed end of November - milestones and programme of work requires review and potential rescoping following Government Budget on 17/11/2022.

The Government announcement to delay the implementation of SCR by 2 years to October 2025 gives Norfolk County Council additional time to prepare and plan for the implementation of SCR. The Programme funding to implement SCR has been refined following the Budget and further analysis is required.

The programme is :

Developing the Target Operating Model to deliver Reform, including:

How we will approach assessments in the future so that we can better meet demand (proportionality, whether we get partners involved in carrying out some assessments (trusted assessor model), whether we introduce self assessment, self service, and optimising the use of technology). Mapping and scoping the potential savings that the use of technology and self assessment models may create through assessment activity being delivered differently.

Implementation of changes within reform to Charging and the creation of Care Accounts.

Market sustainability and Fair Access to Care.

Working with customers, carers and partners to plan and shape the Transformation required to deliver Social Care Reform.

Risk reviewed by Senior Management Team as a group on 15/12/2022 - agreement on risk level and mitigations in place.

Update 3/4/2023

Revised programme progressing to plan. Target Operating Model (TOM) currently being created.

Revised programme endorsed via SMT and DLT.

Challenges in obtaining data to support TOM in relation to staffing resource and activity being discussed
23/5/2023

Challenges in obtaining data to enable robust modelling for the Target Operating Model for demand and staffing escalated to DLT.

Update 3/7/2023

Project Manager availability for the TOM work has been reduced temporarily to enable PM to support strategic review phase 2 - the TOM next stage has been delayed accordingly. The timeline for the roll out of LAS client portal accounts has been extended to enable further pilot testing on a wider scale in the Learning Disability service - agreed via June OD/HOIC meeting and with LD HOIC.

Update 29/8/2023

Programme currently being reviewed with any proposed changes being considered by ASC DLT September 2023.

Update on programme taken to People and Select Committee July 2023 where programme and approach was endorsed.

Update 10/11/2023

SCR reform programme of work reviewed by DLT October 2023. Decision made to dissolve current programme and refocus work activity and priorities following the strategic review and in light of the national political landscape including uncertainty regarding the implementation of the proposed charging reforms and the care cap.

Continue to prepare for expected social care reform, using the delay announced in the Government's Autumn Statement to rescope our project programme to improve our efficiency and outcomes for people.

Key activities to deliver above are: A Digital work programme through the ASC ASTEC Board to implement digital tools using Imposhere to enable on line self-assessment, client portals and client accounts. Governance and work will be via the ASC ASTEC Board. Create a model of Trusted Assessment and work with the Care Market to implement this. Create a Target Operating Model for ASC identifying future workforce requirements.

Risk Number	RM040				Date of update		15 November 2023			
Risk Name	Assurance implementation									
Portfolio lead	Cllr. Alison Thomas				Risk Owner		Debbie Bartlett			
Risk Description					Date entered on risk register			22 July 2022		
A CQC rating of good or above indicates a social service department that is providing the right support in the right way to promote positive outcomes for the people who need to draw on adult social care, and those that support them. A rating of less than good indicates that we are not assessing need, providing support or working in partnership with others in a way that enables the best possible outcomes for people in the local area. If we are rated less than good in the upcoming assurance regime, we are likely to have increased difficulty providing timely and high quality intervention for people. It is likely to increase our difficulties recruiting and retaining good staff, which will further impact our ability to manage the demands well, both from staffing and governance perspectives, leading to further loss of practice quality, increased wait times for citizens and less than optimal outcomes more of the time. Overall risk treatment: Treat										
Original			Current			Tolerance Target				
Likelihood	Impact	Risk score	Likelihood	Impact	Risk score	Likelihood	Impact	Risk score	Target Date	Prospects of meeting Target Risk Score by Target Date
3	3	9	4	4	16	2	3	6	Apr-24	Amber
Tasks to mitigate the risk										
<p>Performance Improvement Group (PIG) in place to drive performance improvements, meeting monthly. Quality Improvement Group (QIG) established Feb 23 to drive quality improvement, including ensuring that increased focus on recovery does not compromise quality of work.</p> <p>The action plan developed following regional mock assurance, updated following ex-director challenge session in Jan '23. This is reviewed regularly at PIG and continues to drive performance improvements and assurance readiness.</p> <p>Performance is majorly impacted by recovery. Recovery tracker maps performance against key metrics weekly and is circulated to senior managers. All areas have recovery plans with routine monitoring.</p> <p>Connecting Communities transformation programme is having a significant positive impact on our ability to ensure optimal outcomes for more people as we change our ways of working, embedding more preventative work and reducing the reliance on formal social care.</p> <p>Our refreshed corporately significant vital signs embed our commitment to prevent the need for formal care, reduce the reliance on formal social care, manage the risk in our waiting lists well, manage safeguarding work effectively and work with provider market to improve the quality of provision. These, and their feeder indicators, are used to direct performance conversations as part of our governance structure, directly linking to aspects of the CQC framework.</p> <p>We closely monitor development of the CQC assurance process, including feedback from the pilot sites as they complete the process.</p>										
Progress update										

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Progress update

April '23: Further clarity regarding assurance regime now available. Desktop exercise for all ASSDs from April 2023. Up to 20 selected for assurance Oct-Dec '23 based partly on perception of risk. Given our recovery pressures and associated waiting times and waiting lists, this increases likelihood of us being assured in first or second tranch. Risk scores remain valid.

July '23: The SALT and ASCOF returns for 22/23 have now been finalised and submitted. We have seen significant improvement in a number of metrics, but remain with low performance when compared with the East of England region or the England average for last year in some measures. Comparative data will not be available until around September/October.

The ADASS Spring Survey was recently submitted and early indications are that we have more people waiting for assessments of various types than the regional average.

The Office for Local Government launched a dataset for local government this week, containing seven measures for adult social care. For five of these measures, we are below the median performance for our nearest statistical neighbours. For two measures we are at or above the median. This is in the public domain but draws on data from 21/22.

Given these datasets being in the public domain, the likelihood of CQC assuring us earlier in the process is increased.

Nov '23: Awaiting final guidance from CQC regarding details of their approach assurance, and are carefully monitoring for information from our networks. Engaging in regional challenge event which will give further indication of our performance from a 'critical friend' perspective.

Risk Number	RM041					Date of update		16 November 2023		
Risk Name	Adult Social Services Supplier or Market Failure									
Portfolio lead	Cllr. Alison Thomas					Risk Owner		Gary Heathcote		
Risk Description					Date entered on risk register			05 September 2023		
The Council contracts with independent providers (of care homes, nursing homes, home care, supported living, housing with care and day care) spending over £330m annually to support around 16,500 adults at any one time. Failure in the care market may be defined as the sudden/unplanned loss of any or all of these services by reason of: inadequate quality, lack of financial viability, deficient supply of workforce, provider decision to withdraw from the market or natural disaster, The Council has a duty under the s5 of the Care Act 2014 to meet the needs of people who require assistance from public funds and to secure a diverse and good quality care market for this purpose.										
Original			Current			Tolerance Target				
Likelihood	Impact	Risk score	Likelihood	Impact	Risk score	Likelihood	Impact	Risk score	Target Date	Prospects of meeting Target Risk Score by Target Date
3	3	9	4	5	20	3	4	12	Apr-24	Amber
Tasks to mitigate the risk										
1) Annual uplift of fees and consideration of cost of care to ensure a full understanding of a fair price for care 2) Process in places to ensure NCC business is conducted well with invoices paid promptly. 3) Work with providers to ensure early communication of cashflow concerns. 4) Use of a provider at risk dashboard to support earlier conversations with providers 5) PAMMS review to work proactively with all providers to support quality improvement and implementation of quality improvement and escalation policy 6) Agreed workforce strategy and implementation plan including increased focus on recruitment and retention 7) Up to date market position statement to track changes in demand and protections of future need and signal commissioning intentions. 8) Fair cost of care work completed for home support and older people residential and nursing and market sustainability plan reported to Cabinet 9) Weekly multi team meeting to review providers with highest risks and actions required 10) Annual winter resilience plan to help address capacity 11) Specific actions to focus on issues related to providers of services for people with learning disabilities - these include commissioning actions to develop new compliant care including capital investment to increase independent living and residential care review; LD&A quality improvement actions to provide additional support to providers undertaking improvement actions. 12) ICS Social Care Quality Improvement Programme in place										
Progress update										

Progress update

18/08/2023

Internal capacity meeting to oversee actions and impact

Connecting communities programme with focus on Norfolk First Response - to increase reablement capacity

Weekly provider at risk meeting - focused on actions to monitor and manage providers delivering services to working age adults, with critical risks.

PAMMS Reviews programme on track, and team supporting providers with urgent quality and safeguarding issues

Quality Improvement and Escalation policy in place

Regular review of provider risk dashboard for residential and nursing and development for other parts of the care sector. Further development of the provider at risk dashboard developed

Regular communication with Market via NORCA and engagement programme.

Further incentives put in place when needed for home support from hospital or NFR

International Recruitment approach

There is a community of practice in place and developed offer implemented with ICB. Norfolk is the lead sponsor for the regional programme using government funding for international recruitment.

Home support and OP residential and nursing cost of care work completed. Market Sustainability Plan completed.

ICS Social Care Quality Improvement Programme in place and working towards agreed deliverables.

Market position statement presented to Cabinet 4 July. Market Position seminar held with providers.

Paper to DLT setting out specific pressures relating to WAA care providers with further funding agreed to support targeted support. Two Quality Improvement Officers appointed and new wrap around support model being developed.

2023-24 fee increase agreed by Cabinet in January 2023.

Proactive sourcing implemented within brokerage.

No change.

Cabinet

Item No: 13

Report Title: Corporately Significant Vital Signs

Date of Meeting: 10 January 2024

Responsible Cabinet Member: Cllr James (Corporate Services and Innovation)

Responsible Director: Paul Cracknell, Executive Director Strategy and Transformation

Is this a Key Decision? No

Executive Summary / Introduction from Cabinet Member

The purpose of this Quarter 2 report is to provide Cabinet with an update on the Council's performance against its Corporately Significant Vital Signs.

Each performance report provides the opportunity to review and understand context, current performance, trends, identify performance risks, and by regular monitoring during the period, allow for early interventions and to validate the actions that have been taken to address performance deviation and identify further opportunities for improvement.

Our Vital Signs are made up of an array of different types of performance measures, some of which are focused workload or output measures, like the Museum visits measure which focuses on services received/visits made, and some which measure our timeliness or productivity, like % of Education, Health, and Care Plans completed within Timescale, in Children's services. Where possible we focus on being outcomes driven, but recognise that for some of our Vital Signs, performance is often affected by circumstances outside of our control, such as the Looked after Children measure in Children's Services, which is affected by the volume of UASC Children allocated to the area. That being said, it remains important for us to understand the challenges and extenuating circumstances that affect our service delivery and achievement of our strategic outcomes, and we continue to monitor trends and establish insights around such measures to aid effective planning, allocation of resources and to monitor demand and forecasting.

As a Council, we continue to operate in a period of challenge, and have been actively responding to changes in the national landscape around performance, with the prospect of further proposed metrics from the Office for Local Government (Oflog). We are continuing to review our Vital Signs, across Children's Services and CES, ready

for 24/25 to ensure that our focus on performance across our services remains on the right areas, with the right targets and stretch goals in place.

Alongside this, we are working to develop our approach to realising benefits in relation to our Priority Portfolio of Change and Transformation activity, so that we can be assured that we are prioritising and investing in the right activity, that supports the delivery of our Strategy and positive outcomes for our residents.

The Norfolk care market continues to face challenge, despite the uplift in performance for this Quarter, due to lack of choice for enhanced and specialised care in particular, which can limit options for both individuals and commissioners to use good and outstanding provision as a matter of course. Workforce issues including staff shortages, lack of staff retention, and lower level of skills and qualifications are a factor for quality provision and can also prevent more providers expanding their offer to meet more complex needs. We continue to work collaboratively to strengthen the market, and improve recruitment and retention opportunities, and have included proposed actions across both Adults' Services and Strategy & Transformation to improve performance, in the body of this report.

In Children's Services, our measure around Decreasing the Rate of Looked After Children is disproportionately being affected by the number of Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children within County. We have made a number of pledges to Kent LA in addition to our on-going duties locally and for the National Transfer Scheme, which means we are currently looking after a high number of UASC amongst our cohort.

Performance remains stable across our CES measures and static across our Strategy & Transformation measures.

There continues to be some risk reported around the savings targets for Finance, with shortfalls anticipated in Adults, Children's Services and CES. Monitoring of these programmes shall be reported via the Monthly Finance Report and clear actions outlined for any mitigations against the anticipated risk.

As with the last quarter's report, performance across this quarter has seen an uplift from measures moving from Red to Amber (1), with the volume of measures reporting as red at a volume of 4 (5 last Quarter). We've also seen an uplift in measures moving from Amber to Green against last Quarter (2), and positive improvements against key measures, like the Quality of the Care Market measure in Adults Services, which moved from 56.67% to 76.67% in this Quarter, and in Children's Services, the % of children achieving a Good Level of Development in Early Years at age 5 has improved against last year, from 64.4% to 67.3%, and moving from Amber to Green.

For areas of underperformance the relevant supportive narrative on these measures discusses the corrective actions that will take place to improve performance and the expected return to target dates. These measures shall be actively discussed at Executive Leadership Level, and at Directorate DMTs to ensure that trends continue to be monitored and mitigative actions put in place, where we have the influence to do so. Actions are clearly highlighted at the end of each Directorate Section.

This report utilises the Corporately Significant Vital Signs that underpin portfolio outcomes using a traffic light visual rating. 35 monthly and quarterly Corporately Significant Vital Signs are being reported in this period, where performance for the monthly measure is drawn from the last month in quarter (September).

Performance is measured using Red, Amber, and Green (RAG) ratings based on the current level of performance against target. The table below shows the proportion of corporately significant vital signs at each RAG rating in the last month at the end of Quarter 2. Performance in the last month of Quarter 2 is compared to that in the last month of Quarter 1 of 23/24.

35 Corporately Significant Vital Signs- please note that this Quarter includes 3 measures that are not RAG rated, therefore the total below will not equal 35.	
Green	22 Vital signs met or exceeded the target (24 last month in last quarter)
Amber	6 Are within the accepted tolerance of the set target (6 last month in last quarter)
Red	4 Vital Signs are below or behind the target set (5 last month last quarter)

In the review of performance, in addition to the “RAG” ratings, the trajectory of performance against target is noted as -

Improving  Deteriorating  Static 

For measures to be classed as improving or deteriorating there will be more than a 2% tolerance shift against the previous report. For those classed as static this will be within the 2%. The exception to the rule will be for those with targets that are set at under 10%, where a 0.5% rule shall apply.

Recommendations:

- 1. Review and comment on the end of Quarter 2 performance data and associated narrative.**
- 2. Agree the 27 highlighted actions as set out.**

1. Background and Purpose

1.1.Vital signs provide measurements of operational processes (internal) and strategic outcomes (external). Poor performance and or a deteriorating trajectory represents a risk to the organisation in terms of our ability to meet legal responsibilities, maintain financial health, meet the needs of our citizens and a reputational risk.

1.2.The Corporately Significant Vital Signs are closely aligned to the principles underpinning our Council Plan - Better Together, for Norfolk:

- A VIBRANT AND SUSTAINABLE ECONOMY
- BETTER OPPORTUNITIES FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE
- HEALTHY, FULFILLING, AND INDEPENDENT LIVES
- STRONG, ENGAGED, AND INCLUSIVE COMMUNITIES
- A GREENER, MORE RESILIENT FUTURE

1.3. Each vital sign has a target which has been set based on the performance required for us to work within a balanced budget and meet statutory requirements. Where the measure relates to the delivery of services, benchmarking data where relevant, has also been used to assess our performance against that of our statistical neighbours.




2. Proposal

2.1 This report uses data from the last month in the quarter, during which there has been some success during this time in increasing areas of previously poor performance.

2.2. There do remain however, several areas where performance is a cause for concern and potential risk, and these are identified in the relevant parts of the report, with mitigating actions described to outline our response to reaching target.





2.3 Highlights for the quarter (shows the total of indicators RAG by portfolio).

2.4. Throughout this report, the Red, Amber, Green “RAG” traffic light system of reporting is used, with some highlights on performance listed below.

	Total Vital Signs				Highlight
Adult Social Services	5	0	4	1	Timeliness of risk management within the holding lists % has improved performance to reach Green at 88.89%, from 77.78% last Quarter
Children's Services	9	2	1	6	% of children achieving a Good Level of Development in the Early Years at age 5 has improved against last year, from 64.4% to 67.3%, and moving from Amber to Green
Community & Environmental Services	8	0	0	8	All measures are reporting at Green for this Quarter
Finance & Commercial Services	7	1	1	3	Capital receipts for land sold, that will be counted as part of overall capital receipts has increased by £170K
Strategy & Transformation	6	1	0	4	Performance remains static in this area

3. Impact of the Proposal - Vital Signs overview by portfolio outcome

3.1 Adult Services

Measures	Performance Q1- New Measures for 23/24	Performance Q2	Target	Trajectory
Reduce and delay the need for formal social care (%)	77.78%	77.78%*	80%	Static 
Maximised independence for those who draw on services %	63.33%	60.00%*	80%	Deteriorating 
Timeliness of risk management within the holding lists %	77.78%	88.89%*	80%	Improving 
Managing our safeguarding work effectively	N/A	55.56%*	80%	N/A
Quality of the Care Market %	56.67%	76.67%*	80%	Improving 

*Please note, as these are composite measures, the percentages shown represent the combined performance over each month of a number of feeder performance indicators, assigned scores at each month are collated to form these percentages.

3.2 Of the 5 performance measures 4 are below target, and at Amber. These are as follows and have 12 associated actions highlighted.

3.3 Vital Sign 111: Reduce and delay the need for formal social care %. Target 80%. Current performance 77.78%. Expected to reach target date: March 24

This composite vital sign brings together a range of indicators including how many people are signposted at our front door and how many people receive short term services to increase their independence.

SCCE continues to manage referrals coming into the service, which have remained consistent across the quarter. We have looked at our processes and made them as smooth and efficient as possible. We are now able to respond to 77% of people contacting us within 2 days. The changes we have made have enabled us to signpost people to the correct teams and services as we adopt a preventative model of support.

As part of the community engagement and assessment process provided by SCCE, consideration continues to be given to opportunities for short term and low levels of support.

SCCE continues to support people to access appropriate care at the earliest opportunity, maximising the use of short-term services to support independence, to prevent, reduce and delay the need for commissioned services.

Dashboard data is being used to inform and target work, upskilling managers, and front-line staff to deliver the right outcomes for people.

Actions:

- 1. Continue with actions to recruit and retain staff.**
- 2. Streamline referral pathways to further improve efficiency and maximise preventative opportunities.**

3.4 Vital Sign 112: Maximised independence for those who draw on services %Target 80%. Current performance 60%. Expected to reach target date: March 25

This composite vital sign includes a range of measures which include new residential placements and the number of people supported by short term services who then did not need ongoing support.

Our Connecting Communities programme is increasing the number of people who have effective short-term support which reduces their need for on-going long-term services. It also supports helping people to stay in their homes with support. We are seeing a reduction in the rate of new long-term placements for people aged over 65.

We are working to reduce how long people stay in a short-term bed – either coming out of a hospital stay, or from the community. We know that if we can support people home from short-stay beds swiftly then they are more likely to keep or re-gain independence. Since June 2023, we have managed to reduce length of stay by 34% - but there is more to do.

Compared with other similar authorities, we do not have as many people taking up direct payments which can give more choice and control, allowing people to manage and arrange their own bespoke care. There are currently 1975 people using DPs, and we want to increase this to 2660.

Key to helping people stay independent for longer is ensuring alternatives to residential care. Our Independent Living programme to date has two schemes open, offering 124 apartments. In the coming year we plan to have a further three schemes start on site, with over two hundred apartments between them.

Analysis of choices for younger people with disabilities highlighted shortcomings in options for people, with a lack of 'step-down' or 'step-up' facilities for people as an alternative to permanent accommodation. In response, we have developed three accommodation-based enablement schemes and we will be increasing housing and independent living options for younger adults.

Actions:

- 3. Continuing to embed and sustain Connecting Communities ways of working in Community Care Teams**
- 4. Reduction of length of stay in short term beds, resulting in more independent outcomes for people.**

5. Continue work in supporting localities and NFS to work collaboratively to re-able where possible and reduce the reliance on formal care.
6. Continue to roll out the accommodation plan, bringing independent and supported living options online.

3.5 Vital Sign 114: Managing our Safeguarding work effectively. Target 80% Current performance 55.56%. Expected to reach target date: March 24

This composite vital sign looks at a series of measures around how we manage safeguarding.

Outcomes for people who have been through a safeguarding enquiry are good, with more than 95% of people having had the risk reduced or removed through the interventions.

Our focus is on ensuring that all people who need to be safeguarded are. People at moderate to high risk of harm are seen quickly, with steps taken to safeguard them from the point of the referral.

Some less urgent safeguarding referrals are waiting for the full process, having had initial steps taken to protect them from avoidable harm. We continue to work with providers to improve quality and minimise safeguarding referrals.

Actions:

7. Updating of risk stratification process to improve consistency in the use of the RAG rating system.
8. Safeguarding adults process is being reviewed to make it as streamlined as possible.
9. Strengthening relationship between operational and safeguarding teams with more mentoring and support availability.

3.6 Vital Sign 115: Quality of Market. Target 80% Current performance 76.67%. Expected to reach target date: March 25

This composite vital sign includes a range of measures which tell us about the quality of the market, such as, the percentage of providers rated as Good or Outstanding by their most recent CQC inspection and the percentage of providers previously rated as inadequate or requires improvement by PAMMS who have improved at their most recent PAMMS inspection.

The County has had lower quality of care compared to some other local authority areas for some time. There are many elements that contribute to this and actions to see improvement will take time. Social care in Norfolk is provided by over 450 care

providers, so the Council needs to work across the care market to help support and influence change.

The Norfolk care market is challenged due to lack of choice for enhanced and specialised care in particular, which can limit options for both individuals and commissioners to use good and outstanding provision as a matter of course.

Workforce issues including staff shortages, lack of staff retention, and lower level of skills and qualifications are a factor for quality provision and can also prevent more providers expanding their offer to meet more complex needs.

National workforce shortages over the last two years are placing more pressure on care provision and will impact on quality. However, the workforce position over the last year is improving. Availability of high-quality registered managers is challenging in Norfolk. The Integrated Quality Services complements the CQC programme of work and proactively supports quality improvement. An increase in staffing and economic concerns has increased the amount of care provision with significant issues. These can lead to provider failure and quality concerns, which has required deployment of resources to focus on immediate improvement support and in some cases, actions involving performance notices and support of service closures. The actions we are taken to impact on our workforce challenges are reflected in our performance against the Adults Social Worker Vacancies - % establishment filled (Grade I – L) reported against the Strategy & Transformation Section on this report.

Onsite quality assurance audits are undertaken by the IQS team. Good progress has been made with a mix of both risk-based scheduled audits and undertaking focussed work with providers where quality concerns have been identified.

CQC unfortunately only undertakes a small number of assessments – about four to five per month. These are often risk based so focus on establishments at risk of becoming inadequate or requires improvement.

Despite a sustained small improvement since December 2022 there has been a recent decline in care quality compliance in Norfolk. However, our own PAMMS system and work with the market tells us that we have 16 providers, currently rated as Requires Improvement who we are confident would be judged good or outstanding if CQC inspected them now. We continue to see improvement in a number of providers as a result of our engagement with them.

The ICS Social Care Quality Improvement Programme is a collaborative programme of work overseeing actions to deliver care quality improvement for Norfolk. This was created following the strategic framework approach agreed by Cabinet in June 2022. The Programme is now well established and has received significant support from partner organisations including Norfolk Care Association (NorCA); Healthwatch Norfolk and the Norfolk and Waveney ICB (Integrated Care Board) with the aim of ensuring a coordinated approach but also ownership and accountability from all parties that can help influence and action improvement to care quality in Norfolk.










Action:

- 10. To continue scheduled audits and undertake focussed work with providers where quality concerns have been identified, (Carried forward from previous report).**
- 11. Continue to support improvement focused on workforce initiatives; recruitment and retention, training and development, and international recruitment, (Carried forward from previous report).**
- 12. Full engagement with the programme of work under ICS social care Quality Improvement Programme to promote and support high quality care.**

3.7 ASSD- Composite measurement breakdown:

Vital Sign 1 - New Contacts where the need for social care is reduced or delayed
Requests for new clients where sequel was universal services/signposting
Requests where the sequel to request for support was low level support or short term other
Requests where the sequel is short term services to maximise independence
Vital Sign 2 - Maximised independence for those that draw on services
Proportion of adults aged 18-64 whose long-term support needs are met by admission to residential and nursing care homes (per 100,000 population)
Proportion of adults aged 65 and over whose long-term support needs are met by admission to residential and nursing care homes (per 100,000 population)
Proportion of new clients who received shrt-term services during the year, where no further request was made for ongoing suport (18-64)
Proportion of new clients who received shrt-term services during the year, where no further request was made for ongoing suport (65+)
Average Hours of Home Care avoided through reablement intervention
Vital Sign 3 - Timeliness of risk management within the holding lists
% of people not risk stratified on Holding List
% of people rated RED on the Holding List
% of people with a contact with SCCE more than 7 days with no open assessment or care plan
% of people waiting assessments on Holding List for longer than 3 weeks
Vital Sign 4 - Managing our safeguarding work effectively
Vital Sign 4 - Managing our safeguarding work effectively
% of people who have had initial efforts made to safeguard them within 3 days of referral
Red safeguarding cases on holding list for more than 1 working day
% of s542 safeguarding enquiries where a risk was identified and the reported outcome that this was reduced or removed
Vital Sign 5 - Quality of the Market
% of providers rated as Good or Outstanding by most recent CQC
% of providers rated as Good or Excellent by most recent PAMMS
% of beds in Residential and Nursing proviers rated as Good or Outstanding in latest CQC/PAMMS report
% of providers previously rated as inadequate or requires improvement by PAMMS who have improved at most recent PAMMS inspection
% of spend on commissioned care which is with providers rated as good or outstanding in latest CQC/PAMMS report

3.8 Children's Services

Measures	Performance Q1	Performance Q2	Target	Trajectory
% of schools judged good or outstanding by OFSTED	84%	84%	86%	Static 
% of Care Leavers who are EET (19 - 21)	61.80%	61%	52%	Static 
% of family support referrals who have had a referral in the previous 12 months	13.4%	13.10%	15%	Static 
Decreasing the rate of Looked-After Children per 10,000 of the overall 0-17 population	69.7%	71%	62.3%	Static 
% of Referrals into social care who have had a referral to social care in the previous 12 months	20.6%	20.2%	20%	Static 
% of children starting a Child Protection Plan who have previously been subject to a Child Protection Plan (in the last 2 years)	7.9%	7.67%	11%	Static 
% of children achieving a Good Level of Development in the Early Years at age 5	22/23: 64.4%	23/24: 67.3%	67.2%	Improving 
Avg. time (in days) between LA receiving court authority to place a child and deciding on a match to an adoptive family	112	147	221	Deteriorating 
% of Education, Health and Care Plans completed within Timescale	76.4%	60.6%	60.4%	Deteriorating 

3.9 Of the 9 performance measures, 1 is amber, and 2 are red. There are 6 actions highlighted.

3.10 Vital Sign 301: % of schools judged good or outstanding by OFSTED. Target 86%. Current performance 84%. Static. Expected date to reach target: September 25.

The percentage of secondary and special schools judged good or outstanding compares favourably to national figures. The proportion of primary schools judged to be good remains below the national average for this phase of education (Norfolk 84%, England 90%). In primary schools judged as requires improvement, this is usually because the wider curriculum hadn't been sufficiently well developed and / or implemented. There are 12 local authority-maintained schools judged as requires improvement (7%), 8 of which are Diocese of Norwich schools. 42 academies are judged as requires improvement and 5 inadequate. A further 5 academies have a historic requires improvement judgement, and 5 an inadequate judgement prior to being sponsored by their current multi-academy trust.

As dictated by Department for Education (DfE) policy, most schools not judged as good are now part of Multi-Academy Trust. We continue to monitor the performance of Multi-Academy Trusts and discuss this with trust leaders and the Regional Director from the DfE, challenging them if their trajectory of improvement is not strong. There are not enough Multi-Academy Trusts in Norfolk who are consistently improving their

primary schools. We are working with school leaders on a refreshed Learning Ambition as part of our FLOURISH strategy to improve outcomes in Norfolk.

Actions:

- 13. Continue to monitor the performance of Academy Trusts, challenging trajectory where required, (Carried forward from previous report).**
- 14. Development of a Learning Ambition to improve outcomes for learners in Norfolk, (Carried forward from previous report).**

3.11 Vital Sign 309: Decreasing the rate of Looked-After Children per 10,000 of the overall 0-17 population. Target 62.3. Current performance 71 **Static. Expected date to reach target: September 24.**

This measure is disproportionately affected by the number of Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children within the County. We have made a number of pledges to Kent LA in addition to our on-going duties locally and for the National Transfer Scheme, which means we are currently looking after a high number of UASC. This remains affordable practice as the government grant covers our costs. Once we remove UASC from our Looked-After population, the % is 60.8 which is within our current target.

To monitor the quality of our work, Safety at Home forums continue, to ensure that only the right local children are taken into our care, where all other possibilities/services have been exhausted.

Actions:

- 15. Review the vital sign indicator and how it is reported to enable better benchmarking of performance and cohort dependencies, (Carried forward from previous report).**
- 16. To continue to monitor the volume of non UASC Looked after Children to monitor trend both locally and nationally, (Carried forward from previous report).**

3.12 Vital Sign 310: % of Referrals into social care who have had a referral to social care in the previous 12 months. Target 20%. Current performance 20.2%. **Static Expected date to reach target: 31/03/2024.**







It is not uncommon for re-referral rates to increase at this time of year as it takes into account the peak of referrals received year on year in Sept/Oct. However, we are not confident at this juncture that the current re-referral rate is accurate - the introduction of the pilot Family Help localities has impacted on some reporting, which we are continuing to review.

Actions:

- 17. Work between Operations and Quality Assurance to understand whether the data is accurate.**

18. Where inaccuracies are found, establish actions required to address concerns.







3.13 Community and Environmental Service

Measures	Performance Q1	Performance Q2	Target	Trajectory
% of businesses brought to compliance	97.25%	96.63%	95%	Static 
% of emergency response within 10 minutes to fire incidents where life may be at risk (and 13 minutes to other incidents where life may be at risk)	87%	87.10%	80%	Static 
Number of Home Fire Safety Interventions	N/A- New Measure	624 Interventions / 375 required Interventions	375	N/A New Measure
Percentage towards delivery of Risk Based Inspection and Audit Programme (RBIAP)	N/A New Measure	58.7%	48.5%	N/A New Measure
Number of museum visits	28,009	32,019	6,759	Improving 
% of defects dealt with within timescales	96.9%	95.8%	92.5%	Static 
Customer satisfaction (with council services)	94%	95%	90%	Static 
Increased use of public transport	6132096	6316538	6000000	Improving 

3.14 Of the 8 performance measures, all are performing at Green. The Leadership Team are considering new Vital Signs and targets for 24/25, following a sustained period of positive performance across service areas. We are reporting two new measures for the Fire Service, 1) The Number of Home Fire Safety Interventions, 2) The Percentage towards delivery of Risk Based Inspection and Audit Programme (RBIAP). For Metric 1) this is reflecting High Risk interventions completed through Home Fire Safety Visits and Homesafe to improve fire safety in homes. For Metric 2) This is reflecting the total number of premises identified as due for inspection or audit (job reason = "RBIAP audit") in reporting period (Quarter) that have been inspected or audited.

3.15 Performance against the target for increased use of public transport has been very positive, which is against a backdrop of public transport use nationally not returning as quickly to pre-pandemic levels. This positive performance for Norfolk is due to several factors including the government's £2 bus fare cap and also the £50m Bus Service Improvement Plan funding awarded to Norfolk, which has enabled more frequent and new bus services being introduced, further fares discounts and better waiting areas and interchanges.

3.16 Finance

Measures	Performance Q1	Performance Q2	Target	Trajectory
Capital receipts for land sold, that will be counted as part of overall capital receipts	£1,062,575	£1,232,757	£5,000,000	Improving 
Revenue monitoring by organisation	£0	£4,363,000	N/A	Deteriorating 
Savings targets delivered	£59,458,000	£57,858,000	£59,703,000	Deteriorating 
FES - Debt recovery	91%	94%	85%	Improving 
Payment performance - % of invoices paid within 30 days of receipt	98.5%	98.4%	98%	Static 
Level of borrowing / debt	£842,455,330	£828,111,000	£935,045,000	Improving 
Capital monitoring- Profiled projected annual spend vs actual to date	16% (Target 18%)	35%	45%	N/A

3.17 Of the 7 performance measures 3 are below target, 1 not RAG rated, 1 amber and 1 red, as outlined below, with 1 action –

3.18 Vital Sign 401: Capital receipts for land sold, that will be counted as part of overall capital receipts. Target £5,000,000. Current Performance £1,232,757. **Improving**. Expected date to reach target: January 2024

The projected disposals subject to contract is £3.183m and once these disposals are completed the full disposals achieved in 2023-24 will be £4.416m which will bring the performance closer to the £5m target.

3.19 Vital Sign 404: Savings Targets Delivered. Target £59,703,000. Performance £57,858,000. Expected date to reach target: March 2024

The forecast savings for 2023-24 as at September 2023 is £57.858m against a budgeted savings target of £59.703m. A shortfall of £1.500m has been reported in Adult Social Services, £0.055m in Children's Services and £0.290m in Community and Environmental Services.

Adult Social Services:

It is also now unlikely that the £1.5m savings associated with the Physical Disability service are to be achieved this year. This is in part due to the delay of the creation of an 18-65 operational service which would have provided increased resource in this area. At the same time, we have seen an adverse underlying movement in cost due to increased numbers of people requiring our support and increased unit costs of care packages. A recovery plan is being put in place in order to try to bring down the overspend as much as possible.

Children's Services:

The saving for Post 16 transport at £0.055m will no longer be delivered.

Community and Environmental Services:

Saving (S2324FCS021) relates to further income from commercialisation of property assets including County Hall. Given the new tenants were not utilising the space from 1 April there will be an estimated shortfall against the saving in 2023-24 of £0.190m due to rent not being charged for the full year.

An increased income target had been applied to Adult Learning over the past two years linked to the development of a creative hub at the Wensum Lodge site. This project is not progressing as it is no longer viable, and as the service will also be withdrawing from the site, the 2023-24 saving of £0.100m is no longer achievable (S2021CES001).

Actions:

19. To continue to monitor the risk associated with identified savings programmes, highlighting any material issues within the monthly finance report.

3.20 Vital Sign 401: Capital monitoring- Profiled projected annual spend vs actual to date. Target 45%. Current Performance 35%. Expected date to reach target: March 2024

Performance is behind the target trajectory because of natural slippage in the capital programme. Once the programme is suitably reprofiled we expect the actual performance will be closer aligned to the target trajectory.

3.21 Strategy and Transformation

Measures	Performance Q1	Performance Q2	Target	Trajectory	
New employee retention (24+ months)	65%	68%	65%	Improving	↑
Sickness absences - % lost time	2.90%	2.90%	3.50%	Static	→
Adults Social Worker Vacancies - % establishment filled (Grade I – L)	80%	82%	90%	Static	→
Voluntary turnover rate	12%	10%	10%	N/A	
Absence due to mental health as a % of lost time due to sickness absence (*note measure has changed since quarter 4 and is no longer based on overall absence time)	0.9%	0.9%	1.2%	Static	→
Children's Social Worker Vacancies Level 1-3 - % operational establishment filled (Grade I - L)	91%	91%	90%	Static	→

The service is currently unable to report on measure 501: Percentage of employees with written and agreed goals. Work is ongoing to develop the business line reporting capability of myOracle to support the reintroduction of this measure later in the year. These improvements will also enable the introduction of a new measure relating to completion of mandatory training. We expect to be able to report on these areas for April 2024.

3.22 Of the 6 performance measures 1 is below target and red, as outlined below, with 5 actions –

3.23 Vital Sign 503: Adults Social Worker Vacancies - % establishment filled (Grade I – L). Target 90%. Current Performance 82%. **Static. Expected date to reach target: March 2024.**

This measure identifies the number of unfilled posts in the budgeted staffing establishment for Adult Social Care Social Workers. It is important due to the operational impact on service delivery of Social Work, in terms of continuity, consistency and quality of practice to enable positive interventions and outcomes. Identified reason for performance variation.

Social Work continues to be a national skills shortage occupation and is highly competitive in both the permanent and temporary labour market, increasing the challenge to reach the targeted establishment level.

We have taken a number of steps to support performance improvement including:

- In January 2023 we introduced a Golden Hello of £2k for Occupational therapy roles
- In April 2023 we introduced a retention payment for staff working in the SCCE department
- We increased the number of team manager roles within the Community Care teams to support transformation of services alongside our connecting communities workstream

We have also:

- Introduced protected training time for Social Workers and OTs
- Centralised the tracking of vacancies and the performance of recruitment process
- Introduced a weekly DLT review of the recruitment position to drive targeted intervention
- Developed a focused resource to manage shortlisting and coordinate interviews for all social worker roles
- Increased the number of social work apprentices that we are able to support through 2024-2027 from 13 to 20
- Developed a new international recruitment approach and investing into our support offer for international staff. We are targeting Sri Lanka as a key market and are exploring initial approaches to develop this market.
- Recently introduced a green car leasing salary sacrifice scheme

In addition, we are:

- Developing a strategy to encourage young people to work in Adult Social Services
- Liaising with the NHS Health and Social Care Academy to trial taster sessions for students in the Academy
- Exploring the development of a ring-fenced apprenticeship scheme for care leavers as part of the NHS Universal Family Model Trial

These actions will support a streamlined and strengthened offer to this very competitive market.

Actions:

- 20. We are developing a new international recruitment approach and investing into our support offer for international staff. We are targeting Sri Lanka and Germany as key markets and are exploring initial approaches to develop this market.
- 21. We are developing a programme of support to focus on return to practice candidates to ensure that this section or the market consider NCC as an attractive place to work.
- 22. We are developing a programme of practice support to target and upskill refugee social workers.
- 23. We are reviewing our career development offer for APs to support retention.
- 24. We are reviewing our engagement process with staff to make this more effective.
- 25. Developing a strategy to encourage young people to work in Adult Social Services
- 26. Liaising with the NHS Health and Social Care Academy to trial taster sessions for students in the Academy.
- 27. Exploring the development of a ring-fenced apprenticeship scheme for care leavers as part of the NHS Universal Family Model Trial

These actions will support a streamlined and strengthened offer to this very competitive market.

4. Impact of the Proposal**4.1 Information Report****5. Evidence and Reasons for Decision****5.1 Provided in the narrative under each departmental section.****6. Alternative Options****6.1 Information Report****7. Financial Implications****7.1 None Identified****8. Resource Implications****8.1 Staff: None Identified****8.2 Property: None Identified****8.3 IT: None Identified**

9. Other Implications

- 9.1 Legal Implications: None Identified
- 9.2 Human Rights Implications: None Identified
- 9.3 Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) (this must be included): None Identified
- 9.4 Data Protection Impact Assessments (DPIA): None Identified
- 9.5 Health and Safety implications (where appropriate): None Identified
- 9.6 Sustainability implications (where appropriate): None Identified
- 9.7 Any Other Implications: None Identified

10. Risk Implications / Assessment

- 10.1 This report is intended to be read with the Risk Management Report

11. Select Committee Comments

- 11.1 This report has not been heard at select Committee.

12. Recommendations

- 1. Review and comment on the end of Quarter 2 performance data.
- 2. Agree the 27 highlighted actions as set out.

13. Background Papers

- 13.1 None

Officer Contact

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

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Cabinet

Item No: 14

Report Title: Health, Safety and Well-being Mid-Year Report 2023-24

Date of Meeting: 10 January 2024

Responsible Cabinet Member: Cllr Kay Mason Billig (Leader and Cabinet Member for Strategy & Governance)

Responsible Director: Paul Cracknell, Executive Director of Transformation and Strategy

Is this a Key Decision? No

If this is a Key Decision, date added to the Forward Plan of Key Decisions:

Executive Summary / Introduction from Cabinet Member

As an employer Norfolk County Council (NCC) is required to have in place a management system to ensure the health and safety of our employees and others affected by our business undertaking; including anyone we provide services to (either directly or through a 3rd party) such as school pupils, commissioned services clients, contractors, and members.

This report provides data and analysis on the Health, Safety and Well-being (HSW) mid-year performance of NCC as an employer so that members have the information necessary to satisfy themselves of the effectiveness of the NCC health and safety management system, or where necessary to identify actions for Executive Directors and others to improve the performance against the 3 key outcome goals:

- NCC has a positive health, safety and well-being (HSW) culture.
- The standard of HSW management ensures employees are at work, well and productive.
- HSW has a successful strategic approach to trading and cost recovery.

(Further detail and explanation of the measures is provided in Appendix 1)

The data provided in this report needs to be reviewed in the light of the implementation of the new HR and finance system and in particular, the ability to report and send notifications relating to mandatory learning This remains in

development and is essential to enable NCC to effectively manage compliance with identified training requirements for our managers and employees.

Additionally, the incident data also reflects the increase in incidents classed as involuntary harm, this is influenced by the increasing number of complex and challenging needs of the children we support, a notable change in behaviours of children's behaviours post pandemic, an uplift in reporting and HSW ensuring the correct incident recording categories are used.

Whilst mental health absence continues to be the largest cause of ill health absence for NCC it remains below the vital signs target of 1.2%, at 0.94% of lost time due to sickness absence for all NCC, marginally increasing from 0.83% when compared to the same period last year. Overall mental health sickness equates to 36.5% of our sickness absence. It should be noted that only a very small percentage (9%) is attributed by employees as relating to work. This is reflective of a national trend of elevated levels of anxiety and depression. Directorates continue to prioritise wellbeing support for employees and HSW regularly review the wellbeing offer to help reduce absence in this area. Our three-year Wellbeing Strategy has now been agreed, this will continue to develop our wellbeing culture and leadership in NCC.

Executive Directors have reviewed the data and insights provided in the report and have reaffirmed their commitment to the actions identified in the 2022-2023 end of year report. These are: -

- Focussing on the core fundamentals, supporting managers understanding of their responsibilities including risk assessments, incident investigations, driving for work and DSE assessments.
- That mandatory training particularly that aimed at managers including Mental Health First Aid Champion, Leadership and Risk Assessment, is identified and prioritised, and the training provision is fully utilised.
- Supporting and encouraging managers to develop their conversational skills, understanding of NCC support and prioritise supporting team and individual wellbeing, and the role of the Well-being Champions.
- The timely and appropriate use of the Wellbeing service, NSL and MIRS service within their teams.
- Utilising the data available from employee survey(s), incidents, workforce dashboards, this report and other sources to better understand the areas for focus.

The key highlights from the Mid-year 23-24 HSW Report data includes:

Mental health and wellbeing

- Following the reintroduction of Mental Health First Aid Champion (MHFAC) training the number of mental health first aid champions has risen to 433 with the number of managers having completed the training increasing from 19.9%

to 31.4%. Whilst this is positive and good progress has been made, the target is that all managers complete this vital training.

- Norfolk Support Line (NSL) use has been consistent with 2.1% of employees accessing formal support. Work as a primary presenting issue has decreased from 19% in previous period to 9% this period (remaining below the target of $\leq 25\%$) and is the third highest presenting condition (Stress and anxiety are the top two at 35% and 28% respectively).
- Critical incident support has been provided on 6 occasions during this period these were in relation to 2 critical incidents, 1 in Children's Services and a team bereavement.
- As part of the Well-being Strategy, HSW is currently reviewing, and redefining the well-being model of support – including support and advice, our myNet pages, training material and additional support packages, to seek to improve the signposting of employees to the correct support service. Recent developments have included manager referral to NSL, face to face drop-in sessions (County Hall and Kings Lynn Fire Station) and psychological assessment / support packages.
- HSW will be introducing the Health and Safety Executive Stress Indicator Tool (SIT), starting in Q1 next year. This tool will be used pro-actively across NCC, to build a consistent data set, benchmark NCC, to better inform our support activities and aid directorates to understand presenting issues. In support of this HSW are developing related manager tools / team tools and guidance. HSW will communicate this revised provision to NCC once the process has been finalised.

Musculoskeletal health

- Musculoskeletal absence in this period, accounts for 0.4% of lost time compared to 0.37% for the same period last year.
- 218 employees in NCC Services were referred to the Musculoskeletal Rehabilitation Scheme (MIRS) this year (excluding schools). No department is meeting the benchmark level of referral of 8%. However, this may be reflected by the low rate of musculoskeletal absence overall.
- 87.6% of employees were at work at the time of referral which is an improvement on last year's position of 85% but falls short of the target of 90%.
- The service is estimated to have prevented 1943 days of absence so far this year which equates to £165,155 based on an average day's salary demonstrating this service continues to provide good value for money to NCC.

Management of health and safety

- The number of reportable incidents has remained static compared to the same point last year (0.18 per 1000 f.t.e).
- The number of non-reportable incidents has risen overall compared to the same point last year (from 64.09 per 1000 f.t.e. to 87.58) the majority of these are of the lowest impact in terms of absence, this also includes an increase in reporting of near miss events, which are viewed as a positive indicator in relation to reporting culture.

- The end of year NCC (22-23) position of 0.53 reportable incidents per 1000 f.t.e continues to remain below the national benchmark figure of 2.15 for 2022/23 –provided by HSE every November.
- The timeliness of reviewing and signing off incidents has dropped to 64% of incidents reviewed by managers within 90 days against a target of 90% (compared to 85% last year). There are several incidents that predate 2023 that have not been reviewed, the majority of which relate to schools. HSW will reinstate the reminder process for schools to help reduce these numbers.
- Violence remains the single biggest cause of incidents accounting for 47% of all incidents. The number of violent incidents has significantly increased compared to the same period last year (181 compared to 460). However, it should be noted that the majority relate to involuntary harm by service users in Children's Services and Education. It is notable that schools are experiencing different behavioural problems with children post pandemic – meaning more incidents of involuntary harm – not specifically attributed to those children with identified special educational needs. Colleagues in these services support some of our most vulnerable children, therefore, preventative measures are often limited, and incidents of concern are reviewed by health and safety professionals with the service. Working with Children's Services and Educational settings to review these continues to be a priority for the HSW team.
- Other top causes of incidents remain similar to the previous year's position, slip, trip and falls being the second highest category. Many of these occur in primary schools, where the incidents are varied and do not suggest any gap in controls.
- Reporting and notifications relating to completion of mandatory health and safety training continues to be developed following migration to the new HR and Finance System. The inability to provide these currently is impacting on the compliance rate.
- The Health, Safety and Well-being Team have provided 59 tutor led training sessions relating to the core HSW mandatory training for managers, reflected in the report. This is an increase from 40 sessions last year, and HSW has also increased the number of spaces on each session. This reflects the previously agreed action on HSW to refocus our resources from monitoring to providing more training availability to the organisation.
- HSW have identified that 75% of the available training provision was booked by 801 attendees, but within those bookings 159 'did not attend'. NCC should ensure that the training provision (1060 available spaces) is fully utilised, and, where possible, late cancellations are avoided, as these spaces cannot then be re-allocated. This will further support the competency of our managers and aid compliance with our mandatory training requirements.
- During this period additional e-learning modules have been developed (Infection Control, Personal Emergency Evacuation Plans (PEEPS)) and existing courses updated (Evacuation with Dignity and Driving Safely for work). All these courses have been designed to ensure they enable managers and employees to feel confident and competent at health, safety and well-being management.
- £145,898 of traded income has been raised this period. When compared on a like for like basis the income has increased slightly from £133,241 at the same

point last year. The trading market is becoming increasingly difficult because of the challenging financial position for our traded customers, and the reinvigorated academisation policy from central government. HSW are monitoring the position closely.

Recommendations:

Cabinet are asked to:

- 1. Consider and comment on the performance report.**
- 2. Champion employee and Member health, safety and wellbeing through demonstrable leadership and advocacy of the guidance and services available**
- 3. Endorse and support the ongoing focus to improve health, safety and wellbeing management through Executive Director and management leadership and delivery of health, safety, and wellbeing services.**

1. Background and Purpose

- 1.1 As an employer Norfolk County Council (NCC) is required to have in place an effective management system to ensure the health and safety of our employees and others affected by our business undertaking. This report provides a mid-year update on core measures associated with Health, Safety and Well-being to inform the recommendations.

2. Proposal

- 2.1 The proposal is that Members consider the report and recommendations and that the recommendations are supported by cabinet.
- 2.2 The report and recommendations has been reviewed and accepted by the Leader and Cabinet Member for Strategy & Governance Kay Masson Billig, by the NCC executive Directors, including the responsible Director: Paul Cracknell, Executive Director of Transformation and Strategy.
- 2.3 The public are not consulted with regard to this report, or the recommendations.

3. Impact of the Proposal

- 3.1 Continued support on the ongoing focus to improve Health, safety and well-being management and ensure to effective corporate governance.

4. Evidence and Reasons for Decision

- 4.1 NCC's legal obligations under the Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974.

5. Alternative Options

- 5.1 There are no identified alternative options, this governance is part of our HSW management system.

6. Financial Implications

- 6.1 There are no specific financial implications to bring to the attention of Cabinet, although reference should be made to legal implications below.

7. Resource Implications

7.1 Staff:

There are no additional staffing implications in the proposed actions and recommendations.

7.2 Property:

There are no additional property implications in the proposed actions and recommendations.

7.3 IT:

There are no additional IT implications in the proposed actions and recommendations.

8. Other Implications

8.1 Legal Implications:

Health and safety law is criminal law. If the Authority does not have a robust and proactive health and safety management system in place there is a risk that the Authority will be exposed to enforcement action and ultimately prosecution. Enforcement bodies can act where systems are not in place even in the absence of an incident. Where they do act sentencing guidelines dictate it is the likely severity of injury (rather than actual injury caused) that influences the sentence as well as the size of the organisation and the simplicity of the control measures. Therefore, if a solution is relatively easy to implement and it is likely to prevent a serious injury there will be significant sentencing consequences of not doing so. Public sector fines have been in the region of £100,000 - £1,000,000.

There is also a risk of an increase in successful civil claims made against the authority.

It should be noted that as the legal employer in NCC schools these risks also apply to schools, unless their status means we are not the employer e.g., academies.

8.2 Human Rights Implications:

There are no human rights implications from the recommendations and actions in this report.

8.3 Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) (this must be included):

EQIA screening and assessments (full assessments where identified) are undertaken for all new health, safety, and well-being policies – where possible our documents are made accessible, in the case of the HSW report it has been subject to review by our accessibility team to ensure that the document is as accessible as possible in its current format. There are difficulties in displaying multiple data source graphs, and whilst these have been updated with a more suitable colour contrast, some users may find it difficult. The Alt text has been added and the main text of the slides describes the key data in relation to the graphs.

8.4 Data Protection Impact Assessments (DPIA):

A DPIA is not required to be undertaken for this report.

8.5 Health and Safety implications (where appropriate):

This is identified throughout the HSW report.

8.6 Sustainability implications (where appropriate):

There are no specific related sustainability implications, however effective HSW management supports our social values.

8.7 Any Other Implications:

None other than those listed.

9. Risk Implications / Assessment

- 9.1 Our activities contain elements of risk, this report identifies the key measures and trends to further inform and ensure that we manage Health, Safety and Well-Being effectively. Failure to do so can result in potential reputation damage, criminal and civil liabilities.

10. Select Committee Comments

This report has not been reported to a select committee, and there are no related comments.

11. Recommendations – Cabinet are asked to:

1. Consider and comment on the performance report.
2. Champion employee and Member health, safety and wellbeing through demonstrable leadership and advocacy of the guidance and services available

3. Endorse and support the ongoing focus to improve health, safety and wellbeing management through Executive Director and management leadership and delivery of health, safety, and wellbeing services.

12. Background Papers

No additional papers, excepting the HSW Mid-Year report 23-34

Officer Contact

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

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Norfolk County Council

Health, Safety and Well-being

NCC Mid Year Report 2023/24



Recommendations for Executive Directors (End of Year 22/23)

Executive Directors agreed to champion HSW:

- Focussing on the core fundamentals, supporting managers understanding of their responsibilities including: risk assessments, incident investigations, driving for work and DSE assessments.
- That mandatory training particularly that aimed at managers including Mental Health First Aid Champion, Leadership and Risk Assessment, is identified and prioritised, and the training provision is fully utilised.
- Supporting and encouraging managers to develop their conversational skills, understanding of NCC support and prioritise supporting team and individual wellbeing, and the role of the Well-being Champions.
- The timely and appropriate use of the Wellbeing service, NSL and MIRS service within their teams.
- Utilising the data available from employee survey(s), incidents, workforce dashboards, this report and other sources to better understand the areas for focus.

The focus and priorities for the Health, Safety and Wellbeing Service for the forthcoming year are to:

- Continue to develop and deliver a communications and promotion plan that supports managers to understand and deliver the fundamentals of good health, safety and wellbeing management and demonstrate their commitment to it.
- Review and improve the tools, training, systems and services available to managers to support them to improve take up of services that support good health, safety and wellbeing, such as the employee training offer, compliance codes and guidance, and wellbeing services
- Work with services to understand the health, safety and wellbeing data and focus resources on improving performance including understanding the underlying causes of violence, increased slip, trip and fall incidents, mental health and musculoskeletal absence and reducing the number of long term open incidents in schools
- Continue to develop the health, safety and wellbeing core activity, supporting well-being strategy delivery, such as the training provision, well-being service provision, and information shared on myNet and Infospace.
- Refocus resources from auditing (monitoring inspections) to development and delivery of training to further invest in competency of managers, which should result in improved standards of leadership and management

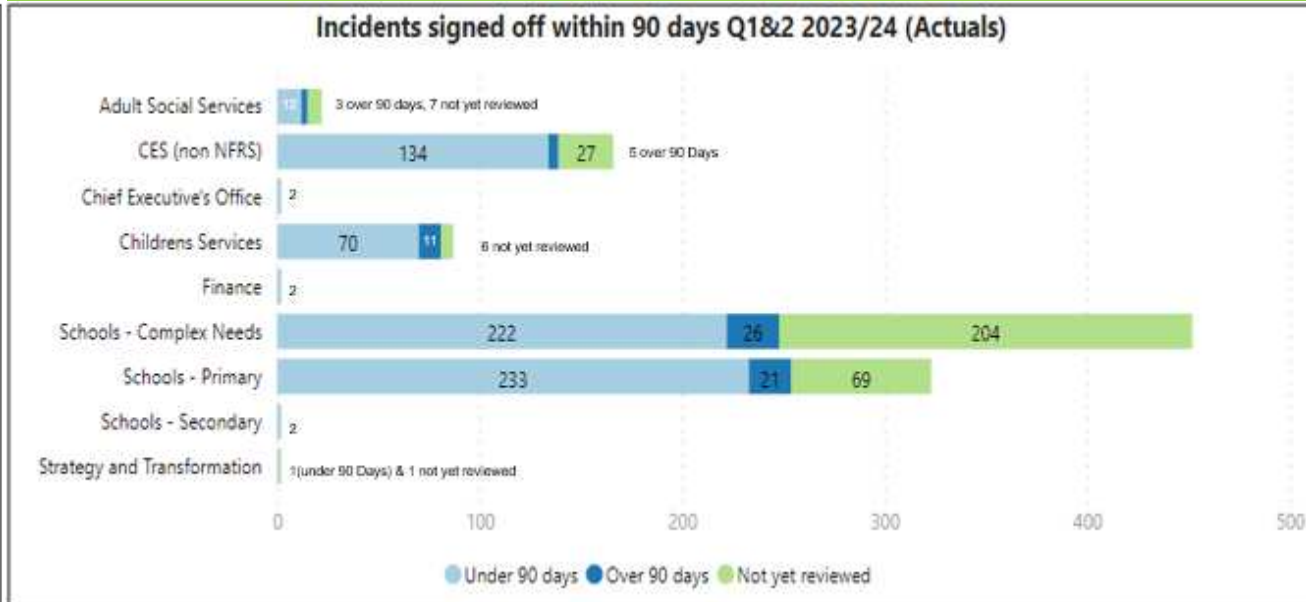
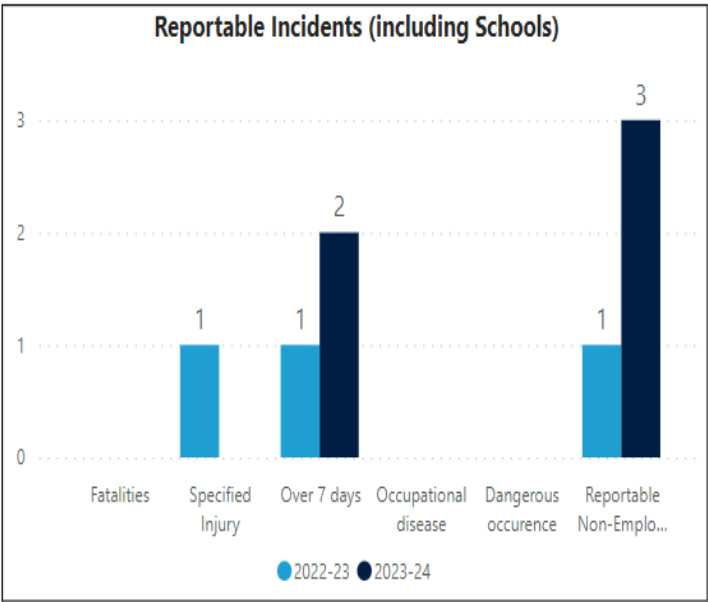
Key Points – HSW Mid Year report 23/24

- Incident Review needs to be timelier (Slide 4 – drop to 64% review within 90 days), absence data on OSHENS updated (Slide 4 – absence not closed), and focus should be given to pre 2023 incident review (Slide 4 – 198 outstanding incidents). More incidents are being reported, which should be seen as a positive reporting culture.
- There is a significant increase in reported incidents relating to Involuntary harm, primarily relating to Children's services and schools 460 versus 181 (Slide 4). The Directorate should consider these incident types and related controls via their risk assessments and ensure that they are used to inform the related directorate Risk Register(s). HSW will re-institute a follow up process with those schools that have a significant number of outstanding incidents
- Core HSW training (mandatory) both tutor-led and e-learning should be prioritised (Slide 6 & 15), including assuring attendance (use of spaces) and fewer late cancellations (slide 16), training resource has been increased. ED's should actively lead by example and support managers understanding of their responsibilities and training including risk assessments (Slide 5), incident investigations (Slide 4), driving for work and DSE assessments (Slide 6).
- Mental Health equates to 36.5% of all absence in NCC, with Stress, Anxiety and Work-Related stress being the top 3 cited issues from those supported by NSL (Slide 8). ED's should actively lead by example and support/encourage managers to develop their conversational skills by ensuring that they undertake relevant training (e.g., MHFAc – slide 6), understand the NCC support and tools available (Slide 10), and prioritise supporting team and individual wellbeing. This should include the role of the Well-being Champions (slide 7), and the timely and appropriate use of the Wellbeing services including NSL and MIRS (slides 9&10), within their teams.
- Our Traded Services income is broadly aligned (slight increase) with that of last year but will need monitoring due to external factors potentially reducing this income. (Slide 17)

In summary, the identified recommendations from the end of year report, are still appropriate, progress is being made, but further sustained focus is required to deliver improvements.

Outcome 1: A positive health, safety and well-being culture

Incidents

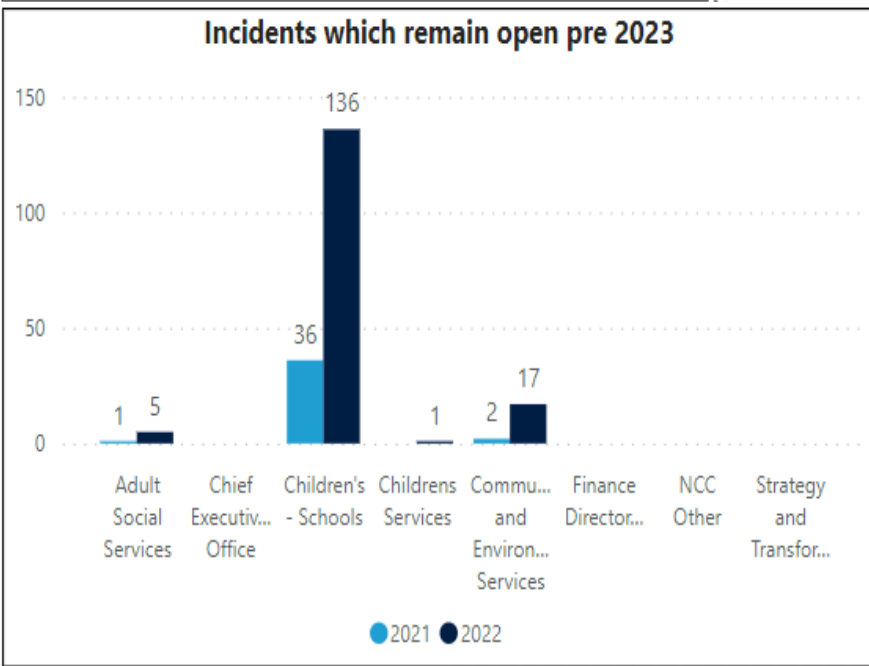


Incidents per 1000 FTE (Employees only including Schools)

Financial Year	Non-reportable	Reportable
2022-23	64.09	0.18
2023-24	87.58	0.18

Non-reportable Incidents by Employee Absence Duration (per 1000 FTE) - including Schools

Category	2022-23	2023-24
0-3 days	61.80	84.36
4-7 days	1.10	1.34
Over 7 days	0.46	1.07
Absence not closed	0.55	0.80

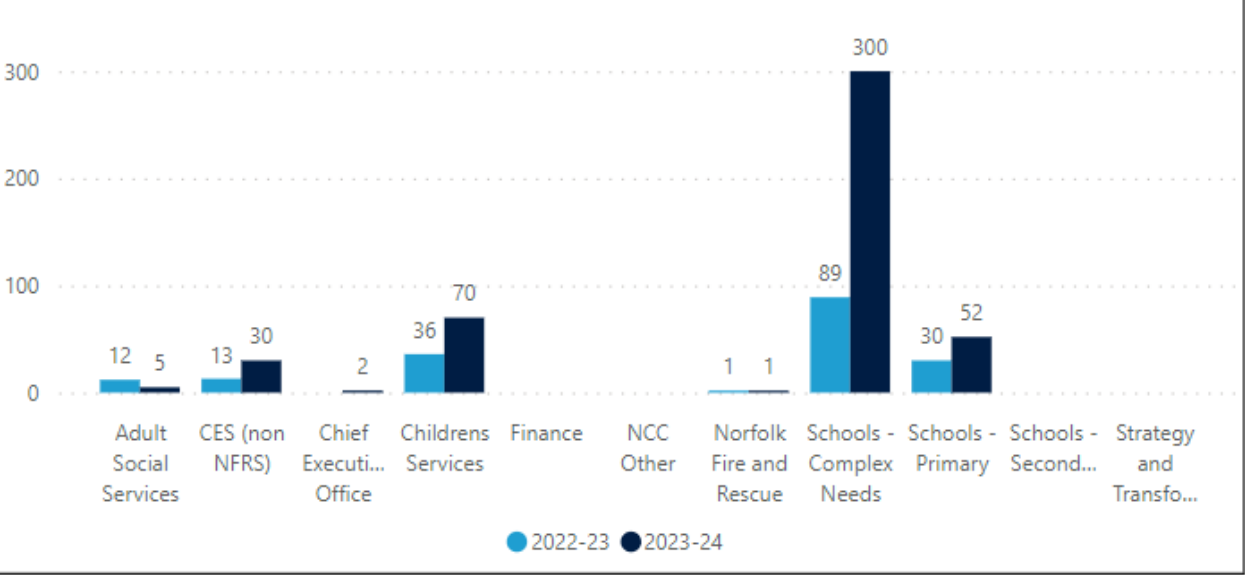


- The number of reportable incidents to employees has remained static compared to the same period last year 0.18 per 1000 FTE, with a rise in those involving non-employees 3 vs 1. Four of these occurred in primary schools. The three relating to non-employees are injuries sustained during outdoor activities: forest school, play equipment and PE equipment. The two employee reportable incidents relate to a back injury to an employee supporting a primary school trip, as the result of involuntary harm, and the other incident relates to injury sustained by our employee, whilst supporting a young person at our residential children's home – again Involuntary Harm.
- Non reportable incidents have increased compared to same period last year 88.40 versus 64.09 per 1000 FTE. The majority of these continue to be incidents that cause the lowest impact in terms of days lost (0-3 days 84.36 versus 61.80). Those with the biggest impact have increased, notably over 7-day absences (1.07 versus 0.46).
- Absences not closed - has worsened when compared to prior period (0.80 vs 0.55), this data reflects the absence data held on OSHENS, which informs our legal reporting criteria (RIDDOR report can be triggered if over 7 days absence and / or adjusted duties) and our Industrial Injury payment process. It is important that managers update this information after the initial report of the incident.
- The target for reviewing and signing off incidents has not been met in most services with 64% being completed within target overall; a significant drop since the same period last year - 85% across NCC (not including NFRS) below the target of 90%. This is affected by a small number of incidents that are remaining open within ASS, CES, Children's Services, S&T, Primary Schools (including Complex Needs) account for the majority of outstanding cases – 273 not reviewed within 90 days. The restructure and team changes may have affected teams and those supporting the directorate to manage this aspect, directorates should seek to re-instate appropriate management, using the HSW provided report tools on OSHENS. HSW will reinstate the previous process, reminding schools of open cases, and escalating where necessary. This process was paused during COVID and had not been re-instated
- NFRS also have 63 non-reviewed safety events for this period – this data is collated manually due to the separate system and is therefore not reflected in the chart. The transition to the corporate incident reporting system (OSHENS) and alignment of NCC HSW reporting requirements will help to improve this.
- There are 198 incidents from pre 2023 that have not been reviewed, 6 in ASS, 172 in Schools, 1 in Children's Services and 19 in CES. The directorates should seek to review these incidents as a priority to ensure that any identified issues are acted upon. The reinstatement of the HSW reminder process for schools should also help reduce these numbers.

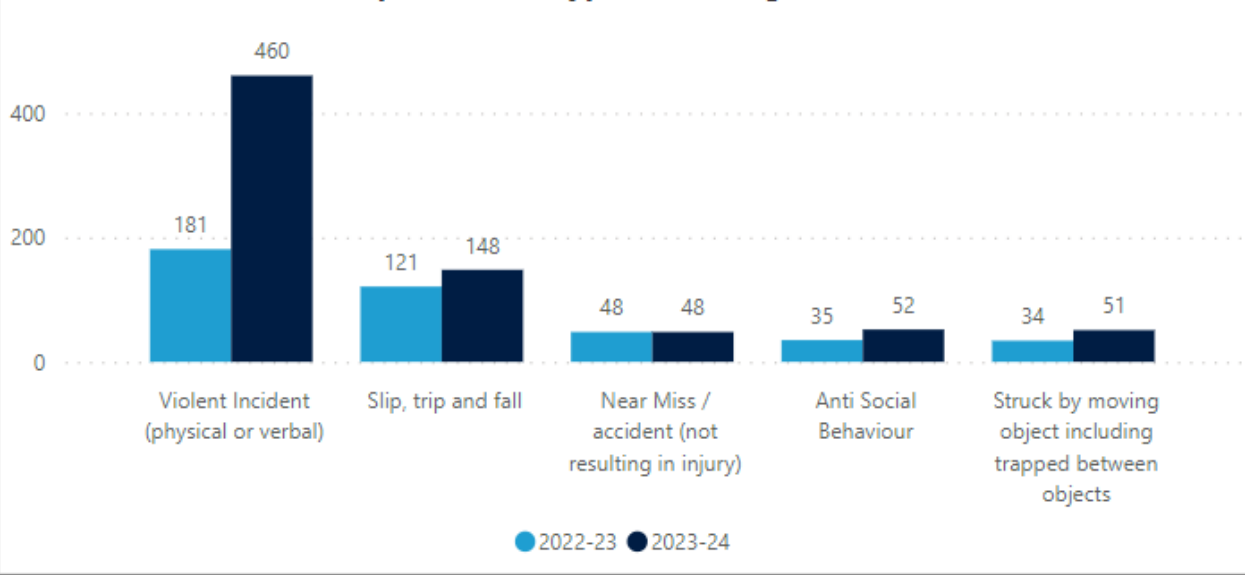
Outcome 1: A positive health, safety and well-being culture

Incidents - continued

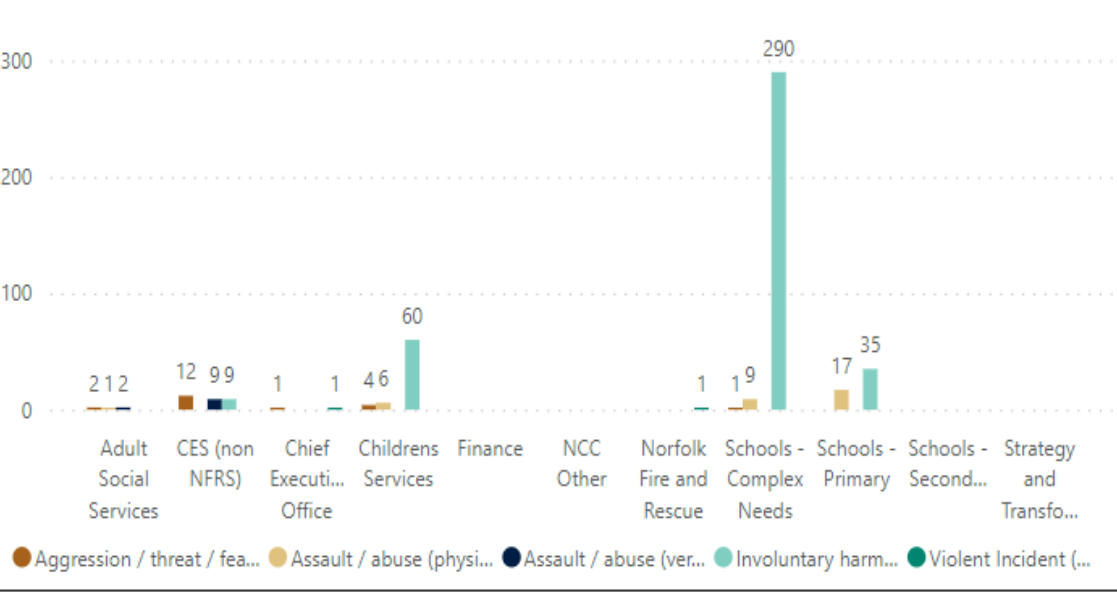
Number of Violent Incidents split by Department



Top 5 Incident Types (including Schools)



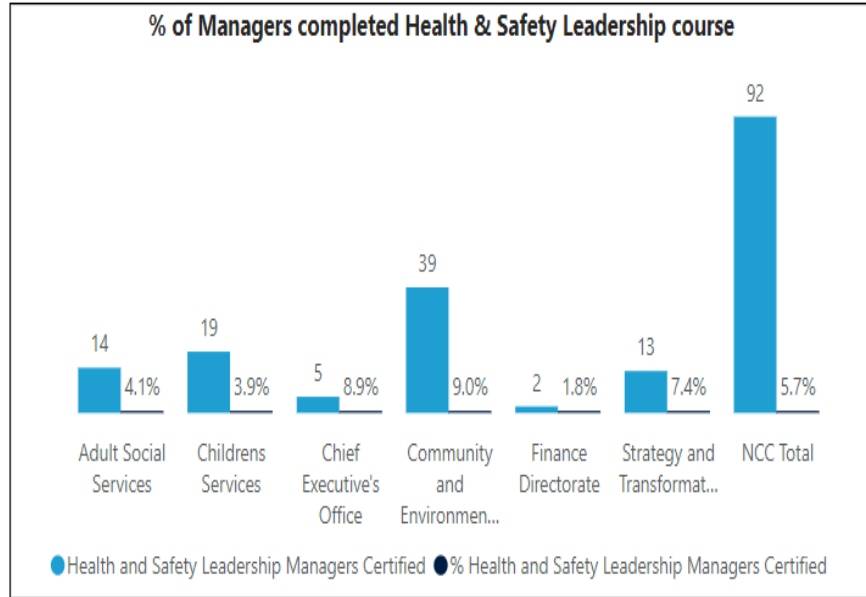
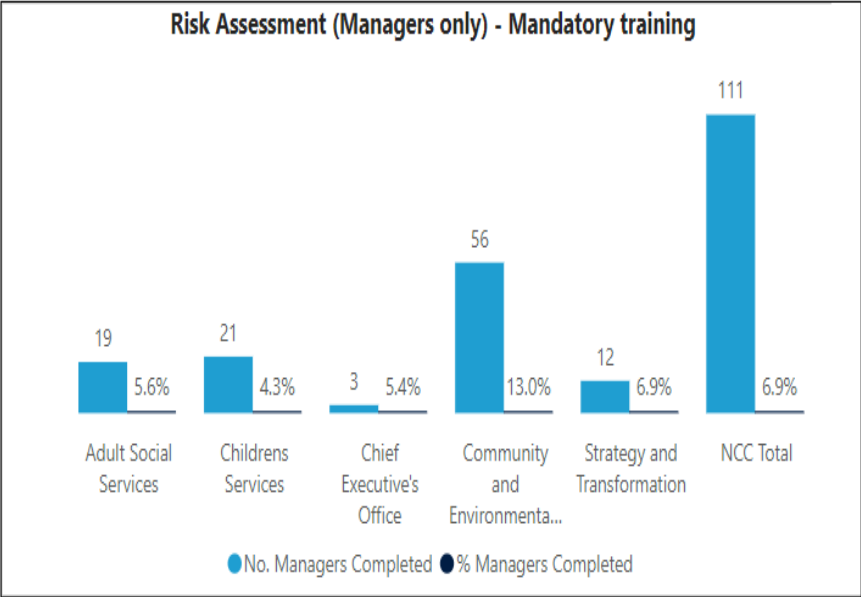
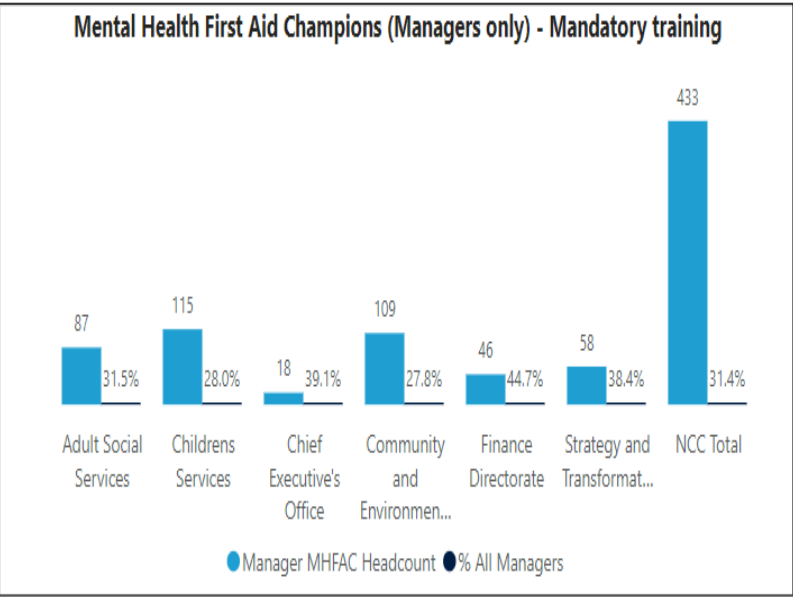
Violent Incident Type by Department (Q1&2 2023-24)



- Violence (which includes Involuntary Harm) remains the single biggest cause of incidents – accounting for 46.89% of all incidents, the number is significantly higher than this period last year which is mostly as a result of incidents in complex needs and primary schools and our associated children's services, (460 vs 181) the majority of which are recorded as involuntary harm, which reflects the complex and challenging health needs of the pupils we are supporting, and the notable changes in pupil behaviours post pandemic. The preventative actions available in these cases are limited. Working with Children's Services and Educational settings to review these continues to be a priority for the HSW team.
- HSW has continued the delivery of our personal safety training (e-learning and tutor led) to help ensure our teams have the correct tools available to them, and we are also working closely with Children's services to support the difficult cases they are managing and seek improvements where possible.
- Slips trip and falls is the second highest category the majority of which occur in Primary Schools. Within schools, the predominate causes relate to pupils playing / outdoor activities – some linked to levels of active supervision, with a small number related to raised paving / pathway maintenance and wet floors. HSW will continue to develop our overall comms plan to include schools, to further improve shared learning from these events.
- Notably, near miss reporting continues to be in the top 5, which can be taken as a positive indication in the culture of reporting. A significant proportion of these relate to equipment faults / vehicle damage in NFRS and also behaviours of service users in Libraries.
- Anti-Social behaviour incidents have increased – the majority of these are being experienced by our teams in Libraries, with a significant proportion related to teenagers, and more individuals exhibiting behaviours likened to being under the influence.
- Struck by and /or trapped between moving objects has increased – the majority of these relate to NFRS response and training activities.
- Directorates should consider these incident types and related controls via their risk assessments, and also ensure that they are used to inform directorate Risk Registers

Outcome 1: A positive health, safety and well-being culture

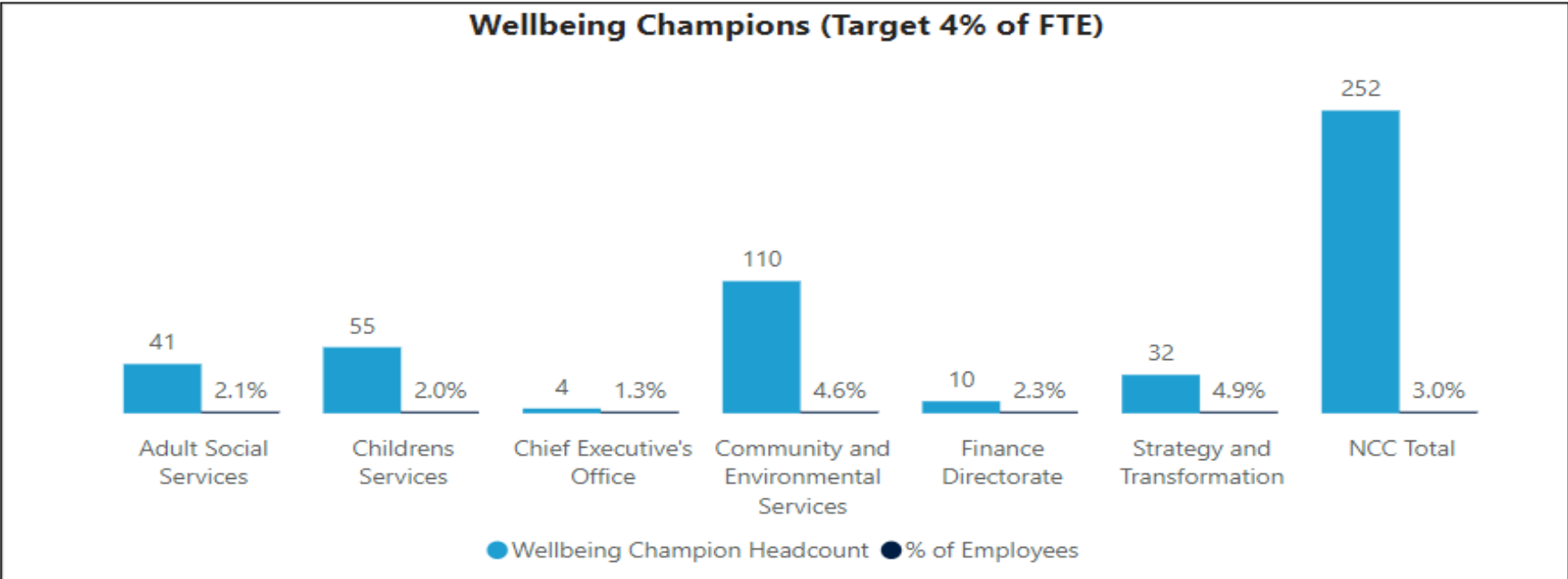
Leadership



- The percentage of managers completing Mental Health First Aid Champion (MHFAC) training shows an increase from last period 31.4% versus 19.9% - this increase is across all directorates, except for S&T (38.4% versus 44.2%). It is likely that all directorates will have been affected by the restructures implemented since last year and may explain the drop in S&T. Although there is some way to go before we achieve the target of all managers completing the training, it is clear that good progress is being made. The HSW team have also developed the virtual delivery, via teams, of the MHFAC course, which is the same content but split into 2 half day virtual sessions via teams, as opposed to 1 day in person, this will enable and encourage more people to access the training provision.
- It is also noted there has been an increase in overall persons receiving the MHFAC training in comparison to last year (789 v 521) whilst positive overall, it does indicate that persons other than identified managers (433) - the core target, are attending this training.
- Due to developments in reporting from myOracle learn (and imported data from learning hub) we can report on additional HSW mandatory courses, Risk Assessment and Health and Safety Leadership. These two courses are core learning to enable our managers to correctly manage health, safety and well-being within their respective teams. This data was not available in the same period last year, so the comparison for Risk Assessment training has been made with the end of year reported data, whereas the ability to report on Health and Safety Leadership has been enabled since the annual report .
- Currently 6.9% (vs 1.7%) of NCC managers have attended the Risk Assessment course, an increase in numbers from 24 to 111 - this is a course that is identified as mandatory for managers and those involved in producing Risk Assessments (data on others attending this course is provided later).
- Health and Safety Leadership training for NCC overall is currently at 5.7% (92 actual) - this is a mandated course for all managers, but this is the first time this data has been reported.
- It should be noted that additional requests for training have been supported by HSW and these are reflected in CES (inc NFRS), Adults and Childrens Services.
- HSW are now able to provide manager headcount for each directorate to further aid improvements in training compliance reporting.
- Norfolk Audit Service audited DSE and Driving for work risk management practice during 2022-23. This identified a number of actions required of both HSW and service departments. HSW has revised the guidance in both of these areas in response to audit findings. HSW is also working with IMT and the myOracle team to seek to provide an electronic risk assessment process, and recording process, to improve employee experience and support compliance. Directorates are reminded to ensure that they have adequate systems in place to ensure the assessments, checks and records are being maintained and recorded locally.
- With computer use a significant feature of many employees working lives, it is important that all relevant employees undertake the DSE e-learning and DSE assessment and that managers are aware of their responsibilities with regard to this process, and ensure that the training, assessment and recording of these processes is maintained locally until the NCC project team have developed an 'in system' myOracle solution.

Outcome 1: A positive health, safety and well-being culture

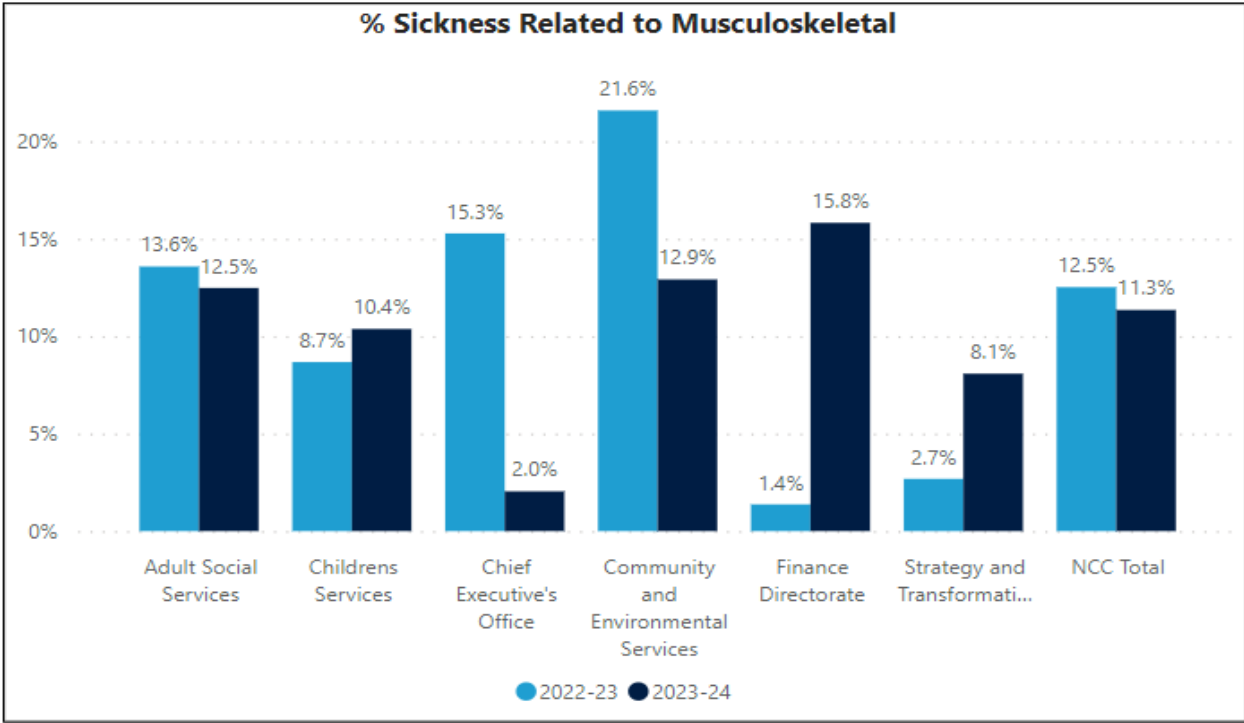
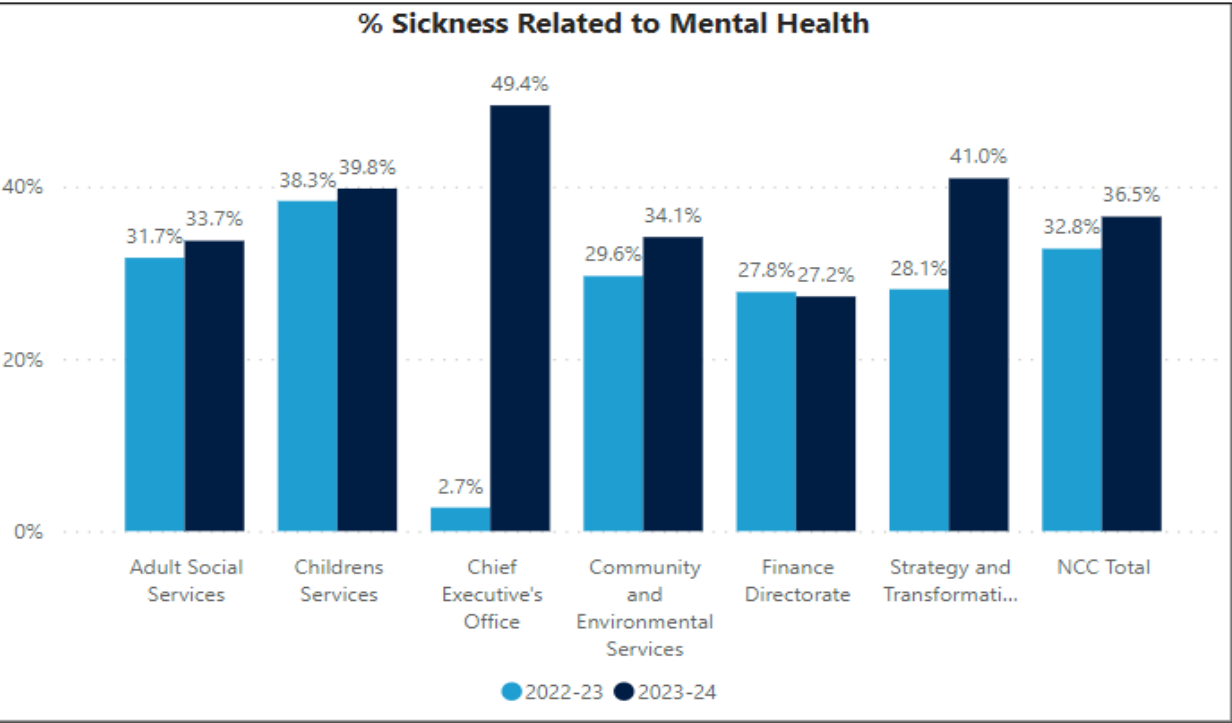
Employee Involvement



- Well-being champions are employees who have voluntarily agreed to champion and support our well-being programme. They act as a focal point for well-being communications and signpost support to their respective teams. The more well-being champions there are in the organisation the more effective communication and implementation of our well-being provision is.
- Well-being champions have access to a TEAMS channel where information, guidance, webinars and ideas are shared, in addition to the CPD sessions identified above. The reference material has been re-organised in this period to further aid the Wellbeing Champions.
- The number of well-being champions across NCC is 3.0% (versus 2.1% last year) currently which remains below the target of 4%. The number of well-being champions in NFRS has more than doubled (9.1% of FTE), due to an increased focus on the well being provision within NFRS - this positively effects the CES directorate score, whilst 4 teams in CES remain broadly static and below the 4% target figure. Children's and S&T have also increased numbers of those acting as Well-being Champions, but possibly linked to the restructure / team changes, it has not materially affected the % of employee figure.
- Increasing the number of Well-being Champions should be a focus point for all services. To put employees forward to act as Well-being Champions, please email: healthandsafety@norfolk.gov.uk
- To continue to support WB Champions their role description has been refreshed and the HSW team are now delivering quarterly Well-being Induction sessions for all our WB Champions (whether they are new or need clarity on the role, sources of support, etc).

Outcome 2: The standard of HSW management ensures employees are at work, well and productive

Risk Management (1)



It is worth noting that the HR Vital signs are reported on a 12 monthly rolling basis (seeking to indicate the impact of absence across the organisation), whereas the HSW report compares period data from this year, to the same period last year. The figures cited below relate to the HR Vital sign data at the end of Q2 2022, and Q2 2023.

- The overall percentage of time (in this period) lost to all absences (Derived from HR Vital Signs) has remained at 2.9%, the same as last year (mid-year position), across NCC – indicating a stable position, below the KPI of 3.5%.
- The percentage of time (in this period) lost due to mental health absence (Derived from HR Vital Signs) has marginally increased from the 2022 mid-year position (0.83%) to 0.94% 2023 mid-year position. This increased figure, remains below the KPI of 1.2%.

The graphs above, based on a comparison of data from Q1-Q2 2022, and 2023, illustrate how much Mental health is as a % of all sickness absence, and how much Musculoskeletal is as a % of all sickness absence.

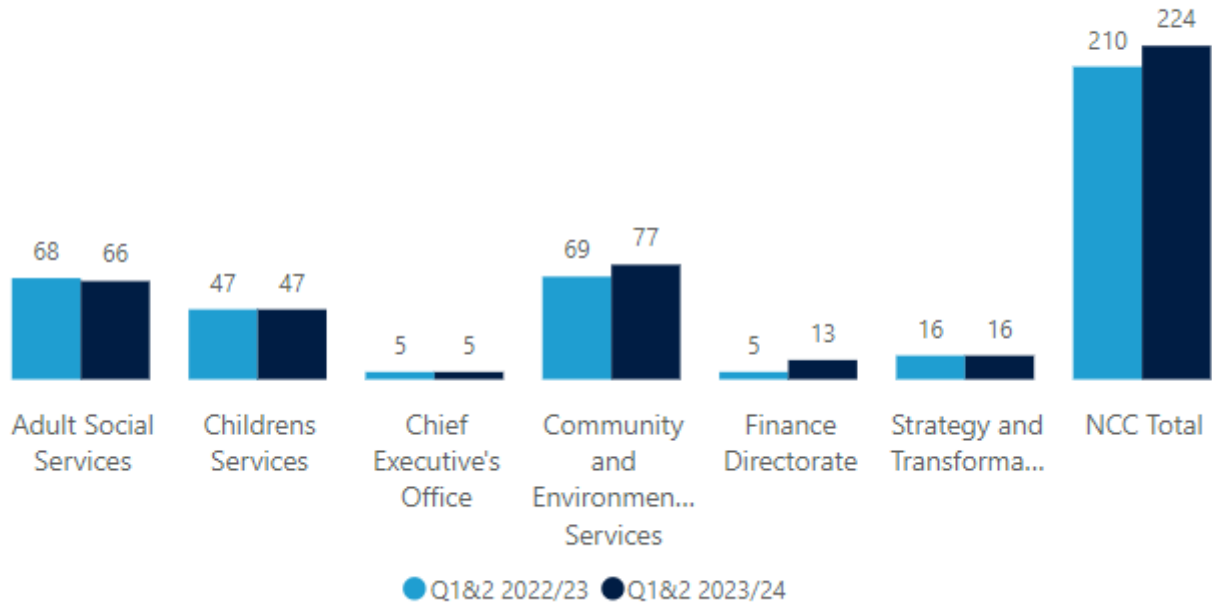
- Mental Health absence has increased in this period compared to the previous period equating to 36.5% of absences versus 32.8%, aligning with the Vital sign data.
- Musculoskeletal absence as a % of all absence has dropped compared to last period (11.3% this period versus 12.5% last period)

HR will review the employee survey results to better understand potential causes and these results.

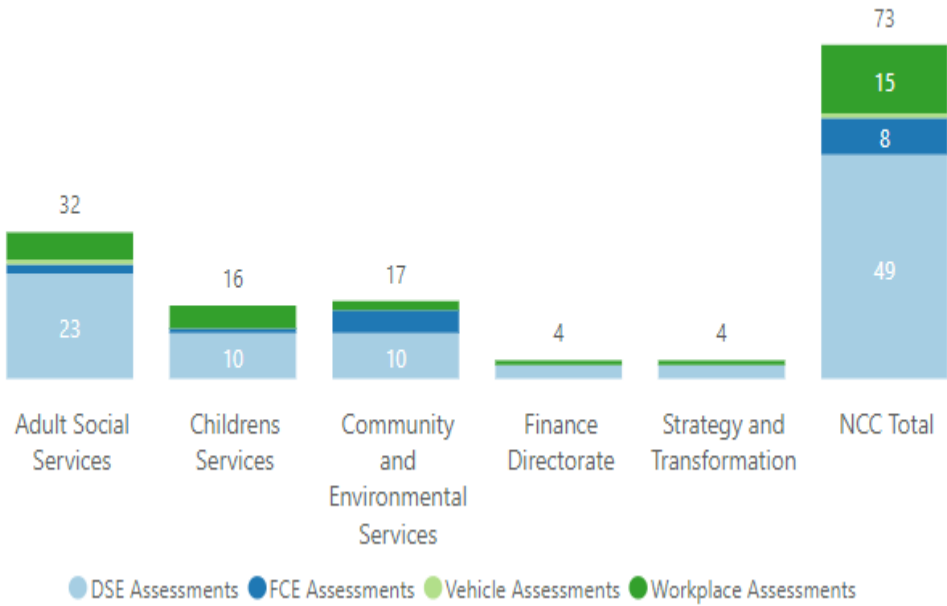
Outcome 2: The standard of HSW management ensures employees are at work, well and productive

Risk Management (2)

MIRS Referrals - Treatments



MIRS Referrals - Assessments (April - September 2023/24)



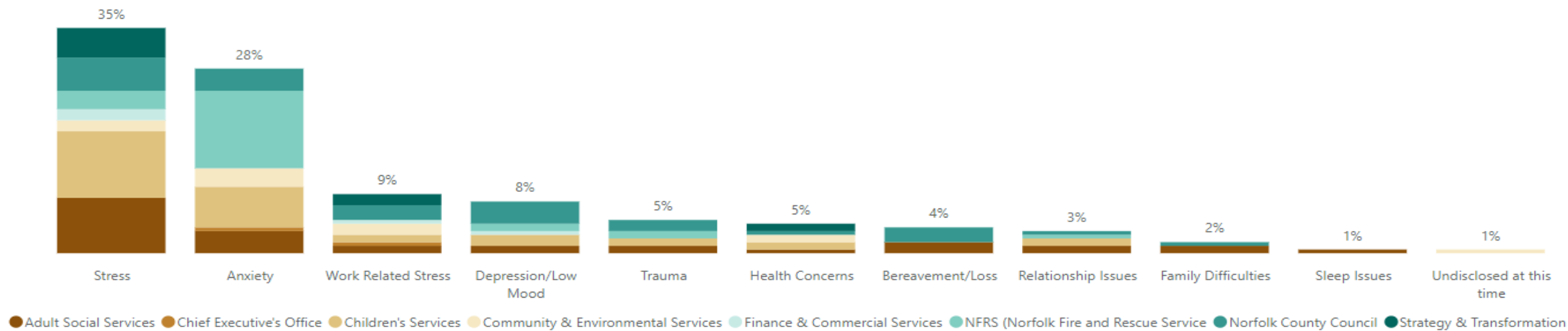
Directorate	% MIRS at Work Referrals
Adult Social Services	89.4%
Childrens Services	93.5%
Chief Executive's Office	100.0%
Community and Environmental Services	77.8%
Finance Directorate	92.3%
Strategy and Transformation	100.0%
NCC Total	87.6%

- The Musculoskeletal Injury Rehabilitation Scheme (MIRS) continues to make a positive impact on colleagues being at work and well, with treatment making a difference and reducing the number of days absence. In this period, 218 individuals have received treatment which is estimated to have prevented 1943 days of absence – equating to an estimate of £165,155 based on an average day's salary. This shows a slight increase in relation to absence in 2022/23 mid-year of 1915 days.
- Overall, the % of MIRS referrals whilst at work is 87.6% (marginal increase vs last year 85%), versus target of 90%. CES and Finance showing decreases in early referral compared to the previous period.
- It remains important that employees are encouraged, by their managers and peers, to use the scheme early, to help keep them well and at work, maximising the impact of the service
- Where employees and managers require expert intervention/assessment due to complex health needs, underlying or early indication of musculoskeletal issues, a referral should be made to the MIRS service for an additional supporting assessment. In total 73 specialist assessments were undertaken via our MIRS provider

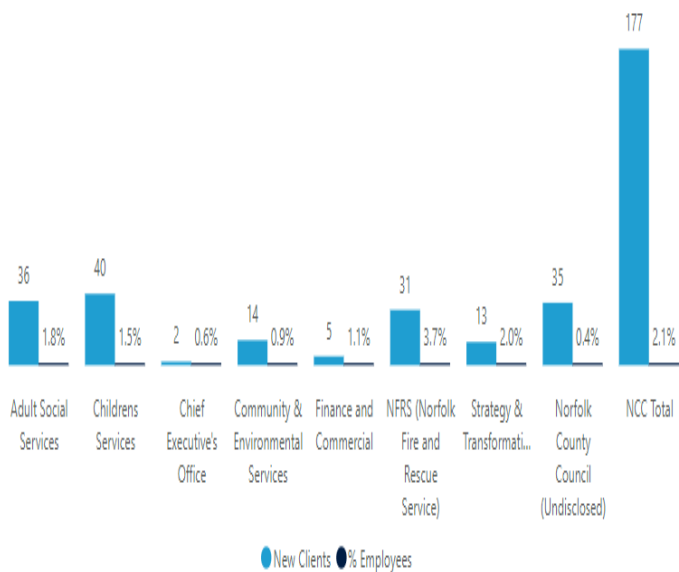
Outcome 2: The standard of HSW management ensures employees are at work, well and productive

Risk Management (3)

Norfolk Support Line - % Split by Presenting Issues Q1&2 2023-24



Norfolk Support Line Users Q1&2 2023-24



- NSL use (access to therapy) continues to remain consistent with end of year figures at 2.1% (177 new clients in period) across NCC overall. NSL counselling report stress and anxiety as the highest presenting issues at 35% and 28% respectively, with work related stress cited third at 9%, remaining below the target of $\leq 25\%$, and has decreased since the same period last year (19%).
- NFRS is markedly different in top 3 presenting issues (reflecting nature of service) – 12% cite Anxiety, 2.84% cite Stress, and at 1.14% trauma and depression are sharing third.
- It is important to note that the group identified as Norfolk County Council are those individuals who have chosen not to identify what team they work for, and as such these could be a significant part of any one of the directorates.
- Data from those receiving structured support from NSL, indicates that 90.91% have an improved outcome measure, from the intervention provided by the service. (The outcome measure is a clinical scoring mechanism used to assess the impact of an intervention.)
- NSL also provide critical incident support: Support for a team when they are affected by a significant incident or an accumulation of incidents and can be team and/or individual support, including virtual or face to face delivery. (Managers can request this service by contacting NSL directly - 0800 169 7676). Reasons for using the service can range from serious health diagnoses or death of a colleague to work related issues in high pressure or difficult roles.
- Use of this service in this period is 6 critical incident support sessions – 3 of these were in relation to support in Children's home, and 3 in relation to a bereavement in a team.
- As part of the Well-being Strategy, HSW is currently reviewing, and redefining the well-being model of support – including support and advice, our myNet pages, training material and additional support packages, to seek to improve the signposting of employees to the correct support service. Recent developments have included manager referral to NSL to support management of cases, face to face drop in sessions (County Hall and Kings Lynn Fire Station) and psychological assessment / support packages. HSW is also seeking to develop a relationship support service. These changes will be communicated to NCC as they are formally implemented.
- HSW will be introducing the Health and Safety Executive Stress Indicator Tool (SIT), starting a phased approach in Q1 next year. This tool will be used pro-actively across NCC, to build a consistent data set, benchmark NCC, to better inform our support activities and aid directorates' to understand presenting issues. In support of this HSW are developing related manager tools / guidance. HSW will communicate this revised provision to NCC once the process has been finalised.

Outcome 2: The standard of HSW management ensures employees are at work, well and productive

Risk Management – Impact of services (1)

- Feedback for Mental Health First Aid Champion Training

"The trainers were really good and sensitive to dealing with some difficult topics and things which were shared in the group. I found it very helpful to think about ways to identify and approach people who may be having difficulties and I would feel more confident being able to signpost them and get help."

"Really interesting and informative course. Good mix of presentations and exercises. A friendly and safe space to ask questions, share experiences etc"

"This was an excellent course, and I gained a really good understanding of how to support colleagues. As head of service, this has given me a really good overview of what I need to ensure we have in place in the service and the training that managers need so that they support their teams effectively"

"It was a really good experience to not only understand how I can support staff I manage and colleagues but also taking a step back and looking at my own mental wellbeing in the workplace and how I can better support myself."

"The training was very well organised and delivered. Found this a valuable session to reflect on my own knowledge and personal development in both personal and professional life. Already recommended to colleagues to upskill or refresh their knowledge as it is so important to ensure we all create awareness about Mental Health"

"I found the course very informative and now have a much better understanding of mental health and why it is important to talk about issues and how to approach people who are experiencing difficult situations"

Outcome 2: The standard of HSW management ensures employees are at work, well and productive

Risk Management – Impact of services (2)

- H&S team has undertaken in excess of 20 site monitoring activities including on-site support and response to incidents both for NCC and our traded partners during this period. This has continued to inform our premise risk profile (which informs frequency of visits and overall H&S management) and identify areas for improvement. It has also identified areas of focus for HSW and resulted in improvements to our compliance codes and training offer and areas for focussed intervention – for example support to Children's residential service, Children's (schools) risk rating, Adults, Libraries (inc. lone working controls / devices), and NFRS.
- HSW has been supporting NFRS extensively, in the continued transition and related planning to full NCC HSW support, policy review, training development and review, and related well-being provision / service. The latter, has provided valuable insight to the service and additional specific improvements related to our Well-Being provision, to seek to further improve the NCC overall offer. It has involved extensive liaison with the service and Public Health, along with our existing service providers.

Feedback – H&S Training

The revised H&S training provision, and supporting updated compliance codes has been received positively by those attending the sessions – sample of feedback:

"All Aspects of the course were relevant to my role"

"I think it was great – I will definitely work more on the pause and active listening..."

"Importance of risk assessment and being inquisitive, asking senior managers to be informed and see important docs"

"The whole course was very good and worth doing, highly recommend it to my colleagues"

"the course helped me understand positive culture around H&S and seeing well-being as part of core health and safety.."

"The course bought realisation that, in various aspects, personal safety is a procedure that needs our attention every time we step out of the door to work, for ourselves, the service users and colleagues"

"The extent of detail required in risk assessments was particularly impacting. Will be booking onto that course."

"The videos which showed real life situations - Videos you made were very good and engaging thank you - Whitlingham example"

"Re-looking at risk assessments and improve communication to staff – find it helpful to hear in training from other teams and organisations"

"My opinion is the training was very useful and I've got enough information. Excellent trainer, v. Knowledgeable "

Outcome 2: The standard of HSW management ensures employees are at work, well and productive

Risk Management – Impact of services (3)

- Feedback from Musculoskeletal Service users:

"Sharon was brilliant, knowledgeable and provided easy to follow instructions for exercises and why they were important, super friendly and welcoming so you instantly feel at ease and open to the support offered"

"The team were wonderful throughout, from the initial call to the referral (very quick response) to the booking team (also very helpful when I called to rebook an appointment) to Sharon who completed my three appointments."

"It may sound a small thing, but I was nearly in tears as I feel these changes to my work environment with the equipment suggested will make an absolute massive difference to my life!!! "

"A quick referral which meant symptoms were dealt with quicker resulting in return to normality faster. Excellent and diligent physio – very lucky referral. Availability of provider you use, to see me on weekends was a bonus!"

"The physiotherapist was very knowledgeable, gave me the exact point of where to exercise the muscle, to help alleviate the pain and build strength. Fantastic customer service, polite and respectful."

Outcome 2: The standard of HSW management ensures employees are at work, well and productive

Risk Management – Impact of services (4)

- Feedback from Norfolk Support Line (NSL) users:

"The counsellor I had, she was amazing, she explained everything in a way that was so easy to understand, she was kind, considerate, and most of all amazing"

"The counsellor helped me to be able to see the wood from the trees so I could start to focus on helping myself to manage all the difficulties I have been facing"

"The range of strategies offered were immensely beneficial. The counsellor listened effectively, had a range of bespoke resources to offer and was able to break down some complex historic issues into more comprehensible chunks that we could tackle one by one "

"My counsellor helped me to realise my self worth and how to recognise the times that I was most vulnerable"

"The techniques and advice given by the counsellor for managing stress and anxiety were very helpful. The counsellor explained and went through them all well and the times that were best to use them"

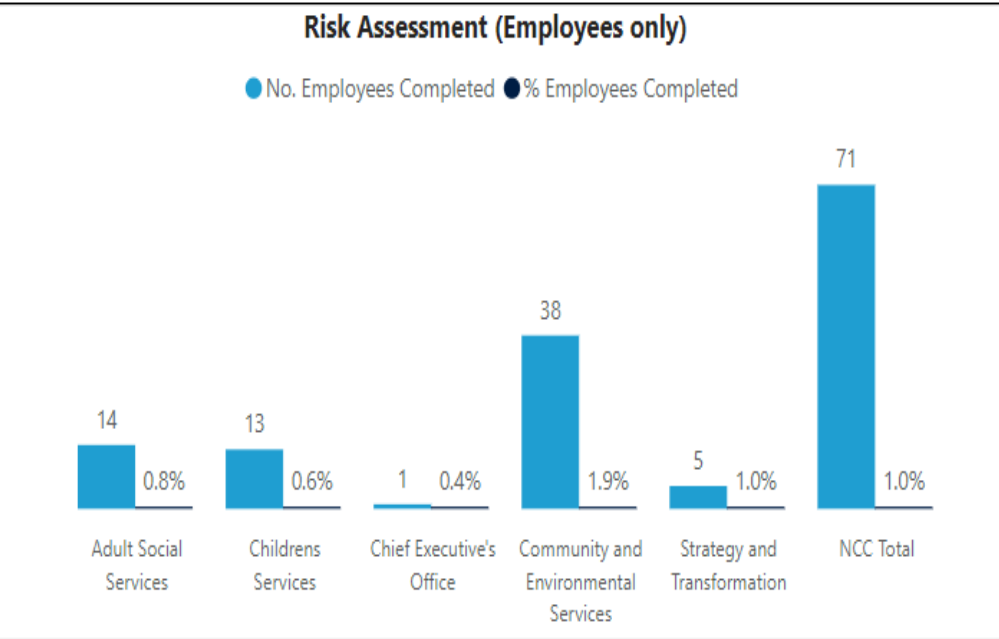
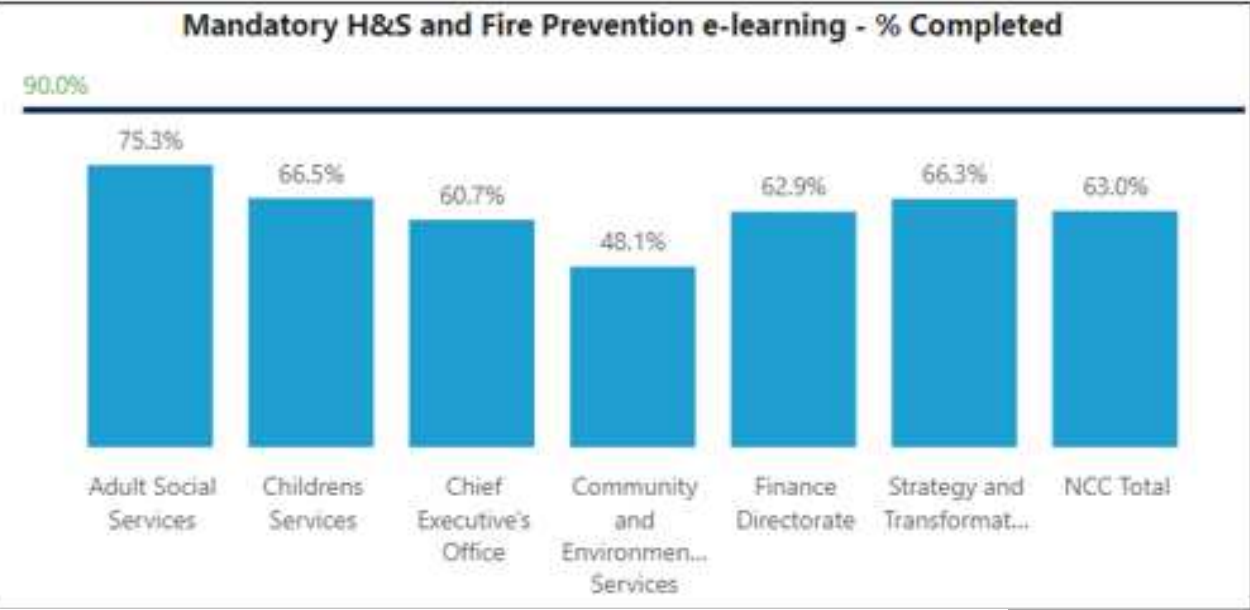
"Practical techniques to help with day-to-day living. I found the counsellor to be really kind and encouraging as well"

"My therapist was really friendly and supportive and came up with lots of suggestions for coping strategies. I felt I was really listened too"

"I've found the whole process extremely helpful. It's really helped me to grow my confidence again and adjust to life post diagnosis. It's really helped talking to someone who is not family or friends so I did not need to worry about upsetting them"

Outcome 2: The standard of HSW management ensures employees are at work, well and productive

Employee competency



- During the transition to myOracle, reporting on mandatory training was unavailable, and automatic reminders for learners are not yet fully in place. This still has an impact on compliance. The development of this reporting and reminders is part of the core work for the L&D team, and is improving, this needs to be considered in relation to the commentary below.
- Health, Safety and Fire prevention e-learning relates to all employees and has been a longstanding mandatory course. It can be seen that no directorates are currently achieving the 90% target for completion of this course. There has been a small increase from end of year position 63% vs 61.3%.
- Evacuation Marshall is mandated training that applies to all those that work / visit our hub sites –reporting indicates overall compliance within NCC, at 37.4% of people whose work base is a hub. This training is critical to ensure adequate arrangements are in place at our hub sites.
- Understanding Mental Health in the Workplace is also mandatory across NCC, and currently NCC overall are achieving 35.1%
- Please note - e-learning modules take circa 20 minutes to complete.
- The mandatory training policy (P505) identifies core mandatory training for all employees. Not all of these will be required by everyone, as it depends on their role, therefore targets are not set or monitored against all other courses.
- Note – these figures only include permanent NCC employees and do not include temporary workers, additional core mandatory courses will be added to the reports, as developments are made in the requisite systems. This data also includes historical data from learning Hub

Outcome 2: The standard of HSW management ensures employees are at work, well and productive

Employee Competency - continued

Health, Safety and Well-Being Training :

To date this period, 59 sessions (1060 available spaces) of our tutor-led training have been delivered to 642 attendees covering:-

Safe Management of Premises Fire, Safe Management of Premises General, Risk Assessment - essential risk management, Safe Management of Premises Asbestos, Health and Safety Leadership, Personal Safety, Mental Health First Aid Champion.

We had 159 non attendees during this period, meaning these spaces could not be re-allocated.

- HSW training provision meets the anticipated demand for NCC and, in line with the change of focus in HSW to support more training, has provided 59 tutor led sessions with the opportunity for 1060 attendees during this period – an increase on the same period last year of almost 50%. 75% of this availability has been booked.
- HSW are now collating data regarding those who have booked a space but cancel late – of those booked for our training courses in this period (801) , 20% (159) did not attend meaning these spaces could not be re-allocated to others.
- We would ask NCC to ensure that this provision is utilised fully by managers, managers prioritise attendance, and cancel in a timely way to enable places to be reallocated.
- During this period HSW have reviewed, updated and delivered additional training sessions for NFRS (MHFAc, Risk Assessment and Health and Safety Leadership), including out of hours, in person – to support the transition to NCC HSW systems, additional sessions are also being planned to support Childrens Services in Q3 2023.
- The HSW team consistently review the content of our training courses based on findings during our interactions, customer feedback and changes to processes – to ensure they remain relevant and fit for purpose.
- We have updated and issued eLearning training, including; Infection control, Personal Emergency Evacuation Plans, Evacuation with Dignity, and Driving safely for work.

Outcome 3: HSW have a successful, strategic approach to trading and cost recovery

**Traded income
(Actuals):**
£145,898
(Mid 23-24)
vs
£133,241
(Mid 22-23)

Education sector:

- 14 Trusts (equivalent to 150 individual academies)
- 28 Additional Academies
- 16 federations
- 145 schools

Purchase at least 1 or more HSW service

Traded services include:

- Norfolk Support Line
- Musculoskeletal Injury Rehabilitation Service
- Health and Safety Advice Service
- High School Specialist Curriculum Advice Service
- Health and Safety Compliance Inspections
- Radiological Protection Monitoring Service
- Pool Inspections
- Ad-Hoc support – e.g. Investigations / Advice

- There was an overall increase in traded income this period compared to the previous period
- A number of Trusts are indicating a possible move to their own provision (HSW), some due to merging, most citing budget constraints and a small number (of larger trusts) indicating additional internal resourcing and therefore a reduction of support required. (e.g., no longer requiring monitoring inspections and reductions to policy and advice service.)
- The continued budgetary constraints within our traded partners and the reinvigorated academisation policy from central government may impact on future income, but this is being monitored and HSW will continue to develop our traded services, provide a professional service, and maintain contact with our customers. This is a risk that HSW must monitor.
- This income offsets the costs of service delivery to external clients and supports a resilient service to NCC. We continue to review our offer to ensure it is competitive and relevant.

Appendix 1 – The performance measures explained

Outcome 1: NCC has a positive health, safety and well-being culture:

The measures are designed to inform NCC whether accountability for health, safety and well-being is being taken at the right levels throughout the organisation and if there is good engagement with the organisation's employees and their representatives in health, safety and well-being matters.

The role of leaders and managers in health, safety and well-being matters is pivotal to ensuring systems and processes are in place, employees understand and feel that their health, safety and well-being is important and in employee compliance with those systems and processes.

Involving employees in health, safety and well-being matters is important to ensure they take ownership of their own and others health, safety and well-being. Workplaces that have a healthy, proactive relationship with unions are shown to have a lower incident rate, employees are more confident to raise concerns and risks are better controlled.

Whilst a lagging indicator, the measurement of the number, type and severity of incidents occurring can give an indication of how well risks are being managed and if learning is taking place, which is indicative of a positive culture.

The measures for outcome 1 therefore focus on incidents, leadership and employee involvement.

Appendix 1 – The performance measures explained - continued

Outcome 2: The standard of HSW management ensures employees are at work, well and productive

The measures provided are designed to give an indication of how well NCC is managing its HSW risks. The measures focus on 3 key areas: risk management, well-being services utilisation and employee competency.

The management of risks can be measured in a number of ways including by outcomes such as work related ill health absence and proactive monitoring undertaken by the professional HSW team

Wellbeing services are designed to be preventative therefore their timely utilisation can support the management of wellbeing risks

When employees are competent in their role they will be better equipped to identify and manage risks.

Outcome 3: HSW have a successful, strategic approach to trading and cost recovery.

The aim of the HSW traded service is to offer complimentary services to those provided to internal customers on a traded basis. The service is targeted at areas that support NCCs wider responsibilities such as non-local authority maintained schools. Through growing its traded services, the HSW service has retained resilience in service provision to all its customers, internal and external. The measures developed to gauge our success relate to these aims.

Reportable incidents (RIDDORs)

Employers are required to report certain serious workplace accidents, occupational diseases and dangerous occurrences to the Health and Safety Executive. These are defined in law and it is an offence not to report them within the specified time period. These include:

- **Fatalities**
Accidents that result in the death of an employee or non-employee that arise from a work-related accident
- **Specified injuries to employees**
Examples of specified injuries that are reportable include: injuries requiring hospital admission for more than 24 hours, fractures, amputations, serious burns, loss of sight, significant head injuries
- **Over 7-day injuries to employees**
Work related accidents that result in an employee being unable to undertake their normal duties for more than 7 consecutive days (including weekends)
- **Occupational Diseases to employees**
Examples of occupational diseases that are reportable where diagnosed by a medical practitioner are: carpal tunnel syndrome, occupational dermatitis, severe cramp of the hand or forearm, occupational cancer, tendonitis of the hand or forearm
- **Dangerous Occurrences**
These are serious incidents that may not have caused any injury but had the potential to do so. Examples include: the accidental release of a substance that could cause harm to health such as asbestos, fire caused by electrical short circuit that results in the stoppage of the plant involved for more than 24 hours, equipment coming into contact with overhead power lines
- **Injuries to non-workers**
Where a non-employee e.g. a member of the public, a pupil or a service user, has an accident on our premises and is taken to hospital from the scene for treatment

Non- Reportable (RIDDOR) Incidents

Incidents that result in injury that are not classed as reportable. These do not include any incident that did not result in an injury, e.g. near miss incidents, damage to property or dangerous occurrences.

Musculoskeletal Injury Rehabilitation Scheme (MIRS)

MIRS is a fast-track physiotherapy treatment service that helps staff with a musculoskeletal injury (back pain, muscle strain, overuse injuries, frozen shoulder, whiplash, ligament damage, tendonitis, sciatica, etc.) in managing or reducing the impact of their injury on work. People who are referred to the service consistently report the treatment either helped them return to work earlier or prevented them taking sickness absence.

The service includes:

- An initial telephone assessment with a physiotherapist within 24 hours of being referred to establish the best course of treatment, and where required an initial treatment session is usually offered within 3 working days.
- An assessment report for the line manager outlining the problem and recommended treatment.
- A discharge report for the manager reiterating the information in the assessment report and providing an assessment of the outcome of any treatment given.
- Functional Capacity Evaluations for staff who report that their health conditions are limiting their capacity to undertake their duties.
- Workstation, workplace and vehicle assessments for staff who report that these are having an impact on their health condition.

Norfolk Support Line (NSL)

A well-established, independent, confidential and professional advice and counselling service for employees; available 24 hours per day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year, on matters such as: money management, substance misuse, legal queries, phobias, consumer advice information, caring responsibilities, trauma, stress, bereavement, domestic matters, emotional problems, anxiety/depression. They also provide support to managers on difficult conversations and team trauma support

