

# Corporate Select Committee

Date: **Monday 15 January 2024**  
Time: **10:00 am**  
Venue: **Council Chamber, County Hall, Martineau Lane, Norwich**

## Membership:

Cllr R Oliver (Chair)  
Cllr A Birmingham  
Cllr S Clancy  
Cllr D Bills  
Cllr G Carpenter  
Cllr D Roper  
Cllr A White

Cllr D Sayers  
Cllr T Jermy  
Cllr B Price  
Cllr V Thomson  
Cllr W Nunn (Vice Chair)  
Cllr C Smith

## Advice for members of the public:

This meeting will be held in public and in person

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

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](mailto: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 apologies and details of any substitute members attending

## 2. Minutes

To receive the minutes of the previous meeting held on **13 November 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. To receive any items of business which the Chairman decides should be considered as a matter of urgency

## 5. Public Question Time

Fifteen minutes for questions from members of the public of which due notice has been given. Please note that all questions must be received by the Committee Team (committees@norfolk.gov.uk) by **5pm Tuesday 9**

**January 2024.** For guidance on submitting a public question, view the Constitution at: [Ask a question to a committee - Norfolk County Council](#)

**6. Local Member Issues/Questions**

Fifteen minutes for local member to raise issues of concern of which due notice has been given. Please note that all questions must be received by the Committee Team (committees@norfolk.gov.uk) by **5pm Tuesday 9 January 2024.**

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|--|-----------------------|
| <p><b>7. Climate Policy for Norfolk County Council</b><br/>Report by the Interim Executive Director for Community and Environmental Services</p>   | <p><b>Page 13</b></p> |
| <p><b>8. Progress on Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Plan and Objectives 2023-2026</b><br/>Report by the Interim Executive Director for Community and Environmental Services</p> | <p><b>Page 25</b></p> |
| <p><b>9. Forward Work Plan 2023</b><br/>Note by the Executive Director for Strategy &amp; Transformation</p>   | <p><b>Page 53</b></p> |

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Date Agenda Published: 05 January 2024



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## Corporate Select Committee

Minutes of the Meeting Held on 13 November 2023 at  
10:00 am in Council Chamber, County Hall, Martineau Lane Norwich NR1 2DL

### Present:

Cllr R Oliver (Chair)  
Cllr A Birmingham  
Cllr A White  
Cllr B Price  
Cllr V Thomson  
Cllr W Nunn (Vice Chair)  
Cllr S Clancy  
Cllr G Carpenter  
Cllr T Jermy  
Cllr C Smith

### Substitute Members Present:

Cllr B Watkins

### Also Present:

Cllr Kay Mason Billig	Leader of the Council
Harvey Bullen	Director of Strategic Finance
Alex Cook	Finance Manager (Planning and Strategy)
Titus Adams	Assistant Director of Finance (Deputy S151 Officer)
Cllr Jane James	Cabinet Member for Corporate services and innovation
Geoff Connell	Director of Digital Services
Kurt Frary	Head of IT, Digital Services
Simon Hughes	Director of Property
Jeannine de Sousa	Head of Construction & FM, Corporate Property
Paul Cracknell	Executive Director of Strategy and Transformation
Maisie Coldman	Trainee Committee Officer

### 1. Apologies for Absence

1.1 Apologies were received from Cllr Roper (substituted by Cllr Watkins), Cllr Sayers and Cllr Bills.

### 2. Minutes

2.1 The minutes of the meeting held on 11 September 2023 were agreed as an accurate record and signed by the Chair.

### 3. Declarations of Interest

3.1 There were no declarations of interest.

#### **4. Items of Urgent Business**

4.1 There were no items of urgent business.

#### **5. Public Question Time**

5.1 There were no public questions.

#### **6. Local Member Issues/Questions**

6.1 There were no member issues/questions.

#### **7. Strategic and Financial Planning 2024-25**

7.1 The committee received and was introduced to the Strategic and Financial Planning 2024-25 report by Cllr Mason Billig, Leader of the Council. The report set out the latest Budget and Medium-Term Financial Strategy position as reported to Cabinet in October 2023 (Appendix 1), in particular the emerging risks and uncertainties within the Council's planning position, the savings proposals for 2024-25 as set out in Appendix 1, which fall within the Committee's remit and the budget gap which remains to be closed for 2024-25. The Select Committee was asked to consider and comment on this information, and in this context comment on any areas that it would recommend exploring for savings development in relation to the services within the Select Committee's remit, in order to provide further input to the 2024-25 budget process and inform the final package of saving proposals put forward to Cabinet later in the year.

7.1.1 The report noted the saving proposals, that amounted to £26.485 million, to contribute to closing the £46.216 million budget gap for 2024-25. The proposed savings divided by departments are outlined in Item 7, Appendix 1, Table 4. Cllr Mason Billig highlighted that Norfolk County Council (NCC) was not the only authority that was experiencing wider economic and financial pressure. The Committee heard that the report also included Financial Benchmarking Indicators and how they were used.

7.2 The following points were noted during discussion and in response to questions from the committee:

- Members shared their concerns regarding the budget gap.
- The Committee heard that the increase in the cost of living, in addition to other factors, was placing pressure on services at NCC. NCC has been required to find savings each year for over a decade and it was becoming more difficult to identify areas for savings that do not have an immediate impact on the delivery of front-line services. Currently, there are efforts to work smarter with the resources that NCC has, to review and consider how services operate, and to explore new technologies, such as AI, to understand how they could aid smarter working. Future

funding from the government would be important and the Council continues to call for a longer-term settlement to provide more certainty.

- In response to a question about Section 114 notices, the Director of Strategic Finance commented that this involves an element of judgement about the financial resilience of an individual organisation, and this was highly dependent on future funding from government. At this moment in time, the Director of Strategic Finance does not consider NCC at risk of having to issue a 114 notice and it was noted that there are other options which would need to be explored before this point would be reached. It was also highlighted that Government had requested Local Authorities experiencing financial stress to engage with them about mitigating options.
- It was clarified that NCC's strategy was to focus on making savings that did not impact front-line services, and that the budget overall for 2024-25 was expected to be bigger than that of 2023-24.
- A member requested clarification about what the other alternative approaches to identify savings were. In response, the Director of Strategic Finance noted that there are different approaches, and resource prioritisation, that could be adopted when setting the budget. The council budget-setting process for 2024-25 allocated saving targets to each department. A different distribution of saving targets could have been applied and the comment in the report was therefore intended to highlight that there are options available during the process. Part of the role of the Section 151 officer was to ensure that the council has a robust budget to deliver its services.
- In response to a question about borrowing, it was noted that whilst there were maturing loans, these did not need to be funded from reserves. NCC were required annually to set aside a minimum revenue provision within the revenue budget to repay borrowing when it becomes due. Regarding the profile of debts, NCC has a relatively smooth profile of maturing debt. This was reported to the Treasury Management Panel and would be reported to Cabinet in December as part of the mid-year Treasury Management Strategy update. The council has borrowed in the last few years at historically low rates. There was adequate provision in the MTFs to repay debt. In the context of rising interest rates, the focus now was on the cost of further borrowing in future and the Capital Programme is being carefully considered in this context to ensure affordability.
- In response to a question asking if NCC was undertaking enough commercialisation activity and whether there was a strategy for this, the committee heard that there was the ability to do this, and commercial opportunities were pursued in order to minimise the impact on the taxpayer.

- The Committee questioned the approach if further savings were identified later in the budget setting process. It was noted that the Council has a legal duty to consult the public on potential saving opportunities if they met the threshold for consultation. If required, further consultation would take place prior to savings being implemented.
- The possibility of setting up Member Task and Finish Groups was considered.
- Cllr Jermy noted that it was positive to see that streetlighting continued to be upgraded. In response to a question about how many upgrades were still to be completed, it was advised that the detailed position would be circulated after the meeting.
- A member shared anecdotal evidence of a resident being unable to pay their Council Tax and not having the computer literacy to access information about what support was available. They highlighted that an increase in Council Tax may see additional people being unable to afford to pay and questioned what safeguards the budget includes to address digital exclusion. The committee heard that residents can access the internet and support from their local library. The concerns were shared by Cllr Jane James, but they were hopeful that the success of the Tech Skills pilot in West Norfolk would provide proof of concept and be able to be rolled out county-wide. There were also conversations about the responsibility of the billing authority to make their customers aware of the support that they are entitled to.
- Cllr Price expressed that they felt that the money gained from ceasing the Transport for Norwich advisory committee was not significant enough to justify the loss of partnership working and collaboration. The Leader of the council responded that the Transport for Norwich budget was finite, and once spent, there would no longer be a requirement for the committee. A steering group remained to ensure that the Cabinet Member for Highways, Infrastructure, and Transport could continue to discuss schemes with partners. The steering group was however unable to meet until Norwich City Council had appointed a member to the group.
- In response to a question surrounding spending on highway developments, it was noted that road and infrastructure developments were part of the Capital Programme and separate from the Revenue Budget, although there was a crossover. The importance of sufficient and safe transport and infrastructure was highlighted.
- Cllr Birmingham highlighted the positive impacts that respite services provide and asked that this be considered when undertaking reviews of this provision.

- Cllr Thomson sought clarification about NCC’s involvement in Moving Traffic Offences. It was advised that this information would be circulated to Committee members after the meeting.
- Cllr Nunn welcomed the proposal to build 2,800 units of extra care housing for older people and to provide 183 units of supported housing for young adults. He asked if there were plans to extend these further. In response, the Leader of the Council noted that NCC would fill in the gaps where outside providers could not be found/did not exist.

7.3 Having considered and commented on the Strategic and Financial Planning 2024-25, as summarised above, the Select Committee **resolved** to:

1. **Note** the latest Budget and Medium-Term Financial Strategy position as reported to Cabinet in October 2023 (Appendix 1), in particular the emerging risks and uncertainties within the Council’s planning position.
2. **Note** the savings proposals for 2024-25 as set out in Appendix 1, which fall within the Committee’s remit.
3. **Note** the budget gap which remains to be closed for 2024-25.

## 8. The Artificial Intelligence Opportunity

8.1 The committee received, and was introduced to, the Artificial Intelligence (AI) Opportunity report by Cllr Jane James, Cabinet Member for Corporate Services and innovation. The AI opportunities available for Norfolk were outlined and it was highlighted to members the importance of ensuring that data was used ethically and appropriately.

8.2 Geoff Connell, Director of Digital Services, and Kurt Frary, Head of IT, Digital Services, provided the committee with additional context and how AI would be useful for NCC. They highlighted the pilot in Adult Social Service where AI was used to identify people who were at risk of falling. The implementation of AI would aid colleagues, help free up resources, and improve efficiency. Members were reassured that AI was not seen as a tool that would replace staff, they are essential to quality assure the products and outcomes feedback by AI. An Artificial Intelligence Governance Board (AIGB) has been established by NCC to ensure the ethical and responsible development, deployment, and management of AI technologies with AI. Consultation with expert bodies and peer groups was occurring to better understand how technology was being used, especially considering how quickly it was evolving.

8.3 The following points were noted during discussion and in response to questions from the committee:

- Cllr Clancy noted that AI was where the future was and technology should be embraced, however, services needed to be maintained to a level that residents are satisfied with and can access smoothly. In



response to this, the committee heard the trust that residents have in NCC was important, and that relationships with the people that use the services remained a priority. New technology would be tested on staff before being released to the public.

- Geoff Connell did not think that the implementation of AI technology within the workplace would result in a reduction of staff numbers but would help them do more with what was already available. Using the example of adult social care, they illustrated that there was not enough staff to employ. The additional capacity that AI could produce would allow for a more efficient service and the ability to do more preventative work. The Director of HR sits on the AIGB so that the changes that staff might expect to see can be understood.
- Norfolk was a leading authority in the use of AI, NCC has good relationships with main suppliers that allow early access to trial new technologies. There was close work with other bodies, peer groups, and partnerships to understand the new technology and how it would benefit Norfolk. Funding options were being explored to afford the capacity to make use of AI.
- One of the focus areas as part of this work would be to ensure that residents do not fall behind. The pilot Tech Skills programme in West Norfolk has been upskilling residents' knowledge of technology, but also finding ways that technology, and AI, can help improve the quality of their daily lives.
- A workshop for all elected members on digital skills was being looked at to provide a general overview of the uses of AI but also how it could be used within the work that members carried out.
- A member raised concerns about the potentiality of data and AI being used inappropriately and unethically. Officers stressed that cyber security was taken seriously and that there would be research into the mechanisms and processes to protect NCC from AI.
- A member suggested that whilst the exploration was happening to see how AI could be utilised to free staff time and resources, could this time also be used as an opportunity to review whether all paperwork was needed. Officers noted that this would be a process reviewing opportunity.
- The implementation of AI was not going to replace the option to interact with a human and residents needed to have the choice as to whether they wanted to interact with the technology or not. It was felt that the additional resources generated through the use of technology would free up time to support residents who prefer human interactions.
- Your Norfolk Magazine would be published twice a year to inform residents of who to contact / where to go for support. This was felt to be

particularly beneficial to residents who were not confident using technology.

- Officers noted that there were Invest to Save funds in place that could be used for the experimentation of AI at NCC which was suggested to be around £100, 000. Geoff Connell shared with the committee that if there was evidence of positive results, then funding would need to be found to implement new technologies. are not explored and utilised then processes are unlikely to improve, and efficiency will remain the same.

8.4 Having reviewed and commented on the Artificial Intelligence Opportunity, the Select Committee **resolved** to:

- **Endorse** the pace of adoption of Artificial Intelligence balanced with the controls to manage the associated risks.
- **Advise** when the Committee would next want to be updated on progress.

## 9. County Farms Rural Estates Strategy 2023-2027

9.1 The committee received, and was introduced to, the County Farms Rural Estates Strategy 2023-2027 report by Cllr Jane James and was provided with an overview from Jeannine de Sousa, Head of Construction & FM, Corporate Property. This strategy was an evolution of previous ones and worked with the evolving picture of Norwich agriculture. The County Farms Rural Estates Strategy proposed to redraw the boundary lines of County Farms. Currently, farm holdings are split across the county, the redrawing of the boundaries would create larger more regular areas. This would create larger farms that would have increased commercial viability and facilitate the use of larger machinery. Members of the Committee heard that this work would be done in collaboration with farmers and that it was an opportunity to support the community. The other alternative options were shared with the Committee.

9.2 The following points were noted during discussion and in response to questions from the committee:

- It was clarified that the County Farms Estate contributes 2.5 million pounds of gross income to the rural economy.
- The team managing and supporting the County Farms Estate was made up of three people. The internal team would deliver the proposed strategy and thus, there would be no additional cost to the workforce.
- Cllr Price questioned how larger farm holdings, and thus larger machinery would benefit the environment, noting the environmental consequences that this could generate. Simon Hughes, Director of Property, responded that many of the current holdings were designed for use tractors from the 1960s/70's and that the use of larger

machinery was a standard. It was noted that the reference to larger machinery was referring to entry-level tractors.

- A member asked what the process was for farm progression. The team worked with the tenants to understand their business ambitions, this was usually known after 5 – 10 years.
- Written into County Farm Estate leases was that tenants were expected to support biodiversity and maintain footpaths.
- Tenets were able to attend events to inform them how technology could be used within their farm. There was also communication through newsletters and work with partners.
- Cllr Jermy wondered if the strategy marked a move away from the original purpose of the County Farms Estate which was to support, and encourage, people into farming. Managing a larger estate would require more resources and thus, could become inaccessible for entry farmers. In response, the committee heard that ensuring that farms were economically viable was important, and redrawing the boundaries was regarded as essential to this. In modern agriculture, 100 acres was not regarded as a large holding. There was evidence of positively supporting people in agriculture who did not already have significant resources.
- Members expressed different views on the environmental impact of larger machinery, particularly regarding soil compaction. Cllr Nunn shared anecdotal evidence of their experience of farming, highlighting that farms need to take up the opportunity that new technology provides to have viable outcomes. the price of machinery means that it was required to be shared.
- The chair asked how providing tenancies to farmers were justified. In response, Simon Hughes noted that the County Farm Estates' purpose was to encourage farmers into agriculture, this was reflected in government policy and regarded as important. He shared that the current use of the land provides better outcomes for NCC than alternative options
- A member expressed their dissatisfaction that rewilding was not being addressed in the strategy despite the benefits it could yield to soil health and flooding. In response, it was shared that there has to be a balance between rewilding and food provision. Most of the estate was grade 1 and 2 which reduced its suitability for rewilding, however, work was being done to create a plan for tree planting and support with biodiversity.

9.3 The Corporate Select Committee **commented** on the County Farms Rural Estates Strategy for 2023-2027.

## 10. Forward Work Plan 2023

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

**Meeting concluded at 11:40**

**Rhodri Oliver Chair  
Corporate Select Committee**



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# Corporate Select Committee

**Item No: 7**

**Report Title: Climate Policy for Norfolk County Council**

**Date of Meeting: 15<sup>th</sup> January 2024**

**Responsible Cabinet Member: Cllr Vardy** (Cabinet Member for Environment & Waste)

**Responsible Director: Grahame Bygrave** (Interim Executive Director for Community and Environmental Services)

## **Executive Summary**

In June 2023, Norfolk County Council launched its Climate Strategy. This comprehensive document sets out the council's approach to addressing its own estate emissions but also how it can support Norfolk's development as a low carbon and climate resilient place to live, visit and do business. This paper introduces a Climate Policy that reflects the main elements of the Climate Strategy in a more concise policy format. It also uses the Climate Policy as an opportunity to restate the council's county wide commitment, seeking better alignment with the UK's 2050 net zero target and the ambitious trajectory set out in the national carbon budgets. Finally, it proposes a timeline for the Climate Policy to progress to Full County Council for consideration in March 2024.

## **Recommendations**

The Select Committee is asked to:

1. Review and comment on the proposed Climate Policy, including the new statement of the council's county-wide net zero commitment.
2. Endorse the Climate Policy's progression for Cabinet's consideration.

# 1 Background and purpose

- 1.1 Norfolk County Council's policy relating to climate change has to date been stated within its Environmental Policy. Published in 2019, this policy articulated the council's ambition to reach net zero for its estate by 2030 and further to work with partners towards carbon neutrality county-wide.
- 1.2 Given the scale and complexity of this issue, the council launched a detailed Climate Strategy in June 2023. The strategy sets out seven focus areas that guide how the council could best apply its powers and influence to address climate change:
- Reducing our estate emissions
  - Reducing our indirect emissions
  - Addressing Norfolk's county-wide emissions
  - Promoting a green economy for Norfolk
  - Climate adaptation
  - Ensure nature has space to recover and grow
  - Engage and collaborate.
- 1.3 The council's ambition and comprehensive approach to climate change has been recognised in the 2023 Council Climate Action Scorecards, where Norfolk County Council was independently ranked second nationally among the UK's county councils for its initiatives.
- 1.4 When Cabinet endorsed the strategy, a further recommendation was approved to develop a policy that would reflect the strategy within the council's policy framework. A draft Climate Policy for Norfolk County Council is now presented in this paper which seeks to meet this commitment.

# 2 Proposal

## Policy structure

- 2.1 The full draft Climate Policy being proposed is attached to this paper for review. An overview of the policy's structure is as follows:
1. A brief introduction setting out the background to the policy and its overarching ambitions relating to our estate and the county.
  2. A subsequent section for each of the seven focus areas set out in the Climate Strategy, with a brief introduction followed by their respective strategic priorities.
  3. References to where it aligns with a primary policy for that theme (for example, the Local Transport Plan).

- 2.2 By following this structure the policy looks to offer a concise summary of the key aspects of the Climate Strategy so that close alignment is maintained between them.

### **Countywide commitment**

- 2.3 The council's approach to addressing climate change looks beyond simply its own estate to also encompass how it can support low carbon development across Norfolk.
- 2.4 In its Environment Policy, the council commits to working towards carbon neutrality for Norfolk by 2030. This statement set a clear tone of ambition when it was drafted in 2019 to give focus to the need for action across the county.
- 2.5 Whilst the UK has roughly halved its emissions since 1990, it is clear given the national and international trajectory that Norfolk cannot reach carbon neutrality by 2030 [and nor can the UK as a whole or any other major economy]. Furthermore, the term 'carbon neutrality' that was used does not match with the UK's legal commitment for net zero, which is a source of confusion.
- 2.6 This paper proposes that the Climate Policy includes an update to this county wide statement, using the following wording:
- "Norfolk County Council commits to using its powers, influence and partnerships towards supporting the county's low carbon development in line with the UK-wide target to reach net zero by 2050. We will look to keep Norfolk in step with the ambitious trajectory set out in the national carbon budgets of a 78% reduction in emissions by 2035 relative to 1990 levels, whilst recognising the vital role of Norfolk's agricultural sector in UK food security and the implications for its land use emissions in the national context."
- 2.7 This updated statement aligns to both the target and the language of the UK as a whole. Moreover, it recognises the need for an ambitious but practical trajectory towards net zero that maintains a focus on taking action now - which is what the legally enshrined national carbon budgets represent in setting a path towards a 78% reduction in emissions by 2035 relative to 1990 levels.
- 2.8 The wording also gives reference to Norfolk as key food producing part of the country to properly recognise how its contribution to land use emissions is also a reflection of its important role in UK food security.
- 2.9 The amendment does not affect the council's target to achieve net zero on its own estate by 2030, which remains unchanged.

### **Proposed timeline**

- 2.10 To be formally adopted into the council's policy framework, the draft Climate Policy will need to be approved by Full County Council. In line with this, the proposed route following review by Corporate Select Committee is for its progression to Cabinet on 4<sup>th</sup> March 2024 who can recommend its consideration by Full Council on the 26<sup>th</sup> March 2024.

### **3 Impact of the proposals**

- 3.1 The proposed policy ensures that the council's approach to climate change, as already set out in its Climate Strategy, is reflected in the policy framework and so is formally reflected in the council's governance arrangements.

### **4 Evidence and Reasons for Decision**

- 4.1 The Climate Policy fulfils a commitment made in May 2023 by Cabinet to reflect the Climate Strategy in the council's policy framework. This ensures it is effectively integrated as a policy governing how the council is run.
- 4.2 Changing the wording regarding the council's county-wide ambition will provide a more practical emissions trajectory to work towards in line with the UK's statutory net zero 2050 target.

### **5 Alternative Options**

- 5.1 The council could choose not to pursue a Climate Policy. This would leave a gap in the council's governance around this issue and mean not fulfilling the public commitment made by Cabinet in May 2023 to reflect the Climate Strategy in the policy framework.
- 5.2 In relation to its county-wide commitment, the council could choose to stick with its current wording in the Environment Policy. This would maintain the strong tone of ambition in working towards 2030 carbon neutrality for Norfolk, but it will not reflect a practical emissions reduction pathway for the county.

### **6 Financial Implications**

- 6.1 The proposed Climate Policy does not introduce new financial implications for the council as it substantively reflects the existing Climate Strategy as a policy document. The financial viability of specific initiatives that are introduced towards meeting the policy goals will have to be reviewed on a case-by-case basis to ensure they can be budgeted for and are financially sustainable. Key to successful delivery of initiatives related to the policy will be ongoing success in securing government grants. However, it will also require exploring wider channels of funding including leveraging in private sector investment and enabling community investments in local priorities.



## 7 Resource Implications

- 7.1 **Staff** – no new implications beyond what has been recognised through the Climate Strategy. Delivery of the initiatives that relate to the Climate Policy will be through existing staff resource or additional resource secured from partnerships or external funding sources. Furthermore, staff engagement is currently underway to build awareness of the council's Climate Strategy and seek direct input on ways the council can become more sustainable.
- 7.2 **Property** – no new implications. An initial £22.5 million capital budget has been agreed by Cabinet for investing in decarbonisation and building improvement works on the council's freehold building estate.
- 7.3 **IT** – no new implications

## 8 Other implications

- 8.1 **Legal implications** – introducing a Climate Policy into the policy framework will mean it that it is integrated one of the policies that governs how the council should be run.
- 8.2 **Human rights implications** – no new implications resulting from the proposed Climate Policy.
- 8.3 **Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA)** – no new implications beyond the existing Climate Strategy. For example, residents and visitors who are older, disabled, pregnant or have young children are likely to be especially affected by the impacts of climate change – particularly extreme heat, flooding and increased occurrence of disruptive events. There may also be opportunities to reduce inequalities through climate action, for example with more accessible and modern public transport and better designed infrastructure to encourage active travel including for those with mobility aids such as wheelchairs. The effect will need to be considered on a scheme-by-scheme basis.
- 8.4 **Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA)** – no impact identified.
- 8.5 **Health and Safety implications** – No new implications of the policy. Climate change increases risks from flooding, heat-related health impacts and other causes. Playing our part in mitigating it reduces these risks. More directly, investing in buildings which are better-adapted to the changing climate – through being better insulated, having properly maintained fabric, and where appropriate other adaptations – and adapting services to changed conditions mitigates health and safety risks.
- 8.6 **Sustainability implications** – the Climate Policy directly contributes to strengthening the governance around the council's climate action.
- 8.7 **Any other implications** – no new implications

## 9 Risk Implications/Assessment

- 9.1 The general risk implications of climate change were set out with the launch of the Climate Strategy. The more specific risks relating to the proposal of the Climate Policy are the regulatory and reputational risks. As we move closer to the UK's statutory net zero commitment, there is a likelihood of increased regulation towards achieving this as well as funding opportunities for local authorities demonstrating a clear approach on the issue. Introducing a Climate Policy will help strengthen the formal governance of the council's approach to climate change, and therefore help reduce its exposure to being unprepared for new regulations or responsibilities.

## 10 Recommendations

- 10.1 The Select Committee is asked to:
- Review and comment on the proposed Climate Policy, , including the new statement of the council's county-wide net zero commitment.
  - Endorse the Climate Policy's progression for Cabinet's consideration.

## 11 Background papers

- 11.1 [Cabinet Report \(10 May 2023\) 'Norfolk County Council Climate Strategy'](#)
- 11.2 [Climate strategy - Norfolk County Council](#)
- 11.3 [Environmental policy - Norfolk County Council](#)

## Officer contact

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

**Officer name:** Jonathan Franklin                      **Tel No.:** 01603223372

**Email address:** [jonathan.franklin@norfolk.gov.uk](mailto:jonathan.franklin@norfolk.gov.uk)



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# Norfolk County Council's Climate Policy 2024

## Introduction

It is beyond any reasonable doubt that climate change is taking place and its effects are beginning to be felt. This includes here in Norfolk, where our unique geography makes the county a special place to live but also one of the most vulnerable parts of the UK to a changing climate. What we do today can make a huge difference to protect our communities and natural places from the impacts of climate change, but also enable us to seize the real opportunities arising from the green economy.

As the upper-tier local authority, Norfolk County Council has a key role in shaping the local response to climate change in a way that reflects the specific characteristics and priorities of the county. The Council made a commitment to help address climate change in its Environmental Policy in 2019, and in June 2023 launched a comprehensive Climate Strategy. The strategy outlines how the Council will use its powers and influence to address climate change across seven focus areas. This Climate Policy:

- makes two overarching commitments; and
- brings out the key strategic priorities set out in the Climate Strategy for each focus area.

## Overarching commitments

- 1) Norfolk County Council will lead by example through making its own estate net zero by 2030. Estate emissions include those generated from the council's buildings, streetlights and vehicle fleet.
- 2) In 2019, the UK became the first major economy to enshrine a commitment to reaching net zero by 2050 into law. Norfolk County Council commits to using its powers, influence and partnerships towards supporting the county's low carbon development in line with the UK-wide target to reach net zero by 2050. We will look to keep Norfolk in step with the ambitious trajectory set out in the national carbon budgets of a 78% reduction in emissions by 2035 compared to 1990 levels, whilst recognising Norfolk's agriculture sector's vital role in food security and the implications for its land use emissions in the national context.

## Focus area 1: Reduce our estate emissions

The council's focus here is on reducing its carbon footprint rather than relying heavily on offsetting to achieve net zero. To this end, the council has set interim targets for its (gross)

estate emissions relative to its emissions in the 2016/17 baseline year as stepping stones towards reaching this target:

- 66% reduction by 2024/25
- 85% reduction by 2028/29
- 90% reduction by 2030/31 with suitable certified offsets for remaining 10%.

Achieving net zero by 2030 on the council's estate will be pursued through the following strategic priorities:

- Decarbonise and improve the energy efficiency of our council-owned buildings through a comprehensive retrofitting programme.
- Transition towards a low-carbon vehicle fleet and more sustainable modes of transport including e-cargo bikes.
- Upgrade the remainder of our streetlight stock to more energy efficient LEDs to reduce electricity consumption.

## Focus area 2: Reduce our indirect emissions

Our indirect emissions (also known as 'scope 3' emissions) represent the council's wider carbon footprint that we have influence over but which is outside of our direct control. This includes the carbon resulting from our supply chain, the companies we own, and the buildings we lease, among other aspects. We will reduce our indirect emissions through pursuing the following strategic priorities:

- Work with our wholly owned companies to reduce their emissions.
- Improve data quality of supply chain carbon emissions.
- Create carbon reduction strategies for key procurement categories.
- Integrate emission metrics in our procurement activity.
- Use internal carbon pricing where appropriate to inform carbon reduction options appraisal.
- Work with other large public sector organisations to develop procurement standards where appropriate.

## Focus area 3: Addressing Norfolk's county-wide emissions

This focus area steps back to address the bigger picture of how the council can support emissions reductions county-wide through its place-shaping activities and wider leadership role. The scale of potential influence here is much greater than with our estate and indirect emissions, but the degree of control we have over these wider emissions is also more limited.

The council seeks to take a pragmatic approach to supporting carbon reduction county-wide by prioritising the areas where we have the greatest opportunity to make positive change. This will be achieved across the sectoral themes set out below.

## Transport

Our Local Transport Plan represents its overarching strategy in relation to transport infrastructure until 2036. This Climate Policy aligns with its goals but more specifically focuses on decarbonisation of transport through the following priorities:

- Working with transport providers, to continue to positively influence behaviour change and increase the range and number of sustainable travel options available to residents, visitors and businesses across Norfolk. This includes bus operators and building on the Enhanced Partnership relationship we already have in place with bus operators and implementing Norfolk's Bus Service Improvement Plan.
- To prioritise transport investment into more sustainable modes, such as public transport and active travel including micromobility options, to help support the journey to net zero. This is especially important in areas where there is poor air quality, and these will be prioritised.
- To prioritise investment into net zero initiatives, including implementation of our Electric Vehicle Strategy, as part of proactive transport network management, to help residents, visitors and businesses across Norfolk become more sustainable.
- To improve connectivity between rural areas and services in urban centres, with a focus on active travel and public transport.
- To focus on identifying the key risks from climate change and directing efforts to tackling these where they are likely to be most disruptive to journeys, especially on the most critical parts of the network.

## The built environment

- Promote green skill development to support the domestic building retrofit agenda.
- Use our position to secure more resources, seek funding opportunities to support our partners in the retrofit agenda.
- With partners, help residents to understand and engage in retrofitting their homes by information provision and active promotion.
- Promote residential development that is sustainably located.

## The commercial and industrial sector

- Support the Local Enterprise Partnership's (LEP) Clean Growth Taskforce (and equivalent activity under successor arrangements) to facilitate behaviour change in the industrial and commercial sectors and encourage the sharing of best practice.
- Support the decarbonisation of the local commercial sector through continued funding schemes such as Carbon Charter.
- Work with local networks such as the LEP to support SMEs (small and medium enterprises) on their journey to net zero.

## Energy

- Work with the Norfolk Climate Change Partnership to evolve our energy approach for Norfolk.

- Develop an energy strategy for Norfolk County Council aligned with our net zero agenda.
- Support national decarbonisation of the Grid by expanding appropriate renewable energy generation across the county.
- Support an Offshore Transmission Network to minimise the need for any onshore infrastructure associated with offshore wind farms.
- Support the upgrading of onshore transmission infrastructure where this provides appropriate benefits to Norfolk's residents and businesses and helps in delivering clean energy for housing and employment growth in Norfolk.

### Digital solutions and connectivity

- Ensure high speed digital connectivity is made available to every property across Norfolk.
- Work to improve mobile phone coverage across Norfolk.
- Develop and allow free, universal access to IoT network connectivity.

### Waste and circular economy

- REDUCE: use targeted messages and work with the Norfolk Waste Partnership (NWP) to drive behaviour change to help reduce the amount of waste produced with a strong focus on reducing food waste.
- REUSE: provide reuse facilities and promote and support opportunities for reuse and repair.
- RECYCLE: use targeted messages to increase recycling rates and drive down levels of contamination by working with the NWP. Provide easy to use and convenient recycling centre services, keep home composting as a priority and support the District, City and Borough Councils in their recycling services.
- RECOVER: focus on treatment and disposal options for residual waste that are sustainable and consider emissions and recovery, and that are flexible enough to allow for waste reduction and composition change.
- POLICY: influence the development of national policy to support the move to the circular economy and a shift from weight based to carbon-based performance metrics.
- COSTS: promote a total system approach to reducing costs with the Norfolk Waste Partnership and assessing the implications of future funding changes on waste services and the possibility of an emissions trading scheme and the changes they will lead to.

## Focus area 4: Promoting a green economy for Norfolk

Technology improvements and government policy will drive demand for low carbon goods and services over the coming years. A workforce will be needed to match this, so it is vital that Norfolk gets equipped with the skills to harness the opportunities of the green economy for jobs and business growth. Furthermore, promoting Norfolk as a sustainable tourism

destination can help bring year-round value to the local economy. The strategic priorities for this theme include:

- Promote green skill development to support the development and installation of clean technologies to support decarbonisation county-wide.
- Grow the sustainable tourism sector to support year-round, well-paid, skilled careers.
- Support Norfolk's tourism and hospitality businesses to achieve Green Tourism accreditation.
- Provide access to green finance and investments through the Norfolk Investment Framework.

## Focus area 5: Climate adaptation

The impacts of climate change and the risks to Norfolk's communities and natural places are set to intensify over the coming decades. As a council, we must ensure that the vital local services that we provide are resilient in the face of climate hazards, and that we support the resilience of Norfolk's communities to the risks brought by coastal and inland flooding and extreme heat among others. Our strategic priorities to this end include:

- Work with the Tyndall Centre for Climate Change Research at the University of East Anglia to understand better the risks of climate change impacts on Norfolk and potential adaptation responses.
- Ensure new infrastructure is designed against appropriate assumptions on the future impacts of climate change.
- Learn lessons from the extreme heat experienced in summer 2022 and the implications for public services.
- Be the voice of Norfolk residents to government bodies like the Environment Agency on securing appropriate investment on adaptation across the county.

## Focus area 6: Ensure nature has space to recover and grow

Norfolk is a county of diverse and unique landscapes, some of which are recognised as internationally important wildlife havens. The natural environment also provides invaluable services for people, including water and air purification, flood protection, recreation opportunities, and carbon storage in soil and vegetation. These 'ecosystem services' are a vital component of climate change mitigation and adaptation in the county. The Council's Environmental Policy represents the principal policy expression on this theme, but complementary strategic priorities relating to climate include the following:

- Produce a Local Nature Recovery Strategy for Norfolk that prioritises areas for action focusing on species, habitats, landscapes and land use of importance to Norfolk with potential for carbon capture.
- Embrace nature-based solutions for climate adaptation and mitigation.
- Ensure that our actions on land use and nature recovery reflect the interests of the farming community and public at large.

- In September 2024, we will put in place a new robust and resilient monitoring scheme for biodiversity.

## Focus area 7: Engage and collaborate

Cutting across all the other focus areas is the need for engagement and collaboration. A key role for the council as the upper-tier authority in Norfolk is to use our position to bring together the businesses, academic, public and community and voluntary sectors towards delivering the right changes for the county. Our strategic priorities on this theme include the following:

- Work closely with the Norfolk Climate Change Partnership and the Integrated Care System to take forward mitigation and adaptation activities where collaboration can add maximum value.
- Create a carbon conscious culture at NCC by ensuring we engage with staff on the climate agenda.
- Develop and deliver a communications strategy to ensure that stakeholders are aware of the Climate Strategy, understand their role and know how to get involved.
- Facilitate a series of targeted engagement workshops with key stakeholders to refine specific aspects of the strategy and developing evidence-based action plans.



# Corporate Select Committee

Item No: 8

**Report Title:** Progress on Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Plan and Objectives 2023-2026

**Date of Meeting:** 15 January 2024

**Responsible Cabinet Member:** Cllr Margaret Dewsbury (Cabinet Member for Communities & Partnerships)

**Responsible Director:** Grahame Bygrave (Interim Executive Director for Community and Environmental Services)

## Executive summary

[“Better Together, for Norfolk”, the Council’s strategic plan for 2021 to 2025](#), sets out how the Council is transforming services to ensure financial stability and sustainability – and overseeing economic growth, to create jobs and opportunities and to cherish the environment. A priority in “Better Together, for Norfolk” is “No community left behind”.

The Council publishes a range of documents linked to “Better Together, for Norfolk”, which explain how we are delivering this priority for everyone in Norfolk.

Our [Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Plan and Objectives 2023 to 2026](#) is one of these documents. This report summarises progress to deliver Year 1 of the Plan, which sets out the following objectives:

1. Promote race equality and eliminate racism across our workforce, services and communities.
2. Provide services, information and environments that can be accessed, understood, and used to the greatest extent possible by all disabled people.
3. Promote equality for our LGBTQ+ service users and colleagues.
4. Deliver our EDI transformation plans in response to external inspections, peer and safeguarding reviews.

Progress on most actions is rated green, but there have been delays in progressing race equality training, the Accessible Information Standard and responding to the findings of Adults Peer Review, for reasons set out in the report.

It should be noted that ethnic minority employees continue to provide informal feedback about persistent racism at work.

Therefore, this covering report particularly focuses on race equality. A communications campaign is planned across the workforce in the new year to update employees on their responsibilities to promote race equality at work and the policies, guidance and training available to support them to do this.

Following consideration of this report by Corporate Select Committee, Cabinet will consider progress on 4 March 2024.

Detailed progress on the objectives is set out in **Appendix 1**.

## **Recommendations**

The Corporate Select Committee is recommended to:

1. Review and comment on the progress to date set out in **Appendix 1**.
2. To support the Committee to develop a greater understanding of topical and complex issues, consider whether a/some briefing sessions, covering specific topics, would be beneficial for example a specific briefing on the ethnic disparities occurring in youth justice.
3. Consider the role of the Select Committee in their support of Cabinet to continue to champion race equality in Norfolk.

## **1. Background and purpose**

1.1 The Cabinet approved the new [EDI Objectives 2023 to 2026](#) on 6 March 2023. The Plan covers services, communities, and workforce.

1.2 As a County Council, our capacity and budgets are limited, so we think carefully about what will deliver results. We prioritise actions based on:

- Our legal responsibilities – gaps in compliance.
- Independent reviews – for example, OFSTED, His Majesty’s Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services, the Care Quality Commission, and safeguarding reviews.
- Data about how people use our services and any inequalities they experience – and what will achieve the greatest impact.
- Views of different people and communities.

## **2. Proposal**

### **2.1 Progress on the EDI Objectives**

- This is set out in detail in **Appendix 1**.

## 2.2 Emerging issues in relation to Objective 1 – Race Equality:

- The focus of the Council’s objective to ‘promote race equality and eliminate racism’ is to ensure that employees have clear information, training and resources to understand how to manage racism at work – this includes:
  - Developing the ‘Managing abusive and violent behaviour compliance code’ and Bullying and harassment guidance to clearly set out the steps that managers and employees should take to manage racism at work and respond to complex issues – based on feedback from ethnic minority employees and managers.
  - Designing new training with race equality experts to ensure that managers and employees understand which policies to apply, and actions they should take to tackle racism at work.
  - Creating a new dedicated webpage on race equality at work, to make it easier for managers and employees to find what they need.
  - Ensuring that employees are aware of how to access wellbeing support if they are affected by racism (this includes internal well-being services and external charities providing support).
  - Addressing persistent existing, known, racial inequalities in services, identified by the independent whole-council review (for example, relating to the overrepresentation of black young people in looked after and youth offending cohorts and under representation in early help).
  - Undertaking consultation with people working in the care sector in Norfolk, to understand their experiences.
  - Supporting the establishment of a new black women’s network for Norfolk, led by volunteers – the first of its kind.
  
- The backdrop to this work is that ethnic minority employees working with children, adults and families continue to feedback informally to the Council’s employee engagement networks that they are affected by racism at work and do not feel this is being addressed effectively.
  
- It is difficult to quantify the numbers of employees affected, due to the low number of formal reports submitted by employees citing racism as a factor, and a lack of centrally held data. For example:
  - Racism by another employee or line manager is dealt with by the bullying and harassment policy. The policy encourages informal resolution at the first stage. HR are not always informed of issues that are investigated and dealt with at a local level, and where there are central records these are not currently categorised in a way that enables identification of where racism is cited as a factor.

- It should be noted however that the employee survey 2022 indicates that ethnic minority colleagues may be over twice as likely to experience harassment, bullying or abuse from a colleague or manager (8% of white colleagues and between 14-20% of ethnic minority colleagues reported that they had experienced harassment, bullying or abuse in the previous 12 months from a colleague or a manager).
- Racism by service users is dealt with by the Managing Abusive and Violent Behaviour Compliance Code. Racist incidents by service users must be reported on the Council's online incident reporting system - OSHENS. Employees can make a report themselves and the incident will be allocated to their manager to investigate, or employees can ask their manager to complete a report.
- Currently, few reports have been made on OSHENS regarding racist incidents. Communications have been issued to managers via the standard routes, but either this has not been absorbed or employees are not making formal reports.
- There is a range of information available, nationally and locally, that indicates that people tend to under-report racism at work, due to a range of reasons – such as a belief that it will not make a difference, or a worry that it could impact on a person's employment prospects or Visa status (if they are an international worker).
- The Council has agreed a whole-Council motion to promote race equality and tackle racism. Racism will never be tolerated and will be dealt with robustly and swiftly in accordance with agreed policies. **Appendix 1** to this report sets out the actions being delivered to safeguard ethnic minority employees and to eliminate racism.

### **3. Next steps**

- 3.1 Work will continue to implement the actions set out in **Appendix 1**, in relation to each of the four objectives.
- 3.2 Work will also take place to prepare for an internal communications campaign in the new year to update managers and employees on their responsibilities to promote race equality and the resources available.
- 3.3 Corporate Select Committee may wish to consider the role of the committee in continuing to champion race equality in Norfolk.

### **4. Impact of the Proposal**

- 4.1 Delivery of the objectives set out in Appendix 1 will enable the Council to address the operational challenges reported to Cabinet on 6 March 2023.

## **5. Evidence and Reasons for Decision**

- 5.1 The evidence for the proposals is set out in the [report to Cabinet on 6 March 2023 published on the Council's website](#).

## **6. Alternative Options**

- 6.1 The Cabinet could consider amendments to the proposed objectives or priorities. Alternatively, it could consider not progressing some priorities. This should be considered against the legal implications summarised below and the operational challenges reported to Cabinet on 6 March 2023.

## **7. Financial Implications**

- 7.1 The objectives detailed in this report can be met within existing budgets.

## **8. Resource Implications**

### **8.1 Staff:**

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

### **8.2 Property:**

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

### **8.3 IT:**

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

## **9. Other Implications**

### **9.1 Legal Implications:**

The Equality Act 2010 requires authorities to publish equality objectives every four years and to report annually on progress each year. Local authorities have a statutory duty under the Equality Act 2010 to pay 'due regard' to the following when exercising public functions:

- Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other prohibited conduct.
- Advance equality of opportunity and foster good community relations.

### **9.2 Human Rights Implications:**

No human rights issues identified.

### **9.3 Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA):**

This report sets out how the Council has given due regard to equality to comply with the Equality Act 2010 including the public sector equality duty.

The aim of this is to ensure that the Council continues to take full account of equality, diversity and inclusion when planning and commissioning services and, where necessary, puts actions in place to promote equality and address barriers faced by people with protected characteristics as set out in this report.

**9.4 Data Protection Impact Assessments (DPIA):**

None required.

**9.5 Health and Safety implications:**

None identified.

**9.6 Sustainability implications:**

None identified.

**9.7 Any Other Implications:**

None identified.

**10. Risk Implications / Assessment**

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

**11. Recommendations**

The Corporate Select Committee is recommended to:

1. Review and comment on the progress to date set out in **Appendix 1**.
2. To support the Committee to develop a greater understanding of topical and complex issues, consider whether a/some briefing sessions, covering specific topics, would be beneficial for example a specific briefing on the ethnic disparities occurring in youth justice.
3. Consider the role of the Select Committee in their support of Cabinet to continue to champion race equality in Norfolk.

**12. Background papers**

- 12.1 See Appendix 1.

**Officer contact**

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

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

## Appendix 1: Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Objectives 2023-2026

Objective 1: Promote race equality and eliminate racism across our workforce, services and communities.

Priority	Progress	Rating	Target Date	Lead
1. Publish revised guidance explaining all the steps managers and employees should take to tackle racism affecting service users and colleagues.	<p>The Council's <b>Managing Abusive and Violent Behaviour Code</b> and <b>Bullying and Harassment</b> guidance are being updated, to explain to employees how to report and record racist incidents so that they can be investigated, addressed and monitored.</p> <p>This includes new information about:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What to do if you're an employee affected by racism</li> <li>• What to do if someone you manage is affected by racism</li> <li>• What to do if you witness racism at work</li> <li>• What to do if the racism is caused by a service user – if so the importance of following <b>Guidance on sanctions G630e</b> which sets out the steps to take including sanctions that can be applied such as the need to contact the service user to explain that racism towards workers is unacceptable and will not be tolerated and the use of formal letters to service users regarding their behaviour.</li> <li>• What to do if the racism is caused by someone who lacks capacity to understand the impact of their behaviour</li> <li>• How to report racism, record the incident</li> <li>• How to support the employee and the risk assessments to put in place to keep the employee</li> </ul>	Green	31 March 2026	Director of People and Head of EDI



Priority	Progress	Rating	Target Date	Lead
	<p>safe and to ensure other employees are not unknowingly exposed to racism in the future.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How employees can access wellbeing support if they are affected by racism (internal well-being services and external charities providing support)</li> <li>• If you're a manager, making sure your team knows you will support them if racism occurs (don't wait for racist incidents to be reported).</li> <li>• The importance of establishing positive cultures in teams - for example –championing race equality and respect and dignity for all, diverse perspectives and ideas, listening without judgement.</li> <li>• Recognising that it can be difficult to talk about racism. If employees feel unable to report a racist incident to their manager they can ask a colleague or a trade union representative to support them, or they can contact HR for advice.</li> </ul> <p>This additional guidance will be published shortly.</p> <p>A new web page is under development, to bring together all relevant policies and resources for employees on tackling racism, to make this easier for employees to find.</p> <p>This new web page will also include links to new training on managing racism at work – both e-learning (to explain how to deal with racism and which policies to apply) and face-to-face learning.</p>			

Priority	Progress	Rating	Target Date	Lead
	See Objective 4 for progress on developing race equality training.			
2. Pilot restorative work with people who exhibit racist behaviour towards our employees.	Due to start 1 April 2024.	Not started	31 March 2026	Tbc
3. Undertake analysis to check whether the decisions we make about young people who are Black or from a Gypsy, Roma or Traveller background are equitable.	Due to start 1 April 2024.	Not started	31 March 2026	Tbc
4. Review the support available for Black and Gypsy, Roma and Traveller young people who are Looked After or Care Leavers, to check whether we take every opportunity to meet their needs.	Due to start 1 April 2024.	Not started	31 March 2026	Tbc
5. Work with independent Black equality experts to examine why Black young people are overrepresented in youth offending.	Norfolk Youth Justice Service (NYJS) is leading this priority. The latest position is: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Between January and December 2022, 277 children received an intervention from NYJS.</li> <li>Black children in Norfolk continue to be overrepresented on youth justice interventions (in 2022, 5.4% of young people receiving an intervention</li> </ul>	Green	31 March 2026	Director of Family Help and High Needs

Priority	Progress	Rating	Target Date	Lead
	<p>were black, which is considerably higher than the 1.3% proportion of black children in the school age population)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Black children were also the most likely group of children to be stop and searched and arrested.</li> <li>• White children were more likely to be offered diversion prior to receiving a referral order.</li> <li>• To address this disparity, the following actions have been implemented by NYJS: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Multi-agency group established (courts, probation, housing, NYJS, mental &amp; physical health, Children’s Services) to enable public agencies to work together to solve this disparity.</li> <li>○ Racism, discrimination and bias training has been included as part of assessment skills training for Norfolk Youth Justice Services managers and employees.</li> <li>○ Workforce development strategy includes mandatory training and induction (i.e. cultural competence training)</li> <li>○ Volunteer training includes focus on discrimination and bias.</li> <li>○ Stop &amp; Search session delivered to NYJS practitioners and an intervention tool created.</li> <li>○ Data sharing with Education teams in place to establish a more up to data comparator.</li> <li>○ Case management guidance updated to include relevant ethnicity recording.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>			

Priority	Progress	Rating	Target Date	Lead
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Guided conversations started in routine work reviews.</li> <li>○ Diversity audit carried out.</li> </ul> <p>Working with interpreters guide developed.</p>			
<p>6. Provide clear guidance to managers on how to promote race equality through policies and procedures and continue to undertake robust checks to ensure that our policies consistently meet agreed standards.</p>	<p>Each of the Council's departmental management teams is being briefed on the policies and resources available to promote race equality and manage racism at work.</p> <p>Managers are being asked to rate their services' current level of awareness of the guidance available.</p> <p>This has highlighted a low level of awareness regarding:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● How to support employees affected by racism</li> <li>● What policies to use to ensure a consistent approach</li> <li>● Where to record incidents.</li> </ul> <p>In view of this, and following launch of the new guidance, an internal communications campaign will be implemented in the new year, to ensure that all employees understand how to promote race equality and tackle racial discrimination; the relevant policies to apply to ensure a consistent approach and the training available.</p> <p>Following this, careful monitoring will take place to see if there is an increase in the number of employees feeling supported by the organisation if they are affected by racism.</p>	Amber	31 March 2026	Director of People and Head of EDI

Priority	Progress	Rating	Target Date	Lead
	This action is rated amber, to highlight the importance of ensuring that managers understand the information and resources available.			
7. Increase the representation of ethnic minority people in our public participation forums	<p>A review commissioned by the Cabinet identified that there were low levels of ethnic minority people on the Council's public participation forums.</p> <p>Work has taken place to identify which forums are in scope. Not all of these groups formally collect monitoring data, so work will take place with the chairs to set a baseline so that the Council can track progress over time, to ensure that public participation forums reflect the diversity of the local population.</p> <p>In Childrens Services, an audit of participation undertaken in 2023 showed that overall, ethnic minority children and young people were well represented across participation groups and activities. It is noted that the data is not sufficiently detailed to identify whether some specific ethnic minority groups continue to be under-represented and further work is required to ensure that learning from ethnic minority children and young people's participation is being used to inform service design and delivery.</p> <p>This action has been rated amber, to reflect that not all participations forums reflect Norfolk's diversity.</p>	Amber	31 March 2026	Executive Directors
8. Increase the visibility of ethnic minority people in marketing materials, so	The website has been reviewed. There is proportionate representation of ethnic minority people in images used but further work is required to ensure this approach is	Green	31 March 2026	Head of Communications

Priority	Progress	Rating	Target Date	Lead
that we are representing all the people we serve	<p>consistently reflected in specific marketing materials and on social media.</p> <p>The Council commissioned research with 45 black women in Norfolk in 2022. Participants in the research commended ‘the excellent services’ during the pandemic: and said the care shown by Norfolk County Council was exemplary and ‘the information and advice availability online and on the phone could not be faulted’.</p> <p>They also said that black women are often portrayed as ‘big’ and not ‘pretty, slim or attractive’ in the media.</p>			
9. Monitor whether the ethnic diversity of apprentices reflects the ethnic diversity of the Norfolk population	<p>In 2021, no apprentices were from a black, Asian, Arab or Gypsy, Roma or Traveller background.</p> <p>The ethnic diversity of apprentices has since increased to 3.1%. Overall, there were 203 apprentices 22/23.</p> <p>On 22 November 2023, Trading Standards service received a Highly Commended Award in the Diversity and Inclusion category of the Chartered Trading Standards Institute Awards for work to embed race equality into induction and support materials.</p> <p>Work will continue to monitor whether the level of ethnic minority apprentices is broadly in line with the Norfolk population.</p>	Green	31 March 2024	Head of EDI
10. Engage with black workers in social care in Norfolk, to understand	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>National research indicates that social care employees from ethnic minorities are twice as likely</li> </ul>	Green	31 March 2024	Head of EDI

Priority	Progress	Rating	Target Date	Lead
<p>whether their experiences reflect the national research</p>	<p>as white colleagues to experience harassment, bullying or abuse from service users or the public.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Council commissioned Dr Atuki Turner to complete qualitative research with 45 black women in Norfolk, primarily employed in the social care sector, to better understand their experiences.</li> <li>• The majority of women interviewed reported experiencing racism in the last year from service users.</li> <li>• The research report has been finalised and system leaders are being briefed. The report will be shared with all relevant agencies, and adult social care has agreed to lead discussions with care providers to examine how sector leaders can work together to ensure that ethnic minority workers are protected at work, and are supported by their manager or organisation if they are experiencing racism.</li> </ul>			
<p>11. Support black women in Norfolk to establish a new volunteer-led black women's network for Norfolk residents.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In response to requests from residents, the Council has sponsored a range of events to give black women in Norfolk the opportunity to consider whether they wish to lead and participate in a new black women's network. Volunteers have been nominated and a series of events have been well attended. The new volunteer-led network will be called the 'Norfolk Black Women's Chapter'.</li> </ul>	Green	31 March 2024	Head of EDI

**Objective 2: Provide services, information and environments that can be accessed, understood and used to the greatest extent possible by all disabled people.**

Priority	Progress	RAG rating	Target Date	Lead
<p>1. Improve Digital Accessibility through delivering our new road map which sets out the actions we are taking to comply with the Web Accessibility Guidelines AA Standard - and then beyond that to make our digital platforms as usable for as many people as possible.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The roadmap sets out actions to improve the accessibility of the Council's digital offer. It comprises 6 objectives each with a plan of action.</li> <li>• Currently, <a href="http://www.norfolk.gov.uk">www.norfolk.gov.uk</a> is rated 98.6% compliant with the Website Content Accessibility Guidelines Regulations 2.1AA (Silktide score) - an improvement of 8.1% over 15 months - and the Norfolk Community Directory is 97.8% compliant.</li> <li>• It is important to note that although this high compliance score has been achieved, users with physical, cognitive, learning or visual disabilities may find it hard to use online forms. For example, small fields may be hard to select; error messages do not sufficiently help users to correct errors or are only available visually.</li> <li>• In terms of the Council's other digital platforms, a lack of testing and accurate records makes access testing hard to assess. Available information indicates that most platforms have relatively poor accessibility.</li> <li>• Plans are in hand to migrate the Council's website to a new content management system that will</li> </ul>	<p>Green</p>	<p>31 March 2026</p>	<p>Head of Digital Customer Experience</p>



Priority	Progress	RAG rating	Target Date	Lead
	<p>significantly improve the accessibility of online forms and other website content for a wide range of users.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Training and guidance is being developed to support staff to create and commission accessible content.</li> </ul>			
<p>2. Publish revised guidance explaining the steps managers and employees should take (and the resources available to support them) to promote access for disabled people.</p>	<p>Work is underway to create a series of 30-minute learning briefings, to be offered as monthly 'lunchtime seminars' over the next 18 months, filmed so that they are also available 24/7 as a webinar, accompanied by a briefing note uploaded to Oracle Learn/Mynet on the following topics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How to effectively communicate with and address barriers for D/deaf and hard of hearing people.</li> <li>• How to effectively communicate with and address barriers for blind and partially sighted people.</li> <li>• How to effectively communicate with and address barriers for neurodivergent people.</li> <li>• How to chair or coordinate inclusive <b>physical</b> meetings – using the accessibility software and resources available in council premises and committee rooms.</li> <li>• How to chair or participate in inclusive Teams meetings – using the virtual access resources available (eg captions).</li> </ul>	Green	31 March 2026	Head of EDI and Director of People

Priority	Progress	RAG rating	Target Date	Lead
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How to enable good physical access for disabled staff/employees.</li> <li>• How to effectively induct/onboard a disabled member of staff.</li> </ul> <p>The first briefings will begin by 31 March 2024.</p> <p>A review of access to work guidance and arrangements is underway which will result in revised guidance being launched in 2024.</p> <p>It should be noted that Adult Learning recently won a Norfolk Education Award. The judges stated that they were ‘extremely impressed with the breadth of education offered by Norfolk County Council, recognising that those who teach on its wide range of programmes are supporting adults with often complex needs.’.</p>			
<p>3. Continue to implement the Accessible Information Standard - to achieve compliance and explore ways to overcome supply issues with formats such as Easy Read.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A review of compliance with the Accessible Information Standard (AIS) has been completed. The review has recommended some improvements.</li> <li>• The AIS is a legal requirement set out in section 250 of the Health and Social Care Act 2012 for publicly funded adult social care services to make sure that disabled people are given information they can understand. The Standard requires adult social care services to develop a specific, consistent approach to identifying, recording, flagging, sharing, and meeting</li> </ul>	Amber	31 March 2026	Director of Community Social Work in consultation with Head of Communications

Priority	Progress	RAG rating	Target Date	Lead
	<p>the information and communication support needs of service users, carers and parents with a disability.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adult Social Care has published a procedure on the standards of accessible information that must be used and how staff should make reasonable adjustments to enable people to communicate effectively. The review recommends an update to this procedure to include specific guidance on the provision of particular information formats or types of communication support. It is also recommends training be made available.</li> <li>• One particular challenge identified by the review is that some service users may request information in an 'Easy Read' format or British Sign Language interpretation. However, it is challenging to obtain Easy Read in Norfolk (and other areas of the UK), and the cost is often prohibitively high (e.g., £700 per document). There is also a low level of British Sign Language Interpreters – particularly those for in-person bookings.</li> <li>• This reduced availability can impact the timeframes within which Adult Social Care accessible information and communication support can be sourced and provided to service users. This is of particular importance for time-limited or time-critical processes, as highlighted by the Local Government &amp; Social Care Ombudsman.</li> </ul>			

Priority	Progress	RAG rating	Target Date	Lead
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To address the supply issues with Easy Read, Adult Social Care is working with Communications, to explore solutions. This is likely to take time to address.</li> <li>This action is currently rated amber/red, to reflect the problems described above in sourcing Easy Read.</li> </ul>			
4. Explore whether we can produce accessible templates of our commonly used business documents (eg policies, action plans, contracts, reports, presentations, plans on a page, job descriptions) so that people with sight loss, people who are neurodivergent and/or who have dexterity issues can access this information.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The aim of this action is to ensure that the documents staff routinely use are compliant with the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) Level AA.</li> <li>Templates are being developed and a central storage location for these has been identified.</li> <li>Engagement with services is taking place to identify further key documents requiring accessible versions.</li> <li>Further work will need to be undertaken to address access needs of people who require alternative formats (e.g., Easy Read).</li> </ul>	Green	31 March 2025	Head of EDI
5. Deliver our customer experience strategy, to ensure all our customers can communicate with us, particularly people who are Blind, D/deaf	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Extensive work has been undertaken by the Council to provide different customer contact options to make it easy for disabled residents (and non-disabled residents) to contact the organisation. Details are published <a href="#">on the Council's website</a>.</li> <li>Consultation has recently taken place with 100+ blind and D/deaf residents, and residents with learning</li> </ul>	Green	31 March 2026	Head of Communities and Customer Service

Priority	Progress	RAG rating	Target Date	Lead
or who have learning disabilities.	<p>disabilities, to discuss the current level of accessibility and to identify areas for improvement. This has highlighted issues which are being reviewed to identify potential solutions.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Following consideration of the consultation feedback, the rating of this action will be reviewed.</li> </ul>			
6. Continue to deliver our rolling programme of capital improvement, transport, infrastructure and technology – working with disabled people to identify, prioritise and address barriers to access	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Council is implementing several major capital projects (e.g., King’s Lynn and Great Yarmouth Learning Hubs, and the Hunstanton travel hub). Access considerations are being routinely incorporated into all projects.</li> <li>• Roll out of Changing Places provision across Norfolk continues. There are now 40 changing places toilets installed across Norfolk or being planned/built – funded by the Council or private providers.</li> <li>• A rolling programme of access audits for all Council premises has commenced, to help identify where access improvements can be made.</li> <li>• Ongoing support for managers is being provided to identify reasonable adjustments where required and environmental adaptations to meet the needs of disabled users.</li> </ul>	Green	31 March 2026	Director of Property

**Objective 3: Promote equality for our lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, questioning (LGBTQ)+ service users and colleagues.**

Priority	Progress	RAG rating	Target Date	Lead
<p>1. Publish revised guidance for managers and employees explaining the steps they should take if an LGBTQ+ service user or colleague is affected by prejudice or discrimination.</p>	<p>The Council’s <b>Managing Abusive and Violent Behaviour Code</b> and <b>Bullying and Harassment</b> guidance are being updated, to explain to employees how to report and record prejudice in relation to sexual orientation, sex and gender identity, so that this can be investigated, addressed and monitored.</p> <p>This includes new information about:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What to do if you’re an employee</li> <li>• What to do if someone you manage is affected</li> <li>• What to do if you witness prejudice at work</li> <li>• What to do if the prejudice is caused by a service user – if so the importance of following <b>Guidance on sanctions G630e</b> which sets out the steps to take including sanctions that can be applied such as the need to contact the service user to explain that prejudice towards workers is unacceptable and the use of formal letters to service users regarding their behaviour.</li> <li>• What to do if the prejudice is caused by someone who lacks capacity to understand the impact of their behaviour</li> <li>• How to report prejudice and record the incident</li> <li>• How to support the employee and the risk assessments to put in place to keep the employee safe and to ensure other employees are not unknowingly exposed to prejudice in the future.</li> <li>• How employees can access wellbeing support if they are affected by prejudice.</li> <li>• If you’re a manager, making sure your team knows you will support them if prejudice occurs. Don’t wait for incidents to be reported.</li> </ul>	<p>Green</p>	<p>31 March 2026</p>	<p>Director of People and Head of EDI</p>

Priority	Progress	RAG rating	Target Date	Lead
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The importance of establishing positive cultures in teams - promoting respect and dignity for all; embracing diverse perspectives and ideas; and listening without judgement.</li> <li>• Recognising that it can be difficult to talk about prejudice. If employees feel unable to report an incident to their manager they can ask a colleague or a trade union representative to support them, or they can contact HR for advice.</li> </ul> <p>A new web page is under development, to bring together all relevant policies and resources for employees on promoting equality for LGBTQ+ people, to make this easier for employees to find.</p> <p>This new web page will also include links to new training.</p>			
<p>2. Ensure that our business systems can accurately record someone's sex and gender identity – and where there are barriers, work with LGBTQ+ people to identify ways to remedy this.</p>	<p>The Council aims to record users' sex and gender identity accurately in accordance with the law and users' identity.</p> <p>Departments have gathered information on the systems they own which require users to provide information on sex or gender identity.</p> <p>The Council's modern systems tend to give flexibility in recording sex and gender, however older systems may not allow this. If the Council cannot accurately record identity information, there is a risk of causing harm or distress to the user and not complying with case law. Work is taking place to identify and address issues identified.</p>	Green	31 March 2026	Executive Directors

Priority	Progress	RAG rating	Target Date	Lead
3. Carefully consider public-facing services (such as the books and resources we provide in libraries), to ensure that we are meeting the needs of our increasing LGBTQ+ community in the city.	This action is due to start 1 April 2025.	Not started	31 March 2026	Tbc
4. Increase the representation of LGBTQ+ people in our public participation forums.	<p>A recent review commissioned by the Cabinet identified that there were low levels of LGBTQ+ people on the Council's public participation forums.</p> <p>Work has taken place to identify which forums are in scope. Not all of these groups formally collect monitoring data, so work will begin so that a baseline can be set and the Council can track progress over time, to ensure that public participation forums reflect the diversity of the local population.</p>	Green	31 March 2026	Executive Directors
5. Increase the visibility of LGBTQ+ people in our marketing materials, so that we are representing all the people we serve.	This action is due to start 1 April 2025.	Not started	31 March 2026	Head of Comms



**Objective 4: Deliver our EDI transformation plans in response to external inspections, peer and safeguarding reviews.**

Priority	Progress	Rating	Target Date	Lead
1. Deliver our EDI plan for Norfolk Fire & Rescue Service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The new Plan for 2023-2026 has been developed and is now <a href="#">published on the Council's website</a>.</li> <li>Currently, actions in the plan are rated green.</li> <li>His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire &amp; Rescue Services (HMICFRS) has recently inspected Norfolk Fire and Rescue Service, and a significant part of the inspection focused on equality and diversity.</li> <li>The final report from HMICFRS is due to be published in the new year and will set out recommendations on EDI.</li> </ul>	Green	31 March 2026	Director of Norfolk Fire and Rescue Service
2. Deliver our EDI improvement actions in response to Adults Peer Review 2022.	<p>The Peer Review highlighted a range of recommendations on EDI. Primarily, these related to the need to ensure that adult social care employees understand the department's priorities on EDI – specifically, what the key barriers are for service users and employees with protected characteristics; how these are being addressed and how employees can contribute to positive workforce culture.</p> <p>A programme of events to equip staff with this knowledge has been designed and was due to commence in October 2023. However, this was delayed slightly due to capacity issues within adult social care so a new start date is being identified and should commence shortly.</p> <p>This action is rated Amber, to reflect the importance of completing this work to satisfy Care Quality Commission inspection requirements.</p>	Amber	31 March 2025	Interim Executive Director Adult Social Care
3. Deliver our EDI improvement actions	<p>Recommendation M stated that "Although Cawston Park Hospital was not explicitly tolerant of racism, it did not address the fact that [a</p>	Amber	31 March 2026	Interim Executive

Priority	Progress	Rating	Target Date	Lead
<p>in response to Recommendation M (tackling racism) Safeguarding Adults Review – Joanna, Jon and Ben</p>	<p>resident] targeted ethnic minority employees. Hospital staff were not protected from their injurious encounters with him.”</p> <p>In response, the Council agreed a range of actions:</p> <p><b>(a) Publish clear policy setting out how managers and workers should respond to racism at work.</b> This is covered under objective 1 of this plan.</p> <p><b>(b) Ensure that social care workers have a system for recording, investigating and addressing racist incidents against employees.</b> The Council’s Incident reporting system (OSHENS) has been adapted to enable employees to record when an incident is racially motivated. This system requires managers to investigate and address the racist incident and record what actions they have taken. By the end of the year, racist incident reports will begin to be reported to departmental management teams.</p> <p><b>(c) Develop learning and development for employees to support them to promote race equality and tackle racism at work.</b> An e-learning offer on promoting race equality at work was developed and was due to be implemented in 2022 but testing with stakeholders identified it required further work. In view of this, new learning objectives and content have been agreed and developed, supported by independent race equality advisors. The training should be available for launch by race equality week in February 2024. A procurement process was undertaken in March 2023 to identify potential providers for face-to-face training on race equality. It was not</p>			<p>Director Adult Social Care</p>

Priority	Progress	Rating	Target Date	Lead
	<p>possible to appoint a provider, so an alternative is being developed. This has created a considerable delay in implementation. Mandatory e-learning is being fundamentally reviewed to reflect feedback from international social workers – relaunch planned by 31 March 2025.</p> <p><b>(d) Engage with black workers in social care in Norfolk, to understand whether their experiences reflect the national research.</b> Reported under Objective 1.</p> <p><b>(e) Promoting race equality in safeguarding.</b> Norfolk Safeguarding Adult’s Board is leading work to review data to check whether safeguarding referrals are equitable. This has identified a low level of referrals made for ethnic minority people. The Board will work with stakeholders to understand this disparity and to make sure that the right procedures are in place to keep ethnic minority residents safe.</p> <p>This action has been rated amber to highlight the delays to implementing the training set out above.</p>			
<p>4. Review our EDI learning and development offer – to help us to deliver the priorities in this plan and equip people with the knowledge they need to tackle racism,</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An update has been provided above on work to progress training on race equality and mandatory learning on EDI.</li> <li>• A range of other e-learning modules are in production, relating to allyship and disability equality.</li> </ul>	Green	31 March 2026	Director of People and Head of EDI

Priority	Progress	Rating	Target Date	Lead
homophobia, transphobia, and prejudice in relation to disability, sex and gender.				

**CORPORATE SELECT COMMITTEE – FORWARD WORKPLAN 2024**

Corporate Select Committee	15 January 2024	11 March 2024	Future/to be scheduled
	<p><b>Part A –</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• EDI</li> <li>• Climate Strategy &amp; Environmental Policy</li> </ul> <p><b>Part B –</b> Committee forward plan</p>	<p><b>Part A –</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Smarter Working</li> <li>• Digital Inclusion delivery model</li> </ul> <p><b>Part B –</b> Committee forward plan</p>	<p><b>Part A –</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Communication Strategy</li> <li>• Wellbeing Strategy (<i>review tbc</i>)</li> <li>• Digital Strategy update (tbc)</li> <li>• Customer Experience programme (tbc)</li> </ul> <p><b>Part B –</b> Committee forward plan</p>