

Cabinet
7 November 2022
Public & Local Member Questions

	Public Question Time
6.1	<p>Question from Eleanor Laming A decision was taken in August not to re-open the Postwick Park and Ride site permanently unless the passenger numbers on other P and R services reach 75% of pre-Covid levels. NCC is subsidising the park and ride services and would need to put an additional £100,000 - £200,000 in order to fully re-open Postwick. NCC states in the decision report that this service is important part of the transport strategy. How much in total did NCC receive from the DHSC for leasing it as a Covid testing centre?</p> <p>Response from the Cabinet Member for Highways, Infrastructure and Transport The County Council did not receive any money from the DHSC for the lease for the Covid testing centre as the P&R sites are leased to the operator of the service, Konectbus. Konectbus run the service on a commercial basis and therefore used the income received towards running the overall P&R service during the pandemic.</p> <p>Supplementary question from Eleanor Laming Should this money be reinvested into the Postwick Park and Ride service?</p> <p>Response from the Cabinet Member for Highways, Infrastructure and Transport The income from the DHSC went towards the running costs of the overall P&R service and therefore helped to sustain the P&R service as a commercial venture for a longer period of time during the pandemic without the County Council having to step in and provide any financial assistance. Therefore, it has already been reinvested into the service.</p>
6.2	<p>Question from Ruby Rae Will Norfolk County Council commit to banning the use of glyphosates in its operations and on its estate and properties?</p> <p>Response from the Cabinet Member for Environment and Waste A report will be presented to elected Members in January 2023 recommending adoption of an Herbicide Policy for Norfolk County Council. It will not be recommending the banning of the use of glyphosate but identify the limits of its safe and acceptable use, including training needs and how it will be carefully monitored and reported on.</p>
6.3	<p>Question from Sarah Eglington If an Investment Zone is located in Norfolk, will Norfolk County Council confirm that they will protect the local environment and habitats for now and the future despite the easing of planning and other legislative requirements?</p> <p>Response from the Cabinet Member for Growing the Economy As we have stated previously, our <i>Better Together, for Norfolk</i> strategy affirms our ongoing commitment to growth that is sustainable and a greener future for our county. We will continue to be guided by those principles. The SoS in the Dept. for</p>

	<p>Levelling Up Homes and Communities has recently stated that the policy is being reviewed and that environmental considerations would be part of that review.</p> <p>Supplementary question from Sarah Eglington How can the development of Investment Zones be compliant with Norfolk County Council's Climate Action Plan and move towards net-zero?</p> <p>Response from the Cabinet Member for Growing the Economy If an Investment Zone is progressed for Norfolk, the next stage is more detailed business planning. We would expect this to provide more specific detail around environmental and climate impact.</p>
6.4	<p>Question from David Evans Kent County Council is using long term planning to protect and recover threatened species through habitat maintenance, restoration and creation. Producing a nature and ecosystem restoration plan to restore habitats, species, and ecosystem quality and function. What actions are Norfolk County Council taking to protect and restore biodiversity within the county?</p> <p>Response from the Cabinet Member for Environment and Waste Norfolk County Council undertakes similar work to Kent County Council through its Environment Service which includes a Protected Landscapes Team and a Specialist Advice Team who are both involved with long term planning to protect and recover threatened species and habitats. Additionally, under new powers recently introduced under the Environment Act, Norfolk County Council is identified as the Responsible Authority for producing a Local Nature Recovery Strategy for Norfolk. It is expected that this strategy will be consulted on next year and be agreed on by November 2023.</p>
6.5	<p>Question from Stuart Thompson What progress has been made developing Norfolk County Council's Climate Action Plan (CAP) - when will this be published?</p> <p>Response from the Cabinet Member for Environment and Waste Norfolk County Council is making good progress on its strategic goal of achieving Net Zero across its own estates by 2030 and estate emission have fallen by almost half since 2016/17. Details of progress can be found on the Council's website, including the information and key performance indicators set out in our digital dashboard. As also laid out in the Council's Environmental Policy, NCC is in the process of setting out its activities and programmes in terms of climate action plans. This work is being undertaken with partners including the Integrated Care System (ICS) and the Norfolk Climate Change Partnership (NCCP). The ICS has recently completed its green plan. A number of facilitated workshops are planned over the coming months to support this partnership work. This is a complex undertaking for all involved, and is being informed by Government policy and priorities. As such, no deadline has yet been agreed for the completion of this important work.</p> <p>Once completed, this work will be considered through the Council's committee process and agreed by Cabinet.</p> <p>Supplementary Question from Stuart Thompson Before publication will there be a consultation on the CAP?</p>

	<p>Response from the Cabinet Member for Environment and Waste See response above</p>
6.6	<p>Question from Christine Wilson On Norfolk CC's website it states "We have a statutory obligation under Environment Act 1995, Part IV, Section 80; Environmental Protection Act 1990 Section 7; Environment Act 1995, Part 4; Air Quality Standards Regulations 2010 to prevent the pollution from emissions to air, land or water. As the Highway Authority we are obliged to find solutions to air quality issues through the AQMA process where pollution comes from transport sources". - What actions are you taking to satisfy these obligations?</p> <p>Response from the Cabinet Member for Environment and Waste The County Council was successful in securing funding from central government from the Zero Emission Bus Regional Area (ZEBRA) Fund for 15 zero emission electric buses that will be operated by First Bus through the AQMA in Norwich by March 2024 and replace 15 diesel powered buses. We are also in discussions with bus operators about options to increase the number of zero emission buses and our recently approved Bus Service Improvement Plan for Norfolk sets out our aspirations to reduce tailpipe emissions from diesel buses by introducing more modern buses and retrofitting older buses where appropriate and affordable and therefore to begin to decarbonise the bus fleet.</p> <p>Where Air Quality Action Plans (AQAPs) have been put in place by District Councils in response to an AQMA in their area, we work with the relevant District Council on delivery of initiatives aimed at tackling air quality issues.</p> <p>We are developing Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans (LCWIPs) across Norfolk that will facilitate investment in infrastructure and behaviour change activities that will encourage more people to travel via sustainable and active modes instead of private car.</p>
6.7	<p>Question from Sarah Burston Norfolk County Council invests approximately £118 million in fossil fuels through their pension fund. When will the Council take the popular, moral and financially prudent decision to fully divest pension investments out of fossil fuels?</p> <p>Response from the Cabinet Member for Finance Norfolk County Council ensures that the governance of the Norfolk Pension Fund on behalf of the participating employers is kept separate from the administrative business of the Council by delegating responsibility for Pension matters to the Pensions Committee.</p> <p>The Pension Committee is responsible for setting the Fund's investment strategy. The Norfolk Pension Fund does not have a policy of excluding any industry sector from its investment portfolios, which are held to secure the pension promises made to nearly 100,000 pension scheme members, who are current or former employees of 400+ local employers.</p> <p>The Pension Fund is currently valued at around £4.7 billion and invests its diversified portfolio globally across a range of assets classes and industry sectors. While the</p>

Fund does not recognise the value quoted by the questioner, at any given time the portfolio may include exposure to companies involved in fossil fuel production and exploration.

The Fund believes in responsible investment. Responsible investment is an approach to investing that aims to incorporate environmental, social and governance (ESG) factors into investment decisions, to better manage risk and generate the sustainable, long-term returns required to pay pensions. Responsible investment does not require ruling out investment in any sector or company but should frame the approach to making the decision to own and manage ownership of any specific assets

The Pensions Committee considers a detailed climate risk analysis of its public equity holdings as part of its overall investment review every six months and a summary is published on the Norfolk Pension Fund's website. This considers the entirety of the holdings rather than simply fossil fuel producers. For example, the highest carbon emitters in a portfolio may be utility, cement production or shipping companies. These companies themselves may be involved in or engaged in activities that support the energy transition.

Currently the Fund's public equity portfolio has a Weighted Average Carbon Intensity 47% lower and carbon emissions that are 31% lower than the benchmark global equity index. The Fund's portfolio holding of companies with links to fossil fuel production is also 38% lower than the benchmark.

Supplementary question from Sarah Burston

What, if any, investment has Norfolk County Council made in renewable energy projects?

Response from the Cabinet Member for Finance

Thank you for your question. Norfolk County Council has invested both directly and indirectly in a range of renewable energy projects. Examples include:

- A number of County Council sites already have renewable technology on site, such as Scottow Enterprise Park which hosts a significant solar park providing green energy to the grid.
- As part of the work to 'decarbonise' the County Council property estate, we are further exploring options for micro-generation, alongside addressing building fabric and performance.
- The electricity used across our estate is from a green tariff, supporting the wider renewable energy industry.
- The County Council's wholly owned company, Norse, owns and operates solar installations around the country, ranging from a significant quantity of domestic installations to a number of larger >50kW solar plants. These plants in total generate over 8,000 MWh/year and provide green electricity for third party buildings and sites. A significant quantity of generated electricity from these sites is exported back into the grid. [Note these are 2020-21 figures]
- "LCIF2 Limited" is a joint venture between the County Council and the University of East Anglia, investing in Green House Gas reducing technologies, including but not limited to renewable energy. The programme has invested approximately

	<p>£5m to date and has attracted £35m in private sector match and leverage to the East of England.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> While the County Council does not directly control investment decisions, the Norfolk Pension Fund holds a portfolio of infrastructure assets located in the UK and overseas. At the 30 September 2022 these assets including timberland were valued at £508 million. These diversified real asset portfolios include investment in grid infrastructure and renewable power generation including wind, solar and hydroelectric power.
6.8	<p>Question from Judith Lubbock</p> <p>Now that the bus priority measures and the refurbishment of St Stephens has been completed please will the Cabinet Member reveal how the County Council will assess whether the works costing £6.1m have been value for money in terms of increasing the number of passengers using public transport?</p> <p>The length of time the works have taken, the disruption to existing bus passengers and the loss of revenue to the shops and businesses on St Stephens all need to be included in the assessment.</p> <p>Response from the Cabinet Member for Highways, Infrastructure and Transport</p> <p>A comprehensive programme of monitoring and evaluation is being undertaken as part of the delivery of the Transforming Cities Fund, which has funded the delivery of the St Stephens Street works and other bus priority and sustainable transport works in Norwich. This is being led by an external agency appointed by central government and the County Council is participating fully in this. This evaluation programme will consider a wide range of impacts, including bus patronage. We will be happy to discuss with the evaluation lead how impacts on businesses and existing passengers can be appropriately assessed.</p> <p>Supplementary question from Judith Lubbock</p> <p>Can the Cabinet Member give reassurance that the bus operators will be held to account to improve the reliability of services if not also the frequency of services each time tax payers money is devoted to roadworks to improve bus usage?</p> <p>Response from the Cabinet Member for Highways, Infrastructure and Transport</p> <p>We now have an Enhanced Partnership between the County Council and bus operators which places commitments on both sides to improve public transport in Norfolk. In addition, the County Council was one of a small number of authorities who successfully bid for and were awarded Bus Service Improvement Plan funding from government. This £50m funding will further improve bus services in Norfolk and the Enhanced Partnership Management Board will be responsible for ensuring that bus operator commitments are carried out.</p>
6.9	<p>Question from Willem Buttinger</p> <p>Does Norfolk County Council accept The Climate Change Committee's* (CCC) advice (report Feb 2022) that we in the UK should plan for 4C of global warming by 2100?</p> <p><i>*The CCC is an independent statutory body established under the Climate Change Act 2008. Their purpose is to advise the UK and developed governments, inter alia,</i></p>

	<p><i>on adapting to the impacts of climate change</i></p> <p>Response from the Cabinet Member for Environment and Waste In the delivery of its Environmental Policy and climate change programmes, Norfolk County Council works with key authorities and organisations involved with climate change policy and environmental modelling, including national Government agencies and the Tyndall Centre, UEA.</p> <p>NCC fully appreciates the impact of climate change including sea level rises on a low-lying county such as Norfolk and, therefore, has committed to an ambitious programme of activity as set out in our Environmental Policy and to achieving our overall goal of Net Zero across our estates by 2030.</p> <p>Supplementary question from Willem Buttinger Does Norfolk County Council have any idea of the potential effect 4C warming will have on Norfolk?</p> <p>Response from the Cabinet Member for Environment and Waste See above</p>
6.10	<p>Question from Richard Bearman The stage 1 safety audit for the 'saw tooth' bus bays in St. Stephens Street recommended it be redesigned as it was unfit for purpose, and now it's built Cllr. Martin Wilby is quoted in the press advising cyclists to find an alternative route. The changed sight lines for bus drivers have created a more dangerous road space for Cycling, due to the inability of bus drivers leaving those bays to see cyclists approaching from behind the bus, does Norfolk County Council accept liability due to poor design, for any future collisions involving Cyclists and buses in this street?</p> <p>Response from the Cabinet Member for Highways, Infrastructure and Transport This design of bus stop layout operates successfully in other cities in the UK and we worked closely with bus operators throughout the design and construction of the St Stephens scheme. Bus operators have commented that the new design is a great improvement over what was in place previously in terms of both safety and accessibility. No concerns regarding the safety of those cycling were raised in the safety audit undertaken shortly after the scheme was completed. In addition to St Stephens Street, there are different cycle routes that can be taken to access the city centre and the signposting of these routes is being reviewed and improved to aid those choosing to cycle.</p>

**Cabinet
7 November 2022
Local Member Questions**

	Local Member Issues/Questions
7.1	<p>Question from Cllr Alexandra Kemp</p> <p>Latest research, from the Office of National Statistics, shows lowest-cost basic food items increased 17% in the past year. I campaigned earlier this year for NCC to continue the Free School Meals Holiday Vouchers, for children in receipt of Free School Meals. NCC reinstated the Vouchers monthly rather than for each school holiday week. NCC has announced its intention to continue the Free School Meals Vouchers. Parents say it is helpful to have the Vouchers each holiday week, when children are not being fed at school. Will the Free School Meals Vouchers be available each week?</p> <p>Response from the Deputy Cabinet Member for Children's Services</p> <p>As a council, we have continued to use a large proportion of the household support fund from central government to provide cost of living vouchers for children eligible for free school meals at a cost of £3.6m this winter. This means that 30,000 children are receiving a monthly voucher for £15 and they will also receive an additional £30 voucher at Christmas. By spreading support over the winter, not just providing support during the school holidays, we are helping families in a more flexible way and the provision of consistent regular monthly vouchers helps families to budget and plan over the whole winter. Families are able to choose how to budget and make use of the vouchers to best support their needs, whether to save vouchers up for particular periods, or use them monthly to offset other financial pressures such as utility costs.</p> <p>As a result of extending support over the winter, eligible families will receive £120 per child, rather than £75 if we only provided vouchers for the 5 weeks of school holidays between November and April.</p> <p>If families require additional financial support they can also make an application to our Norfolk Assistance Scheme, and we will also have 15 community food hubs across the county by the end of the year supporting in the region of 15,000 people.</p> <p>Second question from Cllr Alexandra Kemp</p> <p>Norfolk County Council as Transport Authority is in breach of its duties to disabled residents. West Lynn is an unparished part of Lynn, divided by the Ouse, but poorly connected. The half-hourly 505 bus (cut from every 20 minutes) only goes through the village once an hour (less when bus drivers ignore timetables). The long walk from the main road, is difficult for 80- and 90-year-old residents. This discourages bus travel and staying active.</p> <p>The Ferry landing steps are too steep for many, with a single handrail and loose treads.</p> <p>Can NCC write to Stagecoach and insist every 505 bus goes through West Lynn; and renew the landing stages?</p>

	<p>Response from the Cabinet Member for Highways, Infrastructure and Transport</p> <p>The Council is not in breach of our duties as there is an hourly service, which far exceeds that in place for many parts of the county. We are reviewing the passenger numbers from West Lynn to see if it is reasonable to divert a bus through there every 30 minutes, bearing in mind that any diversion off the main route makes the service less attractive for longer distance passengers.</p> <p>A review of the ferry infrastructure is currently being undertaken to determine ownership, as we do not believe ownership lies with the County Council. Once this has been determined, we can look to see if the infrastructure can be improved and how this can be funded.</p>
7.2	<p>Question from Cllr Lucy Shires</p> <p>Can you please tell us the latest figures for the number of people on the holding list awaiting assessment, and also those on the interim care list?</p> <p>Response from the Cabinet Member for Public Health, Adult Social Care and Prevention</p> <p>Thank you for your question</p> <p>Our holding list across community social work teams, mental health teams and learning disability teams is currently at 3041. Not all the cases on here will be waiting for assessment. The holding lists are subject to rigorous review and a robust approach to risk management, led by duty teams . Recovery actions are in place to address backlogs whilst continuing to respond to the high workload, particularly brought about by continued pressure on the health system. The recent peer review noted that our policy and framework for managing risk, holding lists and complexity was transparent and robust. There are currently 434 cases on the interim care list.</p>
7.3	<p>Question from Cllr Brian Watkins</p> <p>The Council is scheduled to make over £25 million of cuts to Adult Social Care in 2023/24. Can you tell us where the Phase 2 £11.7m of cuts will come from now that it looks like Newton Europe have overestimated the value of their work?</p> <p>Response from the Cabinet Member for Public Health, Adult Social Care and Prevention</p> <p>Thank you for your question, I do not agree that your statement is correct.</p> <p>Second question from Cllr Brian Watkins</p> <p>The Council's Strategic Review talks about significant future transformation within the authority. In reality, this is likely to involve significant job reductions and trying to do more with less. What do you think will be the implications on those demand-led services upon which so many vulnerable people rely, and what would be your message to them?</p> <p>Response from the Leader and Cabinet Member for Governance and Strategy</p> <p>At a recent scrutiny meeting Cllr Watkins implied that the changes that are planned as part of the strategic review were necessary and indeed overdue.</p>

	<p>The Strategic Review is reviewing the Council's structure and roles to ensure a strong alignment to the Council's vision of Better Together for Norfolk, to continue to serve all our residents in a more efficient and effective way. It is not intended to directly impact the delivery of frontline services. Its focus is on the management structures and cross cutting functions that indirectly contributes to frontline delivery. The SR is expected to help us in two ways: firstly to support delivery of savings to decrease our budget gap and, secondly, to help become fit for the future.</p> <p>Every organisation has been through significant changes in how it works and operates over the last few years, and given that it has been 10 years since the last organisational review, it has become essential for us to undertake the Strategic Review so that we can build on the changes and be in a better position to address the challenges precisely, so we can continue to deliver the services that vulnerable people rely on.</p> <p>As proposals come forward, we will review their impact and risk assess them before making final decisions ahead of implementation</p>
7.4	<p>Question from Cllr Saul Penfold</p> <p>What specific substantial real benefits would a new county deal for Norfolk bring to each of the districts, and what do you think the public make of a council focusing on creating another expensive tier of local government when our communities are being hit so hard by the cost of living crisis?</p> <p>Response from the Leader and Cabinet Member for Governance and Strategy</p> <p>A County Deal will benefit the whole of Norfolk. It is our firm belief that developing our infrastructure, investing in public transport, joining up education, skills and jobs, providing support for our businesses, managing our land and water resilience, and taking action locally to mitigate the effects of climate change will deliver better outcomes for our residents and economy. We anticipate additional funding coming to Norfolk and gaining local decision making over funding. How we make the most of this additional opportunity will be shaped with district and other partners.</p> <p>We recognise that our ambitions will not be achieved by one organisation alone, or by any single strand of investment or action. Therefore, in approaching a deal for the whole of Norfolk, we will ensure we continue to work collaboratively and in partnership with local government, business and other sector leaders to maximise the leverage of our collective strengths, expertise, statutory responsibilities and powers.</p> <p>The most comprehensive level of deal for Norfolk would require a change of governance for Norfolk County Council, to a Directly Elected Leader. This means that there is no requirement for a separate Mayor, unlike creating a Mayoral Combined Authority, so it is incorrect to say this is about creating another expensive tier of local government . Changes to governance would only affect the County Council. I'm sure the public would welcome our approach to not putting in additional layers of government but instead to focus on bringing additional funding for infrastructure, being able to locally control functions and take decisions in Norfolk eg over Adult Education or freedom of transport budgets and to ensure Norfolk has greater influence with government.</p>

7.5	<p>Question from Cllr Steffan Aquarone</p> <p>Can the Cabinet member let me know whether a decision has been reached to protect the future of mobile libraries? If not, will it be necessary to get out campaigning for the second time in four years in order to protect this vital lifeline for our most vulnerable?</p> <p>Response from the Cabinet Member for Communities and Partnerships</p> <p>Any decision on the future of the mobile library service will be made in the public domain, through the Council's democratic processes.</p> <p>As you know, we have recently carried out a public consultation on the service, with nearly 1400 responses received, we now have up to date information on the views of Norfolk communities. This will inform the proposal to review the service, which will take into account the views of local residents.</p>
7.6	<p>Question from Cllr Rob Colwell</p> <p>New joint research by the Resolution Foundation and LSE states that Brexit has reduced how open and competitive Britain's economy is, and will reduce productivity and wages in the decade ahead. The UK has also lost market share across three of its largest non-EU goods import markets in 2021: the US, Canada and Japan. Isn't it time for us to be mature and admit Brexit will not provide growth, growth, growth to Norfolk?</p> <p>Response from the Cabinet Member for Growing the Economy</p> <p>The British people voted to leave the European Union. In a democracy it is important for us to acknowledge and accept the outcome of the vote, regardless of whether we agreed with it.</p> <p>Second question from Cllr Rob Colwell</p> <p>Speeding vehicles in Gaywood (North Central and South) is a real concern to residents and something I receive huge communication on. Residents feel ignored, with the Road Safety Community Fund (RSCF) considered insufficient and schemes taking too long to implement. A letter I have received from the council described Councillor bids for work as being "oversubscribed". What changes to the Fund can you make to allow more works to be implemented and done more quickly so that residents expectations of the council's work can be met?</p> <p>Response from the Cabinet Member for Highways, Infrastructure and Transport</p> <p>The recently introduced Road Safety Fund has given Members a new way to enable low cost and straightforward highway safety schemes to be delivered within local communities. Many schemes such as speed limit changes need a Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) and they follow a national, legal process. This can take around 12 months to complete (longer if objections are received during the statutory consultation process) and unfortunately cannot be shortened. Otherwise, the restrictions would not be legal or enforceable.</p> <p>To date, around half of the accepted Year 1 bids have either been completed or are currently under construction. The remaining schemes are undergoing design and consultation.</p>

	<p>This new initiative is only in its first year and it is good to see how popular it is so far. Given the wider funding situation, there are currently no plans to increase the fund from the original, significant investment of £1m.</p>
7.7	<p>Question from Cllr Sharon Blundell</p> <p>The Prince's Trust have called the Class of Covid - that living through a pandemic has been devastating for young people – crippling their self-confidence and robbing them of their futures. It has impacted their education, social lives and options for work, with those already facing disadvantage being left even further behind. Norfolk is seen as one of 55 cold spots areas nationally where education outcomes are weakest. So what hope can you give those young people about their future?</p> <p>Response from the Deputy Cabinet Member for Children's Services</p> <p>It is all our duty to ensure we offer nothing but hope for the futures of our children and young people. We all have a role to play in that. FLOURISH exemplifies are commitment to working together, across the system, including Norfolk County Council, Norfolk education providers, partners such as Health, Police, the voluntary sector and other key stakeholders to ensure that every child has the chance to flourish. Children and Young People Strategic Alliance - Norfolk County Council</p> <p>There is no denying that the pandemic has had an impact on people across the country, and that children have been adversely affected. Whilst we would not minimise the significant impact on some, it has not been all children and young people. The determination of the Education Investment Area designation for Norfolk (one of 55 'cold spots') was based on historical education data, prior to the pandemic. There was no national testing or examinations for two years across the country, until this summer 2022. This years outcomes in Norfolk are disappointing overall for 11 year olds, however some Norfolk schools have recorded their best ever academic outcomes for children. By the age of 16 our young people achieved outcomes similar to the national average and made better than national progress. We must not forget to be proud of the efforts that schools and families have made to ensure children have secured their GCSE outcomes this summer.</p> <p>We know that there has been an impact across the age ranges of children and young people and routes into employment have been affected. However there has been a concerted effort in Norfolk to ensure that young people are supported into education, employment or training. We have invested in social recovery programmes for young people at risk of becoming NEET (Not in Education, Employment and Training) and continue with our relentless effort to keep in touch and support young people, especially those most disadvantaged, in our care or vulnerable to access the right pathway. The very youngest children are widely recognised as being the most affected by lockdown. We know this has resulted in some delay in speech and language, and other early developmental milestones. Early Years providers and schools are focused on mitigating these gaps and catching children up. This year Norfolk children achieved as well as children nationally by the age of 5. We have invested more in supporting early speech and language and work with providers to support them in offering an appropriate curriculum and additional intervention and support. The youngest children will be in school for many years and they will remain the priority for our education providers to ensure gaps are closed.</p> <p>Key Stage 2 results this summer were disappointing overall for Norfolk. The average for Norfolk schools is below the national average. However, we have been pleased to</p>

	<p>see that for some schools they have returned their best ever outcomes. There is much work going on to share the best practice from schools across Norfolk who are achieving well with their children.</p>
7.8	<p>Question from Cllr Tim Adams The footways on Lynewood Road, Lynewood and Links Avenue are among some of the worst in the County, having been substantially rebuilt in 1949. The residents have been repeatedly promised this would be done in years previously with the works even having been programmed in 2020 and then delayed due to obvious reasons. Can the portfolio holder tell me when these footways will finally be resurfaced</p> <p>Response from the Cabinet Member for Highways, Infrastructure and Transport I am pleased to highlight that the footway on the northside of Lynewood Avenue is already included in the council's highways programme and resurfacing works should start in early 2023.</p> <p>The southside of Lynewood Avenue is also provisionally programmed for the 2023/24 financial year, with Links Avenue following in 2024/25. However, this will depend on the amount of funding received from the Department for Transport as part of their annual highways funding allocation. This is usually received in December / January and will then form part of the March Cabinet report.</p>
7.9	<p>Question from Cllr Jamie Osborn This week yet another NHS dentist has announced it will close, in my ward. The Conservative Government is overseeing a crisis in dentistry and creating a two-tier system where some people can afford to go private while others are left to pull out their own teeth.</p> <p>Norfolk's MPs have talked about creating new dentistry training facilities, but, while welcome, that will not resolve the immediate crisis. Will the Cabinet Member commit to writing to all Norfolk MPs as well as the Government calling for a long-overdue reform of NHS dentistry contracts to ensure that we have universal access to NHS dental care?</p> <p>Response from the Cabinet Member for Public Health, Adult Social Care and Prevention Thank you for your question.</p> <p>Norfolk County Council is not responsible for providing NHS dentistry contracts. As you are aware HOSC (Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee) is currently looking at dentistry under the Chairmanship of Cllr Alison Thomas and I would suggest that your question would be better directed at her.</p> <p>Second question from Cllr Jamie Osborn I have seen evidence that members of staff at NCC are unable to afford holidays, will be unable to afford Christmas, and are considering applying for charity help, all because the catastrophic transfer to Oracle has left them underpaid. This issue has been going on for over 6 months now. Does the Cabinet Member accept responsibility for this failure to properly pay frontline staff, and will he issue an apology to all those affected?</p>

	<p>Response from the Cabinet Member for Innovation, Transformation and Performance</p> <p>The decision to upgrade the HR and Finance systems was made for sound operational reasons and the project team worked with Oracle and other companies throughout the period of the lockdown to ensure delivery of the system. The implementation of My Oracle which went live in April was a very large and complex technical project that has been overwhelmingly successful. The successful delivery of such a complex project as this under such challenging constraints is actually something about which I think this Council should be proud.</p> <p>There will inevitably be some anomalies when any new system is initially deployed, particularly a system such as MyOracle which undertakes hundreds of thousands of transactions. These anomalies are almost inevitable in a system of this complexity and work was done to identify these post implementation. Staff have worked hard to address the issues which were being experienced soon after the new system went live and there are no longer system wide issues with payments being processed through the payroll.</p> <p>Payroll actually only represents one element of the MyOracle system, but any errors or omissions to salary calculations will of course be problematic for any staff affected. However, if there are individuals who are experiencing problems with their pay, something which can happen for a variety of reasons, they should be encouraged to report these so they can be resolved. The relevant officers will always work with those individuals to achieve a resolution. There are actually various measures in place which can be used to ensure that there is not the type of impact as described in the question. These measures include emergency payments which are paid to individuals within 24 hours or making supplementary payments through the payroll system.</p>
7.10	<p>Question from Cllr Paul Neale</p> <p>Energy use in homes accounts for more than a quarter of all of Norfolk's carbon emissions. Virtually every house in the county will need to be retrofitted to meet climate targets, end fuel poverty, and improve energy security. With action from the Conservative Government falling catastrophically short on this, there is a need for county and district councils to work together to coordinate skills and training, assessment of need, and securing investment. Does the Cabinet Member agree that establishing a retrofit strategy for Norfolk should be a priority for the Norfolk Climate Change Partnership?</p> <p>Response from the Cabinet Member for Environment and Waste</p> <p>Members of NCC's Member Oversight Group for the Environment recently received presentations on the current national picture regarding retrofitting. The Council will be considering how it can best work with partners, including the Government and members of the Norfolk Climate Change Partnership, over the coming months, including opportunities around the development of skills and capacity building, and support for businesses involved in this work.</p> <p>Second question from Cllr Paul Neale</p> <p>The Stephens Street roadworks were planned for completion by September 2022. This has not been met and is now estimated to be completed by spring 2023. Part of the delay there is an absence of bus shelters with covered seating.</p>

	<p>Is the cabinet member putting in place temporary facilities to keep passengers dry and sheltered with some seating as it's especially important for elderly and infirm passengers during the coming winter's harsh weather?</p> <p>Response from the Cabinet Member for Highways, Infrastructure and Transport</p> <p>We understand and share the frustration caused by the delay to the new bus shelters arriving. The delays in the supply chain were out of our control and every effort was made to find a solution. Installation of different bus shelters on a temporary basis, while we wait for delivery of the new ones, is not a viable option as this would require an unplanned road closure in the run up to Christmas, causing significant additional disruption, and lead-in times to get hold of any other shelters would almost certainly extend beyond the time when the new shelters will be ready. The use of other temporary structures is not considered to be viable.</p> <p>The scheme has involved 19 new benches being installed along St Stephens Street with the majority of these being near to bus stops. We apologise for any inconvenience caused while we wait for the shelters to be installed.</p>
7.11	<p>Question from Cllr Ben Price</p> <p>Liz Truss's disastrous, uncostered plan for growth ruined the country's finances and led to her resignation.</p> <p>The leader of Norfolk County Council is similarly pursuing an ideologically-driven and financially ruinous uncostered project in the form of the Western Link, for which the costs continue to spiral.</p> <p>Will he follow Liz Truss's example by taking responsibility for pursuing a project that is impossible to determine the final cost of and resigning now?</p> <p>Response from the Leader and Cabinet Member for Governance and Strategy</p> <p>The Norwich Western Link is an important piece of Norfolk's infrastructure for the future of our economy and improving connectivity.</p> <p>Some people may be taking a narrow opposing view to the project but supporters greatly outnumber detractors.</p> <p>So the direct answer to your point about resigning is no</p> <p>Second question from Cllr Ben Price</p> <p>Discussions regarding the "County Deal" for Norfolk have been ongoing for months, while the people of Norfolk and district councils have been kept in the dark over the discussions. Will the leader agree with me that this is not open and transparent democracy, and will he ensure that Norfolk residents get a say over the future of our democracy by subjecting the final decision to a referendum by Norfolk residents?</p> <p>Response from the Leader and Cabinet Member for Governance and Strategy</p> <p>Since Norfolk County council made an expression of Interest in becoming one of the first County Deal Areas we have worked closely with District Councils, Local stakeholders and MPs to shape the Deal for Norfolk.</p>

	<p>I have briefed both Group leaders and Members throughout this process and any changes to our governance will be subject to full debate and a vote of our full council, who represent the residents of Norfolk.</p> <p>We will also be undertaking a consultation that members of the Public can participate in</p> <p>Therefore it is simply untrue to say people and district councils have been kept in the dark</p>
7.12	<p>Question from Cllr Emma Corlett</p> <p>Norfolk has a strong record of welcoming and providing care and support for children and young people seeking refugee status who arrive in the UK alone. Does the Cabinet Member for Childrens Services agree that Norfolk is keen to play its part in caring for some of the children and young people currently stuck in barbaric conditions in Kent, but to do so will require additional resources from Government to help us fulfil our moral obligation and how will he make that argument to Government?</p> <p>Response from the Deputy Cabinet Member for Children's Services</p> <p>As acknowledged, Norfolk has a nationally regarded UASC service, and has been recognised for stepping up to support the Home Office and other Local Authorities to address previous pressures. We are keen to continue to do all we can to support the effort in providing care for this vulnerable cohort given the current and increasing challenges and have in the past 6-8 weeks taken in at least 40 new UASC (or Separated Migrant Children) who are being referred from the adult male dispersal hotels recently set up in Norfolk by the Home Office. There are a number of new young people referred to us every week and we know there are plans to open further hotels in the County, so we expect this situation to continue for some time yet. This is in addition to Norfolk's ongoing requirement to accept referrals from the National Transfer Scheme until our 0.1% quota is reached, (which has recently been increased from 0.07%). As of 2nd November, 2022 we have 128 UASC aged 0 – 17 and 140 aged 18 – 21.</p> <p>Whilst the Council receives fixed rate funding from the Government to cover the cost of caring for each UASC, there are significant and additional indirect costs accrued due to lack of availability of staff and sufficiency of placements to meet the demand, meaning use of agency staff and expensive private sector accommodation respectively.</p>
7.13	<p>Question from Cllr Mike Sands</p> <p>Will the Leader join me in extending a warm Norfolk welcome to those seeking refugee status who have been placed in temporary accommodation in my division, thank those faith and community groups and local policing team and health professionals who have gone above and beyond to provide a friendly welcome and ensure safety, and does he agree with me that it is an outrage there was no proper communication with local councils from Government and that Government must urgently provide resources to ensure we can continue to provide the level of support and care needed?</p> <p>Response from the Leader and Cabinet Member for Governance and Strategy</p>

	<p>Thank you for your Question. I fully support and endorse your comments about the local teams that have and continue to make sure that people coming to Norfolk have the support they need.</p> <p>Councils across the country have made it clear to the Home Office that early engagement with local authorities is essential if councils and partners are to be able to support those refugees coming to Norfolk.</p>
7.14	<p>Question from Cllr Brenda Jones</p> <p>As winter approaches the crisis in care provision facing Norfolk is getting worse. There is not enough capacity, the provision of care services in Norfolk is rated poorly by the CQC and the shortage in care workers grows as better paid jobs are available in other sectors.</p> <p>What plans are in place to address this emergency as the cost-of-living bites, temperatures drop and winter flu and covid rates rise and has the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, Public Health and Prevention lobbied Government specifically for extra resources in the forthcoming Autumn statement to help get Norfolk through the coming winter crisis?</p> <p>Response from the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, Public Health and Prevention</p> <p>Thank you for your question</p> <p>It is well known that the COVID-19 pandemic has placed strain on Norfolk's social care and health system and a risk remains of further outbreaks during winter. In addition, it often brings with it events such as widespread infectious diseases including pandemic flu affecting residents and care staff alike.</p> <p>As was the case last year, we have not experienced a summer where pressures have abated. Whilst winter is not an emergency or considered an unusual event, it is a period of increased pressure due to demand both in the complexity of people's needs, and the capacity demands on resources within social care and the wider health system. This winter will present greater challenges than in previous years.</p> <p>To respond to this challenge, both Health and Social Care here in Norfolk have developed a joint winter plan which addresses the risks posed this winter and seeks to maximise opportunities to link people with a range of services across statutory and VCSE providers, to maintain personal resilience and promote independence. Action is being taken to meet people's needs, support resilient communities and systems, support the provider market and continue with business recovery post-pandemic. This will seek to ensure a resilient system over the coming months and guide adult social care and other health and care organisations within the Integrated Care System to maintain high quality and safe services in a climate of increasing pressure that winter will inevitably bring. As part of this plan, Norfolk County Council continues to ensure targeted use of available resource to support our residents over the winter period, including working with our partners in the Norfolk and Waveney ICS to utilise funding to ensure capacity in our community that also supports our urgent and emergency care system.</p>
7.15	<p>Question from Cllr Terry Jermy</p> <p>What consultation with District Councils has the Cabinet Member for Environment and Waste undertaken in formulating proposals to cut opening times for Norfolk's</p>

	<p>recycling centres, given the increasing pressure on their budgets and the potential of increased fly tipping across the County?</p> <p>Response from the Cabinet Member for Environment and Waste We are seeking views on our proposals from all stakeholders through our consultation process and that includes any views expressed by the District, City and Borough Councils. Any views expressed in this consultation process will be taken into account before any final decisions are made on any proposal. Fly tipping tends to be committed by criminals disposing of domestic or commercial waste rather than law abiding citizens who want to visit the local HWRC.</p> <p>Supplementary Question from Cllr Terry Jermy If the cut to the recycling centres were to be implemented next year, would all staff see their hours cut, or would there be redundancies in order to achieve the proposed £200,000 budget saving?</p> <p>Response from the Cabinet Member for Environment and Waste Our consultation document on the proposals explains that if changes were to be made to the opening arrangements for the recycling centre service, the changes would affect staff at recycling centres and lead to changes to shift patterns and a requirement to work fewer hours compared to previous years. If following the consultation a decision was made to make the changes, then the operator of the service would then consult its employees on how those changes could be implemented, a process which could result in some staff redundancies, and if that was to be the case then we would work closely with the operator to support them in keeping this to a minimum.</p>
7.16	<p>Question from Cllr Alison Birmingham Can the Cabinet Member for Childrens Services confirm whether the closure of early years providers across the County has been added to the Corporate Risk Register and how many providers he is anticipating will have closed by the end of the year?</p> <p>Response from the Deputy Cabinet Member for Children's Services Since September 1st 2022 there have been 3 childminders and 1 preschool close in Norfolk. We have also had 4 childminders and 1 preschool open. There are other settings who have closed their registration in order to reopen under different governance arrangements, for example settings located on a school site who often transfer those places over to the school. We monitor this very closely and work to mitigate any impact on families. We are aware of the challenges that some provision is facing, especially if the demand for places is not sufficient to ensure financial viability. In addition we know that Norfolk providers have been affected by the shortage of appropriately trained Managers. It is not possible to make any valid predictions of further closures, however we actively encourage providers to contact us as early as possible if they are likely to close.</p> <p>The number of registered childminders has been decreasing over a number of years. This is a countrywide issue and not specific to Norfolk. The recruitment and retention of Managers for pre-schools is also a nationwide issue.</p> <p>For any setting that closes, our Family Information Service makes a follow up call to determine the reasons for closure, if we do not already know. In these particular</p>

	<p>recent cases in Norfolk, the childminders all closed for personal reasons, including retirement. The pre-school closed due to issues recruiting both staff and new committee members.</p> <p>Whilst we recognise the impact of closure on families, and the concern this causes there are robust processes in place to support families with alternative provision where that becomes necessary.</p> <p>It is not our view that this needs to be placed on the Corporate Risk Register. However we will continue to monitor this rigorously.</p>
7.17	<p>Question from Cllr Mike Smith-Clare Can the Cabinet Member for Childrens Services confirm the total budget gap that Norfolk schools are facing this financial year from unfunded gaps created by higher-than-expected energy costs and other in-year inflationary pressures?</p> <p>Response from the Deputy Cabinet Member for Children's Services We do not hold the financial information for all schools. As school leaders have the delegated responsibility for determining how the school budget is spent (within a regulatory framework) we would only have a partial picture, school by school. It is not possible to quantify this as a collective gap as schools make different decisions about how they use funding. As we know the impact of higher energy costs will have an impact on all of us, including schools, and the Department for Education has sent guidance to all schools about managing this. In addition Norfolk schools who purchase through a scheme already benefit from lower energy costs, and those who are not part of that scheme will benefit from the Energy Bill Relief Scheme and the government work with suppliers will reduce the wholesale energy costs and the significant rises that schools have seen.</p> <p>Supplementary Question from Cllr Mike Smith-Clare Can the Cabinet Member confirm what actions he is taking to help schools to meet these budgetary pressures without impacting on education provision?</p> <p>Response from the Deputy Cabinet Member for Children's Services It is the duty of Governors and Trust Boards to ensure that schools balance their budgets. Our School finance team work with Local Authority maintained schools and some Academies who purchase our services in order to help and hold them to account for managing their budgets effectively. Schools are not governed or regulated by the local authority.</p>