



Norfolk County Council
at your service

Environment, Transport & Development Overview & Scrutiny Panel

Date: **Tuesday 14 January 2014**
Time: **10am**
Venue: **Council Chamber, County Hall, Norwich**

Please note this meeting will commence at 10am with a stakeholder meeting for the Business Rates Scrutiny item, adjourn for lunch at approximately 12.30pm and reconvene for the other items on the agenda at 2pm in the Edwards Room.

Persons attending the meeting are requested to turn off mobile phones.

Membership

Mr B Spratt (Chairman)

Mr T Adams	Ms A Kemp
Mr M Baker	Mr J Law
Mr A Boswell (Vice-Chairman)	Mr B Long
Mr B Bremner	Mr J Perkins
Mr R Coke	Mr N Shaw
Mrs M Dewsbury	Mr J Ward
Mr T East	Mr A White
Mr P Hacon	Mr M Wilby

Non Voting Cabinet Member

Mr D Harrison, Cabinet Member for Environment, Transport, Development & Waste
Mrs C Walker, Cabinet Member for Economic Development
Mr D Roper, Cabinet Member for Public Protection.

**For further details and general enquiries about this Agenda
please contact the Committee Administrator:**

Julie Mortimer on 01603 223055
or email committees@norfolk.gov.uk

A g e n d a

1 To receive apologies and details of any substitute members attending

2 Minutes of the meeting held on 26 November 2013

(Page 5)

To confirm the minutes of the Environment Transport and Development Overview & Scrutiny Panel meeting held on 26 November 2013.

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:

- your well being or financial position
- that of your family or close friends
- that of a club or society in which you have a management role
- that of another public body of which you are a member to a greater extent than others in your ward.

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

4 The feasibility of supporting local businesses through changes to the current business rates regime.

(Page 16)

Report by the Interim Director of Environment, Transport and Development.

5 To receive any items of business which the Chairman decides should be considered as a matter of urgency

6 Public Question Time

15 minutes for questions from members of the public of which due notice has been given.

Please submit your question(s) to the person named on the front of this

agenda by **5pm on Thursday 9 January 2014**. For guidance on submitting public questions, please refer to the Council Constitution Appendix 10, Council Procedure Rules or Norfolk County Council - Overview and Scrutiny Panel Public Question Time and How to attend Meetings

7 Local Member Issues/Member Questions

15 minutes for local members to raise issues of concern of which due notice has been given.

Please submit your question(s) to the person named on the front of this agenda by **5pm on Thursday 9 January 2014**.

8 Cabinet Member Feedback on previous Overview and Scrutiny Panel Comments (Page **45**)

9 Forward Work Programme: Scrutiny (Page **47**)

Report by the Interim Director of Environment, Transport and Development.

10 Recommendations from the Snettisham Access Working Group (Page **52**)

Report of the Snettisham Access Member Working Group.

11 Highways Capital Programme 2014/15/16 and Transport Asset Management Plan. (Page **62**)

Report by the Interim Director of Environment, Transport and Development.

12 Putting People First – Service and Budget Planning 2014/17 (Page **84**)

Report by the Interim Director of Environment, Transport and Development.

Cabinet Members will present the findings from the Norfolk: Putting People First budget consultation and the outcome of the Equality Impact Assessments. The responses will be included here and published on Putting People First webpage (www.norfolk.gov.uk/budgetconsultationfindings).

12a Findings from the public consultation and the outcome of the Equality Impact Assessments for proposals affecting Environment, Transport, Development and Waste (Page **98**)

12b Findings from the public consultation and the outcome of the Equality Impact Assessments for proposals affecting Public Protection – Trading Standards (Page **175**)

Group Meetings

Conservative Group
UKIP
Labour Group
Liberal Democrat Group

Colman Room
Room 504
Room 513
Room 530

Chris Walton
Head of Democratic Services
County Hall
Martineau Lane
Norwich NR1 2DH

Date Agenda Published: Monday 6 January 2014



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Environment, Transport and Development Overview and Scrutiny Panel

**Minutes of the Meeting held on Tuesday 26 November 2013 at 2.00pm
in the Edwards Room, County Hall.**

Present:

Mr B Spratt (Chairman)

Mr T Adams

Mr M Baker

Dr A Boswell (Vice-Chairman)

Mr B Bremner

Mr R Coke

Mrs M Dewsbury

Mr T East

Mr P Hacon

Mr J Law

Mr B Long

Mr J Perkins

Mr N Shaw

Mr J Ward

Mr A White

Mr M Wilby

Also present:

Mrs C Walker

Cabinet Member for Economic Development

1 Apologies

Apologies were received from Mr D Harrison, Cabinet Member for Environment, Transport, Development & Waste.

2 Minutes of the meeting held on 26 September 2013

2.1 The minutes of the meeting held on 26 September 2013 were agreed as an accurate record and signed by the Chairman, subject to the following:

- Paragraph 2.2 to read "The Panel noted the comments made by Mr White regarding the condition of the Fen Roads and the request for providing special funding for maintenance, junctions and haunching of these roads".
- Paragraph 8.2, second bullet point. To insert the word "junctions" within the brackets to read (including Fen Roads, junctions and haunching programme).

3 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

4 Items of Urgent Business

There were no items of urgent business.

5 Public Question Time

No public questions were received.

6 Local Member Issues/Member Questions

No local member questions/issues were received.

7 Forward Work Programme: Scrutiny

7.1 The annexed report (7) by the Director of Environment, Transport and Development was received by the Panel. The report set out the forward work programme for scrutiny.

7.2 Snettisham Beach/Common

The Panel received an update on the Snettisham Beach/Common from the Scrutiny Support Manager, who said that a meeting of the working group had been held on 21 November with stakeholders from Snettisham. Unfortunately not all the parties had been able to attend and a further meeting of the working group would be held in December to consider all the options available and also to receive advice from Defra on the powers available to the County Council regarding signage. The Working Group would bring a report, outlining their recommendations relating to signage at Snettisham, to the Panel meeting in January 2014.

7.3 Mobile Phones.

The revised terms of reference for this long-standing working group were **agreed** by the panel. The terms of reference had been redrafted to reflect developments including the Mobile Infrastructure Project, a national Government funded initiative, which would address the issues of "not spots". Although the project would not ensure perfect coverage across all of Norfolk, it was felt this was a good start.

Members raised a concern about how elderly people, who had mobile alarms fitted, could call for help if their landline telephone had failed and asked if this could also be considered by the working group.

The next meeting of the working group had been scheduled for early December and the Panel were reminded that all Members were able to attend working group meetings, with notice, if they wished. The Scrutiny Support Manager would let Members have the date of the next meeting.

7.4 Business Rates

The Panel's Scrutiny Group Leads had received a copy of the draft report asking for their comments. Once these comments had been received, the report would be circulated to District Councils and business organisations for

their comments.

The Panel **agreed** that the ETD O&S Panel meeting on 14 January would commence at 10am with a stakeholder meeting for the Business Rates scrutiny item, adjourn for lunch at approximately 12.30pm and reconvene for the other items on the agenda at 2pm.

Fracking

The terms of reference, attached at Appendix B of the report, were **agreed** by the Panel. The first meeting of the working group had been held and a schedule of meetings had been planned for 2014.

Broadband

The Panel would receive an update report at its meeting in March 2014.

7.5 **RESOLVED** to note the report.

8 Provision of Temporary Traffic Signs for Special Events.

8.1 The annexed report (8) by the Interim Director of Environment, Transport and Development was received by the Panel. The report set out the current criteria used by the Council to vet applications for temporary traffic signs, the national guidance issued by the Department of Transport and a summary of the concerns that had been expressed about the inflexibility of the Councils current approach.

8.2 During the presentation of the report, the Highways Network Manager informed the Panel that Norfolk County Council dealt with approximately 140-150 temporary traffic sign applications annually and the report set out the criteria currently used to consider those applications.

8.3 The Chairman welcomed Mr Martin Lake, mid-Norfolk Branch Chairman of the Federation of Small Businesses, who had asked to address the Panel. The following points were noted during his presentation:

- Whilst there was general agreement that having a proliferation of signs should be avoided, a widening of the policy was needed in order that businesses trying to advertise local events were not disadvantaged.
- Mr Lake asked if consideration could be given to widening the policy to place signs further than the five mile limit. This would make allowances for the rural nature of Norfolk and the distances some villages were away from main roads.
- Mr Lake also said he would like to see information such as the name of the event, what the event was and the date of the event included in the signage.

8.4 The following points were noted in response to questions from the Panel:

- The advertising on the highway protocol empowered Norfolk County Council to remove unauthorised advertising signs on the highway. This empowerment was regularly utilised, despite the resource intensive nature involved in the removal of signs.
- Signs for events on the highway, such as cycle races, were approved by the Police through involvement with the Safety Advisory Group and the Highways Network Manager confirmed he had not seen any cases where this approach had been inappropriate.
- The Panel requested that the words “under no circumstances” at paragraph 3.2 of the report, be removed and the word “exceptionally” or “normally” be inserted in order that the flexible requirements needed in north Norfolk could be maintained.
- The Highways Network Manager said that, to his knowledge, no-one had been prosecuted for erecting unapproved advertising signs, although the advertisers were contacted to advise them that the signs had not been approved and that these would be removed. Advice was given on how to apply for approval for erecting advertising signage. Following a suggestion that the Council may be able to issue on the spot fines for illegal fly-posting the Highways Network Manager agreed to follow up this suggestion with the Cabinet Member.
- Members asked if a policy was in place regarding advertising signs on roundabouts and the content of such signs if they were approved. The Highways Network Manager referred the Panel to section 2 of the report, which outlined the requirements of the policy.
- “Seasonality” in this instance referred to the summer months of June, July and August with the policy having been put in place to support out of season events and allow for more signage to be erected during the rest of the year.
- It was proposed to amend the criteria of the signs to include the date of the event, as Members considered this would make it easier to remove signs once the event had taken place. It could also mean more timely enforcement action could be taken if the signs were not removed in a timely manner once the event had taken place.

8.5 **RESOLVED** to note the contents of the report, including the guidance issued by the Department of Transport.

9 Environment, Transport and Development Department Integrated Performance and Finance Monitoring Report 2013/14.

9.1 The Panel received the annexed report (9) by the Director of Environment, Transport and Development, updating the Panel on the progress made against the 2013/14 service plan actions.

- 9.2 The Interim Director of ETD updated the Panel about the progress of the NDR submission. The Director said that the department was in the process of collating all the information required for the submission to the National Planning Service. Once this information had been collated and checked by the legal team and the QC, it would be delivered to the Planning Inspectorate who would then consider and validate the information. Once the Planning Inspectorate had validated the information, a date would be set for the Public Inquiry, which was likely to be spring/summer 2014. Once the application had been submitted, the feasibility study would be completed and a report submitted to Norfolk County Council Cabinet.

The Public Inquiry report relating to the Postwick hub was currently with the Secretary of State. It was expected that a decision would be known early January 2014.

- 9.3 The following points were noted during the general discussion:

- The risk register included all the information on how the risk relating to the Willows had been managed and had moved as the project had progressed. The risk had fluctuated between amber and red throughout the various stages of the project.
- The balance of reserves of £9.321m relating to the Street Lighting PFI, reflected the balance of payments to the contractor from the commencement of the project as well as the PFI credits held to pay for contracts which would be completed later in the scheme.
- The Panel requested that the Parish Council contributions to schemes under the Parish Partnership Fund remain at 25%.
- The Panel felt that consideration should be given to lobbying Government for help with funding the County Council's budget gap of £189m to try to avoid the inevitable cuts in services.
- A debate had been held at the full Council meeting on 28 October 2013 and a report had been received showing the options available to the County Council if planning permission for the Willows was refused. These possible options were:
 - Re-procurement of a new contract.
 - Continue to use landfill for the disposal of waste.
 - The County Council could procure the use of a neighbouring waste disposal facility.
- The Parish and District Councils had been involved in the development of the Rural Development Strategy for Norfolk. Action planning was now taking place, which included everyone who had taken part in the development of the strategy to ascertain the best ways to take advantage of any funding whilst remaining aware of the constant tension between sustainability and the need for development, with a balance needing to be

struck and maintained.

- The long-term trend showed a decline in people being killed or seriously injured on Norfolk's roads, although the short term trend showed an increase since the start of the current monitoring period in January 2011. Work was ongoing to try to identify the most vulnerable groups in an attempt to address this short-term increase and the Panel noted that the figures were still relatively small. It was confirmed that road casualty data was supplied on a regular basis to the officers supporting the A47 Alliance to try to help support the case for the A47 upgrade.
- A range of data was reported to the Joint Casualty Reduction Partnership, including data from different services including the police and ambulance service. This data could be used to map casualty statistics which could then be used to lobby the appropriate authorities for road improvements.
- The Finance Business Partner ETD agreed to ascertain the detail and the reasons for the overspend of £2,485,325 relating to the Northern Distributor Road and inform the Panel of the reason.

Mr Baker left the meeting at 3.30pm

- Members requested that acronyms were fully explained within the risk register.

9.4 **RESOLVED to note:**

- the progress against ETD's service plan actions, risks and budget.
- The contents of the Economic Intelligence Report.

10 Service & Financial Planning 2014/17

10.1 The Panel received the annexed report (10) by the Director of Environment, Transport and Development setting out the financial and planning context for the authority and gives an early indication of what this meant for Environment, Transport and Development service (ETD).

10.2 The points below were noted following questions from the Panel:

- Any increase in recycling rates was a net gain to the Norfolk County Council budget, although this would only show a saving if recycling rates continued to rise year on year.
- The 4.75% interest on borrowing 2013-14 was the assumed PWLB borrowing rate for a 25 year loan.
- Norfolk County Council was still waiting notification on what their share of the £2bn single growth fund would be, although Members were informed that the majority of this money would already have commitments assigned to it. Work was being undertaken with the Local Enterprise Partnership to

ensure Norfolk received its fair share of the funding in order that it could invest in the right schemes for Norfolk.

- The Panel stated they were not in favour of a reduction in the refilling of grit bins as they felt this could lead to dangerous road conditions, particularly if the same severe weather conditions were experienced as had taken place last winter.
- The Panel considered that removing funding for rural roads should not take place as they felt to wait an additional two years before maintenance was carried out on these rural roads could leave the roads in a dangerous condition.
- The subsidy paid for the coasthopper bus service was not based on the level of patronage. Members were reassured that the coasthopper service generated sufficient profit to run throughout the year, continuing to offer a good winter service to serve the people living in coastal villages. The incumbent operator had also confirmed that the service would continue.
- Members were concerned that charging £2 to dispose of waste at recycling centres may lead to increased fly-tipping and suggested that penalties for fly-tipping should be increased. The Panel noted there had been similar concerns about fly-tipping expressed three years ago when opening hours at recycling centres had been reduced although these fears had not materialised. Although some fly-tipping had occurred for a short period after the opening hours had reduced, these had not lasted long. If this charge was not agreed, the savings identified of £218,000 under this proposal would not materialise and would need to be found from other areas.
- Members also asked about the cost implications for staff handling cash at recycling centres as they felt the administration costs may be higher than continuing to offer free disposal of items. In response, the Panel noted that staff at recycling centres were already handling cash so there would not be any additional costs involved should a charge be levied.
- An annual amnesty at recycling centres would take place to offer people the opportunity to dispose of waste such as paint or tyres. The main aim of the County Council in suggesting a £2 charge was to try to encourage individuals to recycle items such as tyres at tyre manufacturing and fitting centres.
- If, under proposal 48, it was agreed to charge businesses for the advice provided by Trading Standards, the Panel were reassured that Trading Standards would continue to perform all their statutory obligations.
- In the event that applicants did not comply with the conditions of planning applications, inspections would still take place, although these inspections would be less frequent and may even only take place upon receipt of notification of an alleged breach of the conditions imposed under the

planning approval. This would be monitored on a risk basis.

- Free advice on planning applications would no longer be offered to businesses. This would also apply to applicants submitting applications for larger developments, such as supermarkets, who would no longer be able to receive free transport advice, although advice could still be given if a fee was levied.
- Under proposal 59 – Cut the cost of providing school transport. The Panel were pleased to note that this did not mean that the taxi service taking pupils to schools would be cut. Discussions were taking place to determine alternative options for pupils getting to and from schools, such as cycle training and encouraging farmers to provide ‘trods’ across fields to help people walk or cycle independently along roads without proper footpaths.
- The Panel were reassured that the tender process and award of contracts to Norse followed the same stringent procedure as for all other transport contracts.
- The Panel noted that any charity offering a community transport service would be required to prove they had enough reserves in a contingency fund to operate for a minimum period of three months in the event of vehicle failure. Charitable organisations would be expected to have a vehicle replacement policy in place. The accounts of these charitable organisations were inspected by Norfolk County Council to ensure they remained viable and had adequate reserves to fulfill their obligations.
- Although Norfolk County Council had been offering an enhanced recycling credit payment for food waste collections for some time, North Norfolk and South Norfolk District Council’s had decided not to roll out the food waste collection scheme in their areas.

10.3 The Chairman invited Cllr Pennells to address the Committee to talk to them about air to air heating systems in an attempt to encourage a reduction in carbon output. Mr Pennells advised that renewable heating subsidies could be obtained to install air to air heating systems, which in turn could help reduce electricity usage. Transferring to an air to air heating system may attract government subsidies and could be installed in small classrooms for approximately £1500. Mr Boswell also suggested that the County Council may wish to consider installing solar panels onto buildings and that replacing oil boilers with biomass facilities may also offer greater energy payback than air source heating.

10.4 Members of the Panel were reminded that the Norfolk Putting People First consultation was open until Thursday 12 December 2013. Once the consultation had been completed, all the responses would be consolidated into a report showing the impacts on all the departments. The Panel would receive a copy of the full report at its January 2014 meeting summarising the feedback from the consultation on the budget proposals.

10.5 The Panel asked that the following points be forwarded to the Cabinet Member for Transport, Development, Environment and Waste for him to request Cabinet reconsider some of the options proposed in the Norfolk Putting People First consultation:

- The Panel were against a reduction in the refilling of grit bins, as they felt this could be a danger, especially if prolonged wintery conditions were experienced this winter.
- Revisit the £2 recycling charge as the Panel felt this could result in more instances of fly-tipping which could cost the Council additional money to clean up.
- Parish Council contributions to schemes under the Parish Partnership Fund to remain at 25%.
- Delete the £1m saving from the maintenance budget as this was only for one year and maintenance on some roads was urgently required.

10.6 **RESOLVED** to note

- The revised service and financial planning context.
- The revised spending pressures and savings for the Environment, Transport & Development department.
- Updated capital schemes and announcements relevant to ETD.

11 Apprenticeships Norfolk – one year on

11.1 The Panel received the annexed joint report (11) by the Director of Environment, Transport and Development and Director of Children's Services providing Members with an update on the progress of Apprenticeships Norfolk, an initiative set up to tackle youth unemployment and encourage more businesses to employ apprentices, thereby increasing the skills base in the Norfolk economy. This was a joint initiative between Environment, Transport and Development and Children's Services departments.

11.2 The following points were noted in response to questions from the Panel:

- Members agreed that this was an excellent initiative which had been well received throughout Norfolk.
- If a young person appointed as an apprentice lived in Norfolk but was offered an appointment in Suffolk, the apprenticeship would be classed as an "appointment out of Norfolk".
- The College of West Anglia was a large provider of apprenticeships in Norfolk and this accounted for the high number of apprenticeships taken up in the King's Lynn and West Norfolk area.
- In an attempt to recruit apprentices, work was being undertaken to try to ensure that young people could afford to take on an apprenticeship, as

taking up employment as an apprentice may have an impact on any benefit payments they received. Her Majesty's Revenue & Customs (HMRC) had been contacted in an attempt to negotiate an agreement that the bursary apprentices received would not have an impact on their benefits.

- Members were reassured that work was being undertaken to publicise the apprenticeship scheme to ensure individuals were not financially disadvantaged if they took up an apprenticeship.
- The Employment and Skills Manager, Children's Services, agreed to circulate a list of the business sectors that had offered apprenticeships. The scheme had been targeted at, and had attracted, small companies in Norfolk.
- The Panel noted that if additional money was made available, the scheme would continue as it had been very well received in Norfolk.

11.3 RESOLVED to:

- Note the progress of the Apprenticeships Norfolk Programme.
- Approve a review of the final 12 months of the programme, to take into account the changing local and national landscape, including City Deals, as set out in paragraph 2.5 of the report.

12 Great Yarmouth Borough Surface Water Management Plan

12.1 The Panel received the annexed report (12) by the Director of Environment, Transport and Development providing a summary of the process and findings of the Great Yarmouth Borough Surface Water Management Plan (SWMP). This SWMP was jointly funded by Norfolk County Council, Great Yarmouth Borough Council and Anglian Water Services. These organisations formed the leadership of the project steering group that was actively supported by the Environment Agency and local Internal Drainage Boards (IDBs).

12.2 The following points were noted in response to questions from the Panel:

- The study had shown that there was a reduction in the number of properties which were liable to flooding and therefore there were fewer properties at risk than first thought.
- In response to a question about the sea defences at Hemsby and what work was being undertaken to prevent the erosion of the coastline, the Panel noted that the Environment Agency and the beach owner were monitoring the situation closely. The Panel also noted that following local fund-raising, some work was planned to be carried out by community groups to install some concrete blocks as defences.

12.3 **RESOLVED** to note the report and recommend its adoption by Cabinet.

(The meeting closed at 5.30pm)

Chairman



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The feasibility of supporting local businesses through changes to the current business rates regime

Report by the Interim Director of Environment, Transport and Development

Summary

This report is intended to provide the basis for discussion between members of the Panel and representatives of key stakeholder organisations, with a view to exploring the scope for supporting local businesses through changes to business rates.

Action required

Members are asked to note the contents of this report and, following discussion with stakeholders, to agree any recommendations they think are appropriate.

1. Introduction

- 1.1 This topic originates from a discussion at the Corporate Resources Overview and Scrutiny Panel of the new Business Rates Retention Scheme and the creation of a Business Rates Pool with Broadland District Council. In the course of discussion, concerns were raised about the difficulties being experienced by a number of businesses during the current economic downturn and it was agreed that draft terms of reference should be brought to the next meeting so the Panel could consider what action, if any, could be taken by the County Council, in conjunction with the District Councils, to attempt to reduce the impact of business rates on businesses that are struggling to survive. These draft terms of reference are available at Appendix A.
- 1.2 It was subsequently agreed to ask this Panel to undertake this scrutiny, given its remit for economic development, and a decision was taken to conduct the scrutiny at a one-off meeting and invite key stakeholders identified in the terms of reference to attend and contribute to the discussion and/or submit their views in writing. All such written submissions are available at Appendix B.

2. Background

- 2.1 The current system of non-domestic rates, more commonly known as business rates, is perceived by some to be an unfair, regressive burden on businesses and a contributory cause of business failure. Suggestions for its reform include:
 - Abolition and replacement with an alternative such as a sales tax or payments being based on a company's profitability
 - Temporary freezes across the board
 - Offering relief from payments to selected businesses
 - Exempting empty commercial buildings
 - More frequent revaluations
 - Using the Consumer Price Index rather than the Retail Price Index for calculating increases.

- 2.2 The Daily Telegraph, for example, has run a high-profile *Fix the Rates* campaign calling for a two-year freeze of business rates, followed by reform of the system. If the Government were to freeze the rates in 2014/15, however, local authorities in Norfolk would collectively face a reduction of around £8 million in what was previously expected.
- 2.3 Much of the publicity and debate surrounding business rates in recent months has been focused on the retail sector, especially concerning the ‘future of the high street’, where a combination of the economic downturn, high rents and increasing competition from online shopping and out-of-town retail centres has resulted in a growing number of business failures, including some national retail chains. This debate has been fueled in turn by two major reviews on this issue in the past three years – the ‘Portas Review¹’ and the ‘Grimsey Review²’.
- 2.4 The Portas Review was commissioned by the Government and culminated in twenty-eight recommendations, two of which were aimed directly at local authorities. The first of these was that “local authorities should make more proactive use of Compulsory Purchase Order powers to encourage the redevelopment of key high street retail space.” This recommendation is beyond the terms of reference for this report. However, the second was that “local authorities should use their new discretionary powers to give business rate concessions to new local businesses.” This related to Section 69 of the Localism Act 2011 which gives local authorities a power to grant relief from business rates in any circumstances, subject to the condition that a local authority may only grant relief if it would be reasonable to do so having regard to the interests of council tax payers in its area. Local authorities have had the power to grant rate relief for many years, but normally this has been directed at lone retail premises serving rural communities. The wording of the recommendation suggests this is still the motive behind it, rather than being applied to a larger number of premises on high streets for example.
- 2.5 The Grimsey Review was carried out by an ‘expert team’ led by the former Chief Executive of Wickes and Iceland, Bill Grimsey. It was set up as an alternative to Portas’ work, of which it was widely critical. Among its overall conclusions, the review saw a leading role for local authorities in establishing town centre commissions and developing long-term, holistic business plans for their town centres. It also made a number of recommendations for business rates reform by central Government. In terms of local action on business rates, the review noted that only a handful of councils intended to grant the discretionary business rates discounts under the Localism Act, as recommended in the Portas Review, and proposed that more local authorities could use their discretion to allow businesses to spread payments over a longer period.
- 2.6 In a highly critical interview with The Guardian newspaper, published on 4 September 2013, Bill Grimsey is quoted as saying:

“The evidence I’ve seen leaves me in no doubt. Councils need to significantly raise their game to give the high street a fighting chance.....Only 18 of 326 councils are using clause 69 of the Localism Act to reduce business rates. In contrast, buoyed by new legislation which promotes a mentality described by DCLG officials in

¹ The Portas Review – An independent review into the future of our high streets, December 2011.

² The vanishing high street: the Grimsey Review, September 2013

response to a freedom of information request as “the more unpaid bills they collect, the more money they retain”, councils have increased the use of bailiffs by 20%. We estimate that one in seven business premises in England were summoned over business rates last year. At a time when businesses need a degree of understanding and flexibility, a picture is emerging of an over-zealous culture that’s starting to aggressively squeeze small businesses on the high street.”

2.7 A report from the British Retail Consortium³, published in the same month as the Grimsey Review, concludes that the current business rates system is ‘structurally’ no longer fit for purpose, that it impacts disproportionately on the retail sector and that it is unsustainable. It also points to the economic and social costs of business failure, some of which falls directly on local authorities. However, while the report highlights the recommendation from the Portas Review concerning local authority discretion under the Localism Act, it also recognises that any attempts by local authorities to use these flexibilities would need to be funded by those authorities and that this would have “potential implications for other local authority services, including economic development, particularly given the continuing funding cuts facing the sector.” It should also be noted that if we were to find the resources to apply more widespread relief to a certain area, it would probably lead to a detrimental knock on effect elsewhere. More recently, the Consortium has set up a committee to find an alternative to the current system with the aim of promoting growth without reducing revenues, as well as reinvigorating the High Street.

2.8 The following sections of this report address the issues and questions outlined in the terms of reference at Appendix A.

3. What evidence is there that business rates are a significant cause of business failure?

3.1 Business rates have become a significant part of business overheads. Between 2008/09 and 2012/13 the cost has risen by 22.51% with successive large increases in September’s RPI. The Office for Budget Responsibility has forecast that for the first time business rate receipts will overtake council tax receipts by 2015/16.

3.2 Research conducted in England by the Federation of Small Businesses (FSB) also supports the view that rates are a significant part of business overheads. Results showed that business rates were typically the third highest cost after wages and rent, and that business rates were higher than rent for 7% of companies⁴.

3.3 Unlike corporation tax and VAT, business rates do not ebb and flow with the UK economy. Current rate liabilities are based on rental values as at April 2008, since then rents have fallen by an average of 14% across the county. There is a belief that there is significant disparity between rates and rent paid and therefore a growing sense that business rates have become an unsustainably high burden for businesses, leading to increased numbers of business premises being summonsed over business rates and increased use of Bailiffs by councils to collect business rates.

3.4 The retail industry has been hit particularly hard by not only business rates but also the economic recession and changes in consumer behaviour. Online retail shopping now accounts for 9.7% of the market, with the Centre for Retail Research

³ ‘Business Rates: The Case for Reform, September 2013

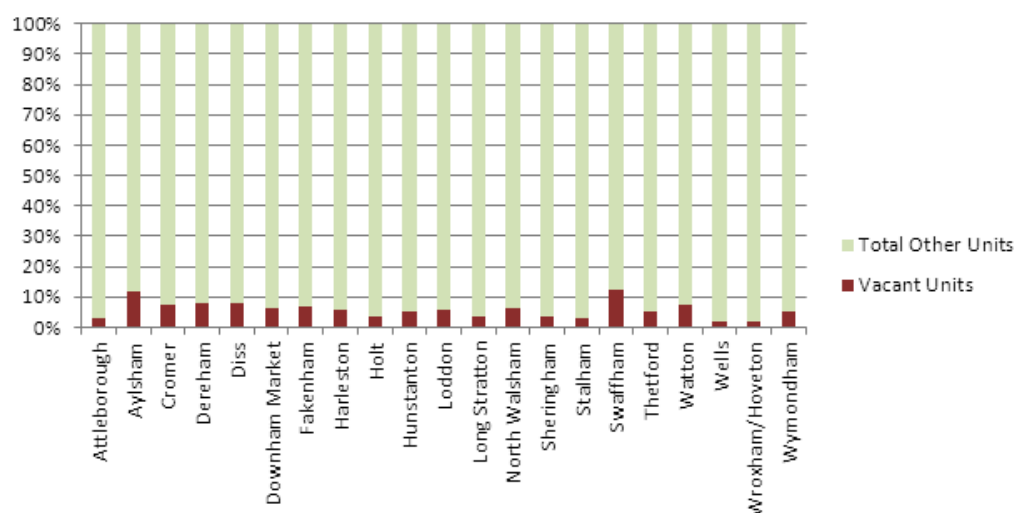
⁴ <http://www.fsb.org.uk/News.aspx?loc=pressroom&rec=8127>

forecasting this to increase to 21.5% by 2018. Businesses are struggling and will continue to struggle. High Streets have always been extremely responsive to changing demand. The difference now is the rate of change has been more rapid. Average UK shop vacancy rates have grown from 4% in 2008 to 14.1% today. The figure for town centres is 12.5%; for retail parks it is 9.6% and for shopping centres (malls, major high streets etc) it is 16.1%. There are 40,000 empty shops in the UK. In July 2013, 46.6% of retailers had total liabilities totalling £5,000 or more than total assets.

Despite this, Norfolk seems to be faring well and has shop vacancy rates below the national average.

In Norwich City Centre, the vacancy rate is 6.2% (Sept 2013) and in King's Lynn the figure is 9.1%. From a study taken in the summer of 2013, the vacancy rate was 17.2% in Great Yarmouth and 6.3% in Gorleston.

The graph below shows the percentage proportion of unit vacancies and occupations in each market town in Norfolk, taken from the Market Towns Survey 2013. All of Norfolk's market towns compare favourably with the national town centre vacancy rate average across the UK of 12.5%. Norfolk's average vacancy rate is less than half the rate at 6.12%.



However, the low vacancy rate could be attributed to the fact that Norfolk's rural market towns have fewer shop units in total when compared to other towns across the UK and the letting of one or two vacant units can have a dramatic effect on the rate. Press articles over the last few years show that there are some localised problems, for example Aylsham and most notably Swaffham where a local partnership has set up the Swaffham Shops Project to help find a solution to their increasing number of vacant shop units.

- 3.5 It should be stressed that business rates are not the only cause of business failure on high streets and that a number of other factors can play a part in causing a business to struggle or to fail. No doubt, the need to pay business rates can present a major cost. However, when a business is being planned, prior to launch; or during a time of expansion or other change, the business owner will be aware of this and other fixed costs and plan for these accordingly.
- 3.6 On some occasions, where business rates are attributed to a business's closure, it is not because they are too high, or because they are payable at all, but more

simply because the business was or had become unviable. Norfolk and Waveney Enterprise Services (NWES) works with both new and existing businesses and sees at first hand how rates are often blamed as the reason for failure; Andrew Wilson, Head of Enterprise Services at NWES says that;

“When businesses are in trouble, they can cite rates as an issue because they see it as a tax and not a cost that is related to the delivery of their business, when in fact it is an existing profitability issue that is the main cause of failure. As a generalisation the issues causing problems for the business and in paying rates is more to do with poor business management, strategy or planning. The business will rarely admit this and blame rates.”

This highlights the need for high quality business support to both new and existing businesses, either at the point of start up or expansion, so that they are informed about the costs they need to pay now and in the future and can remain resilient.

3.7 Since the demise of Business Link in 2011, publicly funded business support that had been universally available has diminished substantially. Businesses that will generally be found on the High Street are now expected to pay for business advice and support. Enterprise Norfolk, a Norfolk County Council led programme, is helping to address the need for high quality business support. Through the provision of expert help and advice in how to start a business, the programme is increasing not only the new business start up rate in Norfolk, but also helping to ensure those that do start up are resilient for the future.

3.8 Statistics from the Office of National Statistics show the most recent picture of start up activity in Norfolk;

In 2012, there were 2,655 new business start-ups in Norfolk, a rate of 8.8%. By comparison there was a business start-up rate of 10.7% in the East of England region and a rate of 11.8% in England. Norfolk’s business start-up rate is also lower than some neighbouring counties (Cambridgeshire 9.9%, Lincolnshire 10.7% and Suffolk 8.8%).

3.9 In 2012 there were 2,960 business closures in Norfolk, a rate of 9.8%. By comparison there was a regional business closure rate of 10.3% and an England rate of 11% in 2012. Business closure rates in adjoining counties are similar to those in Norfolk (Cambridgeshire 9.2%, Suffolk 9.5% and Lincolnshire 10.5%).

3.10 In 2012 the number of business closures in Norfolk (2,960) was greater than business start-ups (2,655). This is a trend which can be seen in each of the last five years; 2008 (-150), 2009 (-445), 2010 (-510), 2011 (-275) and 2012 (-305).

4. How does the current business rates scheme operate?

4.1 The current business rates scheme is universally applied to all business premises. In Norfolk rates bills are issued and the revenue subsequently collected by the district councils. There is no discretion over the amount collected as the two key variables are determined nationally. Firstly, the Valuation Office calculates the rateable value of the building; the key determinant for which is rental value which the Valuation Office assesses. The Government recently decided to postpone the next revaluation to 2017. The rateable value is then multiplied by the Business Rates Multiplier which is set by Central Government. Each year this rate increases by September’s Retail Price Index (RPI). Small businesses in England get a slightly

lower rate. The process of uprating by September's RPI has come under fire and there are calls to use annualised Consumer Price Index (CPI). Businesses saw their bills increase by 5.6% on April 2012.

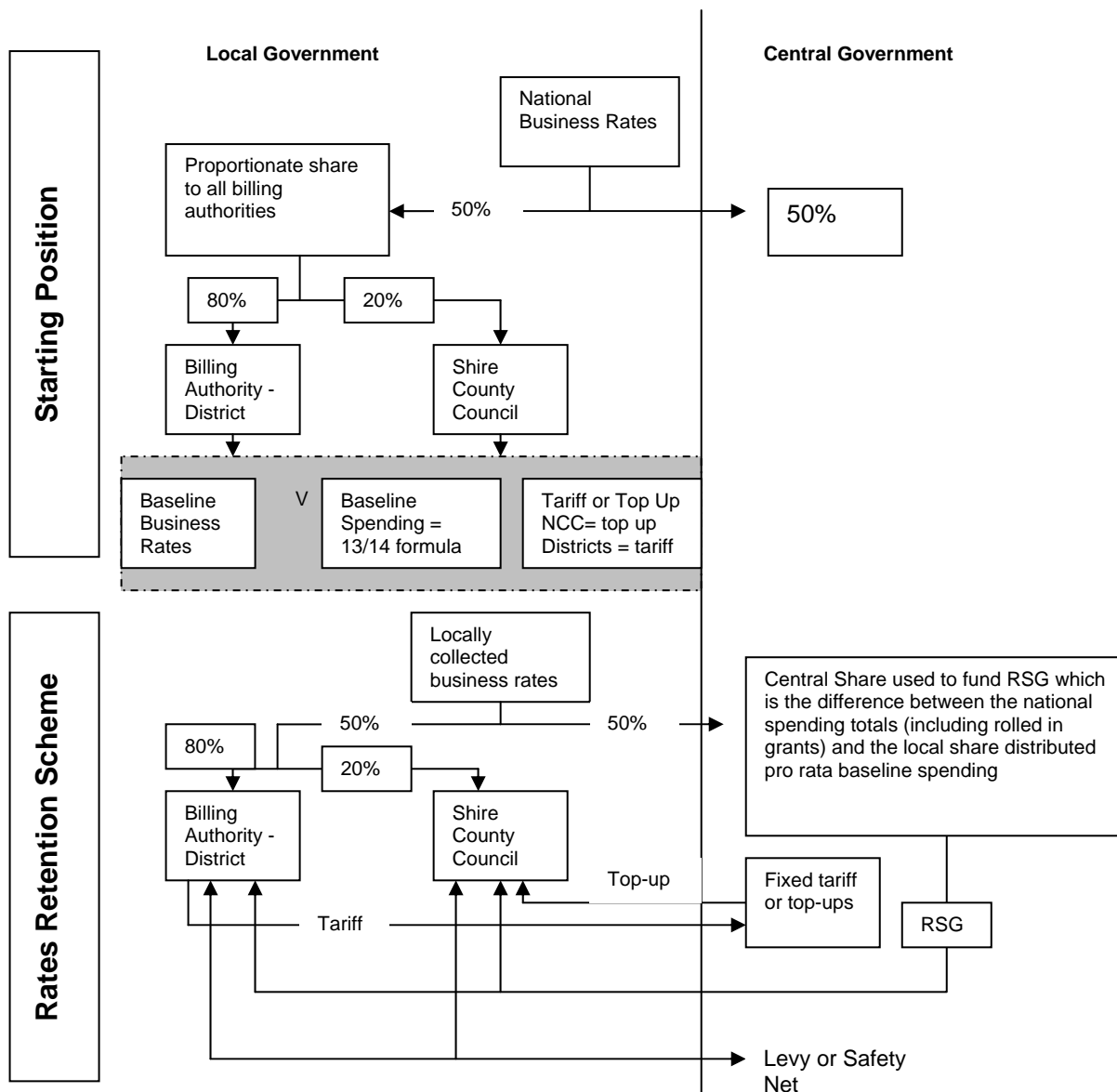
It can therefore be seen that, if fairly applied, businesses occupying properties of similar value should be paying rates of a similar amount. Of course, this takes no account of the profitability or turnover of each business, but on the other hand it should question whether the struggling business is in the most appropriate location.

- 4.2 2013/14 NNDR1 forms (district council forecasts of rates submitted in January 2013) show 32,872 rateable properties in Norfolk with average business rates payable before reliefs of £9,301.

	No. of hereditaments	Gross Yield before Reliefs	Average payable before reliefs
Breckland	4,130	£34,037,024	£8,241
Broadland	3,257	£33,359,652	£10,242
Gt. Yarmouth	4,651	£35,353,961	£7,601
King's Lynn & West	5,283	£48,436,134	£9,168
North Norfolk	6,046	£29,650,789	£4,904
Norwich	5,903	£90,809,773	£15,384
South Norfolk	3,602	£34,097,381	£9,466
	32,872	£305,744,714	£9,301

- 4.3 With the introduction of the new Business Rates Retention Scheme, local authorities will be able to benefit from 50% of business rates growth (or indeed suffer the consequences of business rates decline) in their area. The new scheme is designed to incentivise local authorities into stimulating growth. It is complex, involving a system of tariffs and levies, however, at its simplest, for every £100 change in rates in Norfolk £50 would go to central government, £40 to the district councils and £10 to NCC.

With financial incentive built into the new scheme local authorities may want to encourage the growth of business that will deliver the highest business rate returns. Given that supermarkets and department stores provide some of the highest income presently, it could lead to more being encouraged in the future. Clearly this could put even more pressure on the high street.



5. What Rate relief has already been offered?

- 5.1 Councils already offer mandatory reliefs for small businesses, charities, sports clubs, rural areas and vacant premises (only a short period of time for vacated premises). Government has already recognised the requirement to encourage speculative development and has recently consulted on offering relief to new builds that are left lying empty for 18 months after construction. Businesses in the New Anglia enterprise zone in Gt Yarmouth are also offered exemptions from paying business rates, but this is a key feature of the enterprise zone programme. South Denes and Beacon Park in Gorleston are the only sites in Norfolk to benefit from this status and there are only 22 other locations in England
- 5.2 In 2012/13, Government introduced the business rates deferral scheme allowing business to defer the payment of 3.2% of rates over the next two financial years. It remains to be seen whether such a scheme will continue.
- 5.3 In 2012/13, councils granted nearly £2.4bn of mandatory relief. This included a total of £1.3bn of mandatory charity relief (13% higher than the previous year) and nearly £1bn of relief for empty properties (11% higher than the previous year).

- 5.4 None of the above can really be applied to help businesses on the struggling 'High Street'. There are simply too many and even if assistance was applied to one location due to it appearing to struggle the most, any improvement in fortunes would probably be at the expense of another nearby location. However, councils can offer further discretionary reliefs, including hardship relief to businesses if they wish. The council may reduce business rates where the rate payer would otherwise sustain hardship, and where it would be in the interests of the community to do so. As well as more rural businesses, this is only likely to be applied to significant businesses whose closure or downsizing would have a seriously deleterious impact on the local economy.
- 5.5 Nationally the discretionary hardship relief offered to businesses from local authorities has increased from £1.3m in 2008/09 to £3.5m in 2012/13. Discretionary hardship relief in Norfolk has increased, however, still only stands at £110,400 in 2012/13. As a whole, discretionary relief in Norfolk has only risen 9% in five years.

NORFOLK	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13
Discretionary charitable relief	89,730	99,810	102,212	118,251	122,193
Discretionary non-profit-making body relief	405,092	408,582	348,259	329,134	320,599
Discretionary CASC relief	1,524	2,484	2,121	2,978	3,262
Discretionary rural shop and post office relief	86,756	94,830	89,603	94,278	107,061
Discretionary other rural relief	41,495	36,293	49,980	46,784	44,609
Discretionary hardship relief	28,240	67,767	90,188	62,343	110,400
Discretionary charges on property relief	4,288	0	0	0	9,852
	657,125	709,766	682,363	653,768	717,976
ENGLAND					
Discretionary charitable relief	9,064,978	10,141,406	10,481,000	11,365,954	11,146,738
Discretionary non-profit-making body relief	27,878,105	28,912,560	26,084,031	27,674,629	26,494,912
Discretionary CASC relief	229,632	246,984	247,546	280,840	307,242
Discretionary rural shop and post office relief	2,090,088	2,296,390	1,955,507	2,146,196	2,271,539
Discretionary other rural relief	1,265,527	1,410,693	1,196,592	1,229,354	1,312,025
Discretionary hardship relief	1,304,804	3,710,521	3,280,243	4,582,986	3,534,546
Discretionary charges on property relief	70,732	52,280	8,269	31,110	70,550
	41,903,866	46,770,834	43,253,188	47,311,069	45,137,552

- 5.6 With the introduction of the new Business Rates Retention Scheme, local authorities have been granted the power to offer further discretionary rate relief

where they see fit. The new set up means central government will take 50% of the lost rate income, district councils 40% and county councils 10%. In 2013/14 no Norfolk authorities and only 5.5% of authorities nationally planned on offering this relief.

6. Autumn Statement 2013

- 6.1 The Government used the Autumn Statement to announce a range of measures to help business. The most significant being the capping of the 3.2% RPI increase in business rates to 2% in 2014-15.
- 6.2 There will also be a discount of up to £1,000 against business rates bills for retail and food and drink premises with a rateable value of up to £50,000 in 2014-15 and 2015-16.
- 6.3 There will be a further extension of the doubling of the Small Business Rate Relief (SBRR) to April 2015; it was due to end April 2013. This means that around 360,000 of the smallest businesses will continue to receive 100% relief from business rates until April 2015, with around a further 180,000 benefiting from tapering relief.
- 6.4 SBRR criteria will be amended to allow businesses in receipt of SBRR to keep it for 1 year when they take on an additional property that would currently cause them to lose SBRR, in order to help small businesses with expansion costs.
- 6.5 Introduction of a temporary reoccupation relief. A 50% business rates relief for 18 months up to the state aid limits will be available for businesses that move into retail premises that have been empty for a year or more. The relief will be granted to businesses moving into empty premises on or after 1 April 2014 and on or before 31 March 2016.
- 6.6 With over 168,000 cases of rating appeal outstanding as at September 2013, the Government announced a commitment to resolve 95% of outstanding cases by July 2015. The Government will consult in 2014 on changes to provide greater transparency over how rateable values are assessed, improve confidence in the system and allow well-founded challenges to be resolved faster, preventing backlogs building up in future.
- 6.7 The Government will legislate to allow business rates bills to be spread over 12 months rather than 10 months as currently, with effect from 1 April 2014, to help with cash flow and affordability. The Government will also discuss with business options for longer-term administrative reform of business rates post-2017.

7. Why reduce rates?

- 7.1 Even with the measures announced in the Autumn Statement, some struggling businesses will see a 2% increase on their 2014-15 business rates bill.
- 7.2 It is important to remember that, while business rates may be a significant overhead for small businesses, they are not the only overhead. Any reduction in rates would reduce local government income. It is difficult to imagine utility companies, landlords or the HMRC taking a similar approach and reducing bills.

- 7.3 Furthermore, any rate support to individual businesses will create distortions in the local market and possible unfair competition. However, uniform rate discounts in areas like town centres could help all businesses in these areas. Norfolk authorities will be keen to avoid empty premises in town centres, which may detract from the local area and harm rates income through empty property relief.
- 7.4 The table below shows Norfolk following the national trend over the last five years in increased losses in collection (45% increase), partly-occupied premises relief (194%) and empty premises relief (81%).

NORFOLK	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13
Losses in collection	1,625,969	1,819,569	1,292,036	1,479,149	2,355,256
Partly-occupied relief	209,227	143,290	128,005	909,540	614,774
Empty premises relief	5,231,349	12,300,035	11,912,406	8,309,070	9,479,422
ENGLAND					
Losses in collection	215,163,068	238,318,611	231,010,566	260,148,643	361,922,030
Partly-occupied relief	36,292,995	45,246,857	58,050,087	77,038,348	79,312,066
Empty premises relief	487,039,780	1,117,138,400	1,121,715,462	857,414,572	950,662,248

8. What would be the financial impact of making further changes?

- 8.1 The new Business Rates Retention Scheme means any relief offered will reduce the funding received by local government. A £100 reduction in rates could reduce district council funding by £40 and county council funding by £10.

The Business Rates Retention Scheme uses a system of tariffs and top ups that protects upper tier authorities somewhat as a large proportion of income comes from an indexed linked top up. District councils, however, are more at risk from any reductions in rate income.

	Norwich City Council	Norfolk County Council	Central Government
Rates Baseline 2013-14 (Government forecast of rates)	30,144,312	24,994,701	
Top Up from Central Gov / (Tariff to Central Gov)	-24,914,463	110,427,038	
	5,229,849	135,421,739	
£100k Rate Relief to Business	-40,000	-10,000	-50,000
% reduction in Authority Rates income	-0.765%	-0.007%	

9. What is the financial impact of doing nothing?

- 9.1 In 2012/13, councils nationally collected £21.9bn in business rates of £22.4bn due. Business rates arrears currently stand at £1.2bn. As this local tax remains to be collected, it cannot currently be used to support the delivery of services. In 2012/13, the uncollected in-year amount was £513m.

Since 2007/08 collection rates have declined, likely to have been affected by the

financial crisis, subsequent recession and its related income.

- 9.2 Before April 2013, councils could deduct any arrears they had written off from the amount they paid to the national pool, so there was no direct financial loss to the council. Under the new arrangements, councils have a greater incentive to maximise collection of rates, as a proportion is now retained locally.

Increasing business rates base and maximising rates collected will financially benefit councils.

Empty shops generate little money. Business rates are not paid on empty properties for three months.

- 9.3 Norfolk authorities need to decide whether offering rate relief will create enough benefits through regenerating areas and avoiding losses in collection and empty premises relief, to outweigh the forgone discounted business rates. They will also need to consider whether relief offered in one location will distort the local market, create disparity and simply shift the problem to another neighbouring street/town.

10. Should we be concentrating on other actions?

- 10.1 Many believe business rates are only part of the problem for struggling high street stores, and that other actions should be implemented to make high streets attractive, diverse and distinct in order to compete with the convenience and cost effectiveness and convenience of internet shopping.

- 10.2 The Portas Report has recommended high streets be more than just about shopping, becoming a 'social hub' for shopping, learning and socialising. Other ideas from the report include; town teams managing high streets, affordable car parking, town centre first approach to planning, greater inclusion of the high street in neighbourhood planning and disincentives for landlords who leave shops empty. Encouraging independent start-ups and community-oriented businesses.

Other ideas include the creation of local high street trusts which can own key local shops, keep rents affordable and open up the space for community enterprises – and a right-to-buy for shop tenants faced with unsustainable rent increases.

- 10.3 Planning decisions could be based on which developments maximise the way local earnings stay circulating locally. Creating jobs with living wages, encouraging local enterprises, and giving them a level playing field against big retailers.
- 10.4 Great Yarmouth and Norwich have implemented Business Improvement Districts (BIDs). BIDs actually charge businesses in the area more rates to employ people to create marketing initiatives and look into areas like collaborative buying to benefit local businesses. In July 2013, the Norwich BID voted through a 1% charge on business rates over five years to raise £3m.
- 10.5 An application for a 2014/15 Norfolk business rates pool has been submitted to central government. The pool will create joint working amongst Norfolk authorities to promote growth.

New Anglia LEP funding is also set to increase, and this combined with European funding enable further economic development in Norfolk. However, despite this the

retail industry is unlikely to benefit from direct funding because it has not been identified as a priority sector by the New Anglia LEP. What may be of benefit is the prioritisation of infrastructure improvements such as the Northern Distributor Road which may help to give better access to nearby town centres, or enable city centre enhancements.

11. Resource Implications

11.1 This report has no direct resource implications.

12. Section 17 – Crime and Disorder Act

12.1 There are no implications for crime and disorder arising from this report.

13. Equality Impact Assessment

13.1 This report is not making any proposals that would have a direct impact on equality of access or outcomes for diverse groups.

14. Other Implications

14.1 Officers have considered all the implications which members should be aware of. There are no other implications to take into account.

15. Action Required

15.1 Members are asked to note the contents of this report and, following discussion with stakeholders, to agree any recommendations they think are appropriate.

Officer Contact

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

Name	Telephone Number	Email address
Keith Cogdell	01603 222785	keith.cogdell@norfolk.gov.uk



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Norfolk County Council

Environment, Transport and Development Overview & Scrutiny Panel

Terms of reference for scrutiny of: 'The feasibility of supporting local businesses through changes to the current business rates regime'

Scrutiny by: Full Panel

Reasons for scrutiny

The number of business failures during the current economic downturn has attracted considerable attention and concern, not least in relation to the impact on 'High Streets' which are also suffering competition from internet shopping and out-of-town retail centres. In addition, there are concerns about jobs and general prosperity which could lead to the loss of local businesses; seen by many as a threat to the distinctiveness of Norfolk and therefore to its attraction as a tourist destination.

Members of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel have expressed an interest in ascertaining whether the current business rates regime is a significant factor in business failure and what local authorities may be able to do to prevent such failure.

Issues and questions to be addressed

- What evidence is there that business rates are a significant cause of business failure?
- How does the current business rates regime operate and has the Local Business Rates Retention Scheme had an effect on this?
- What, if any, provision is there to relieve businesses at risk of failure from the impact of paying business rates?
- What scope is there for local authorities to reduce business rates in terms of the impact on their own funding?
- What is the level of business rates relief and who qualifies?

Planned outcomes

The Panel will:

- Have an understanding of the impacts that the current business rates regime has on local businesses
- Be better placed to decide whether any local action to mitigate these impacts would be appropriate

Organisations to involve

- District Councils
- Federation of Small Businesses
- Chamber of Commerce
- Valuation Office



www.broadland.gov.uk

Broadland District Council Written Submission – Supporting local businesses

Broadland District Council collects almost £30m per year in Business Rates from 3,338 local businesses. The council allows discretionary relief to certain rural businesses including pubs, petrol stations, rural food shops and Post Offices as it is important to support communities which rely on local shops and businesses.

The report recognises that any Discretionary Relief allowed under the Localism Act has to be funded by the Billing authority which acts as a powerful disincentive in allowing further rate relief on top of what is already granted.

The Government has recognised the difficulties faced by many businesses in recent years by extending the provisions of Small Business Rate Relief. In Broadland this has meant that around 1/3rd of businesses (1,100) receive full rate relief and pay no rates. This enhanced scheme has now been extended for at least a further year.

Collection rates have held up well locally in recent years with over 99% of all rates billed in Broadland being collected within the same financial year. The number of summonses issued and cases referred to the bailiffs in the last three years were:

Financial year	Summonses Issued	Cases referred to bailiff	Collection rate
2010/11	162	39	99.3%
2011/12	111	40	99.2%
2012/13	110	31	99.1%

The rates system does allow for ratepayers to apply for hardship relief if they are experiencing severe financial difficulty. This form of relief is discretionary and as it is partly funded by the Billing authority and is usually only allowed where the prospect of supporting the business should result in it continuing to trade. Broadland did put funds aside to support businesses through the recession with hardship relief. A number of applications were received, the majority from Public Houses.

Whilst the business rates system is sometimes seen as unfair it does receive regular revaluations (normally every 5 years) in order to review and ensure that rateable values reflect rental values. The Government control the schedule of revaluations and have delayed the next revaluation from 2015 to 2017 which does mean that rateable values will become less relevant toward the end of the current revaluation period. There is a

transitional scheme in place which phases in increases in rates or reductions usually over several years following a revaluation.

One of the main issues with the current rates system is that most ratepayers have to pay full rates on empty properties after either 3 or 6 months from when a property becomes unoccupied. This is widely seen as unfair by ratepayers and does lead to non payment and disputes over payment. It also can lead to bogus claims of occupation in order to trigger a fresh empty period when the property is vacated.

Whilst there are 195 empty business properties in Broadland there are only 13 shops/retail units which are currently unoccupied as follows:

Parish	Count
Acle	1
Aylsham	4
Cantley	1
Coltishall	3
Drayton	1
Hellesdon	1
Spixworth	1
Sprowston	1
Total	13

The recent autumn statement announced well targeted temporary help for businesses, including 50% relief for new occupiers of empty retail premises. This should be a great help to owners of empty high street units. Other measures introduced by the Government will also assist other retail businesses. However, these measures do not form a permanent feature of the rating system.

In the longer term it would be sensible to review the current rates system. It has become more complex for businesses and local authorities alike due to the piecemeal nature of measures which have been introduced by Central Government over many years to ameliorate perceived difficulties. The fundamental structure of business rates is sensible as it is a tax on property which generally proves to be a robust means of enabling local businesses to pay their way. However, the migration of many businesses to online trade does beg the question over whether the rates system should be modernised to more fairly spread the burden with those businesses which trade face to face.

10 December 2013



The Valuation Office Agency and Non-Domestic Rates

The following background note is provided to assist Norfolk County Council's Environment, Transport and Development Overview and Scrutiny Panel consider the scope for supporting local businesses through changes to business rates.

Valuation Office Agency (VOA)

The VOA is an executive Agency of Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs (HMRC) and so is accountable to HMRC and ultimately the Exchequer Secretary to the Treasury. The work of the Valuation Office Agency (VOA) includes the following:

- Compiling and maintaining lists of rateable values of the 1.7 million non-domestic properties in England, and the 100,000 in Wales, to support the collection of around 25 billion in business rates.
- Compiling and maintaining the lists of council tax bandings of some 23 million domestic properties in England and 1.3 million in Wales, to support the collection of around 26 billion in council tax;
- Determining local housing allowances across some 150 Broad Rental Market areas for housing benefit purposes and registering some 60,000 Rent Act 1977 fair rents in England;
- Delivering a range of statutory and non-statutory valuation and surveying services to central and local government departments and the wider public sector; and
- Providing valuation advice to HMRC in connection with capital gains, inheritance tax and other tax compliance work.

Valuation Officers and Rating Lists

Valuation Officers have a statutory duty to prepare and maintain local rating lists for all non domestic properties in England and Wales. Apart from those properties which are exempt from rates, such as agricultural use and public parks, each non-domestic property has an entry in a local list including its address, property description and rateable value. The current lists came into effect on 1 April 2010. Since 1990, there have been revaluations on a five yearly basis; however, the next revaluation will now be in 2017.

Rateable Value

Rating is a tax on the occupation of non-domestic property. The amount payable is determined by the rateable value of the property.

Rateable value represents the amount of rent that a reasonable tenant and a reasonable landlord might agree in the open market at a standard valuation date. For the 2010 lists, this is 1 April 2008.

To maintain consistency, rateable value is based on a set of assumptions established by law and legal precedent. The assumptions are that:

- the property is vacant and to let,
- available on a year-to-year basis with a reasonable prospect of continuance,
- in a reasonable state of repair, and
- the tenant is responsible for the reasonable costs of repairs and insurance.

These assumptions and the standard valuation date ensure that all properties are valued on the same basis. This is often referred to as the 'hypothetical tenancy'.

However, as rental values change over time; demand for properties changes and so values rise and fall in different areas in line with these changes in the market. Regular revaluations ensure that these changes are taken into account and that the 'spread' of business rates is redistributed and each business contributes based on up-to-date information.

Methods of Valuation

Most properties are valued using the rental comparative method; they are valued by comparison to actual rents passing on similar properties in the market. To do this Valuation Officers collect evidence of rents around the standard valuation date for types of property. Adjustments are made for lease terms (such as, responsibility for repairs and insurance) and incentives (such as, rent free periods) in line with the 'hypothetical tenancy'.

The rental evidence is then analysed, usually on a £/M² basis so that parts of a property that are less valuable in rental terms than others (for example a storeroom compared to an office) can be properly accounted for. This means that comparison can easily be made between properties that are similar but have different proportions of accommodation.

From this Valuation Officers determine the amount per M² that is used to value each property in that class. The £/M² is then used to calculate the rateable value of individual properties, again taking into account that some parts are more or less valuable.

If there is limited or no rental evidence for a particular property or class of properties, the receipts and expenditure method is sometimes used. This method of valuation looks at the income and outgoings for the business and calculates the amount that a hypothetical tenant would be prepared to pay in rent to occupy the premises. Examples of property

types often valued by this method are theatres, sports arenas, bingo halls and some hotels.

The contractor's basis of valuation is used where neither the rental comparative method nor the receipts and expenditure method of valuation is appropriate. This method looks at the capital cost of developing the property, including the cost of the land, and then calculates the return on investment required; what a tenant would need to pay in rent. Examples of property types valued by this method are Local Authority schools, theatres, libraries and fire stations. The return on investment is the Statutory Decapitalisation Rate and is set out in regulations for each list. This is a fixed percentage.

The Appeal process

Ratepayers have a right to make a proposal to alter the rating list. They can do this if they believe that their rateable value is wrong. However, before they do so, they can contact the Valuation Officer to discuss their concerns and any evidence that they believe the Valuation Officer is not aware of. Any discussions held at this stage do not affect the ratepayer's right to make a formal proposal or appeal.

If a ratepayer makes a proposal, there will be a more formal period of discussion between the Ratepayer and the Valuation Officer. If an agreement to alter the rateable value or to withdraw the proposal is not reached by the end of this period, the appeal will be heard by an independent Valuation Tribunal.

Claire O'Connor
Relationship Manager
Valuation Office Agency

20 December 2013



In response to the draft feasibility report by the Interim Director of Environment, Transport and Development, Norfolk Chamber would ask for the following points to be taken into consideration by the scrutiny panel in the case for business rate reform:

- **Business rates: a uniquely iniquitous tax on business**

In contrast to most other taxes, business rates as an input tax are effectively fixed no matter the stage of the economic cycle, company performance or ability to pay. Firms pay business rates to fund local services that are largely unrelated to business need. And despite enduring the deepest recession in modern times, businesses have had to absorb relentless increases in the uniform business rate – up-rated mechanistically each year with September's Retail Prices Index (RPI) figure. The 2.6% rise in April 2013 followed a 5.6% rise in 2012 and a 4.6% rise in 2011. These unchecked increases severely aggravate already uncertain business cash flow and impose hefty new costs.

The continued pressure on business cash flow from non-domestic rates is a critical issue for firms hoping to begin exporting: over 70% of potential exporters that responded to the British Chamber of Commerce's 2012 international trade survey said that cash flow and payment risk influenced their decision on whether to export. If we are to succeed in rebalancing the UK economy towards exports, this constraint on growth must be addressed without delay. The Government's announcement in the Autumn Statement to cap the RPI increase to business rates at 2% in 2014/15 is welcomed.

- **The collapse in commercial property values highlights failings in the current system**

As well as RPI inflation, business rates are pegged to property values. Valuations were last set in 2008, yet commercial property values in many areas of the country, including Norfolk, fell sharply during the recession, declining by 45% peak-to-trough (mid 2007-mid 2009) across the country as a whole. Especially in cities outside London, rents have remained below their pre-2008 levels - but there has been no correction in business rates, which have gone up year on year. Despite the fall in commercial property values, the Valuation Office Agency (VOA) assesses that many more businesses would lose than gain from a revaluation in 2015 based on values for April 2013. This is because the VOA concludes that the fall in rateable values since April 2008 would require a 16% jump in the multiplier to maintain fiscal neutrality. *It is a major failing of the current system that 'fiscal neutrality' is seen as a baseline rather than a ceiling for increases in the multiplier.*

- **The business rates system is at odds with the Government's pro-business rhetoric**

Actions such as freezing council tax while continuing to increase business rates send confusing messages to businesspeople about the Government's devotion to improving the business environment.

According to the latest projections from the OBR, *business rate receipts are forecast to exceed council tax receipts by 2015/16*. Government revenue from business rates is expected to reach £29.6bn in 2015/16 and £30.5bn in 2016/17, above the expected council tax revenue of £29.1bn and £30.0bn respectively. This will reinforce the view in the business community that business rates are unfair – with companies seen as 'cash cows' for funding local authority services, and in particular local social services, at a time when council tax is frozen. The notion that local businesses are set to become bigger funders of local services than residential taxpayers is both bizarre and unfair.

Norfolk Chamber welcomes attempts to look for ways to ease the business rates burden. However, we do not believe that a freeze or cut in business rates for smaller firms should be offset by a delayed reduction in Corporation Tax, as proposed by Her Majesty's Opposition. To create a competitive business environment in which companies can thrive, *both* business rates and Corporation Tax have to be contained: you achieve nothing by robbing Peter to pay Paul.

- **UK firms face the highest business rates bill in Europe**

The current business rates system is also at odds with the Government's ambition to have one of the most competitive tax systems in the G20. Analysis by the British Property Federation³ (BPF) revealed that UK revenue from business rates is equivalent to 1.6% of GDP, the highest of any country in Europe and double the combined income from equivalent taxes in Germany (0.3%) and France (0.5%).

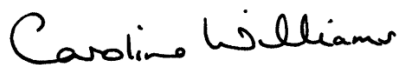
- **Small Business Rate Relief and Business Rates Deferral Schemes are not enough**

In recent years, the Treasury has argued that it has taken action on business rates by extending its Small Business Rate Relief scheme. The extension of Small Business Rate Relief simply is not enough to deal with the pressure on business: it only applies to a section of the business community that occupies very low-rated properties. Any business with substantial premises, regardless of age, employment or turnover, faces rate bills that are often comparable to their rent. Many Chamber members are sceptical about the use of reliefs in the business rates system. They are often seen as temporary, open to unnecessary tinkering and adding to uncertainty.

The Business Rates Deferral schemes introduced in recent years are a case in point. These were painted as a help to businesses, but they simply serve to delay the pain of the latest rate rises. Companies using these schemes face bigger eventual demands, fuelled by subsequent years' increases in the uniform rate.

This is a complicated issue and Norfolk Chamber welcomes the opportunity to feed its response into the debate for the 14 January 2014. Although business rates are essentially a national issue, requiring a national policy, the Chamber feels it is necessary that the strong feelings of the Norfolk business community are taken into account and we will do everything we can, working with our partners, to ensure the necessary changes can be brought about.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Caroline Williams". The script is cursive and fluid.

Caroline Williams
Chief Executive



Business Rates – the South Norfolk experience

All discussions regarding Business Rates, and the need for local authorities to provide further support at this time, now needs to be seen and understood in the context of the measures announced in the government's Autumn Statement which represents significant investment from the government in supporting businesses with their rates in 2014/15 and 2015/16:

- Rise in business rate multiplier capped at 2% for 2014/15 (would otherwise have been 3.2% in line with September RPI).
- Small Business Rate Relief enhanced scheme (doubling of relief) extended for a further year (this relief already reduces bills for over 40% of business premises across South Norfolk).
- Changes to Small Business Rate Relief to ensure it is paid for a further year where it would previously have been lost when a business expands by taking on additional premises.
- Business Rate Discount of £1,000 for all retail premises (including pubs, cafes, restaurants and charity shops) with a rateable value below £50,000. Will apply for 2 years from April 2014.
- A new temporary "re-occupation relief" granting a 50% discount from business rates for new occupants of previously empty retail properties for 18 months. Will be granted where businesses move into long-term empty retail properties between 1 April 2014 and 31 March 2016

It should be noted that Government have made a commitment to fully reimbursing local authorities for income lost as a result of the above measures.

What evidence is there that business rates are a significant cause of business failure?

Any costs and overheads of a business will to greater or lesser extents contribute to the failure of businesses as can many other factors such as: cash flow, market conditions, business acumen, bad debtors, poor business planning, suitability of staff, failure to adapt etc.

We do not collect evidence on business failures, but anecdotally we are not seeing evidence that business rates are a significant cause of business failure.

The Insolvency Service or local insolvency practitioners may be a better source of such information.

How does the current business rates regime operate and has the Local Business Rates Retention Scheme had an effect on this?

The business rates retention scheme has had the following effects:

- Encouraged billing authorities to focus resources on seeking out businesses that had not previously been rated, or where premises had not been reassessed for rates following improvements to the premises – to generate additional income and ensure a level playing field for businesses.
- Lead some local authorities to review the use of discretionary rate reliefs with a view to being less generous and retaining greater business rates income. This has not been the case in South Norfolk to date.
- Given business rates a far higher profile within local authorities, with particular focus on growth in rate income, and attracting further business to the area.
- At South Norfolk it has made the authority more open to the use of business rate discount powers under the Localism Act, now that the cost no longer falls entirely on the billing authority. This may be used to assist companies bringing additional jobs to the area, and to attract key players to new development sites to help attract other businesses on sooner. However any support has to have regards to the state aid regulations.

What, if any, provision is there to relieve businesses at risk of failure from the impact of paying business rates?

We do have the option of hardship relief – which we could take a decision to make more widely known and have utilised this in the past.

Businesses that are at risk of failure do not necessarily communicate with the billing authority to make us aware of the difficulties they are facing. Not all businesses that are behind with payments at any point in time will be at risk of failure, they may be reluctant to pay or poor at attending to the payment of bills, experiencing cash flow problems etc.

There will always be business failures, and a failing business is often replaced with a business that has better long-term viability – which in turn will deliver a better income stream for the local authority.

South Norfolk Council is concentrating efforts through their Market Towns initiative on increasing the long term viability of local businesses so that they can flourish long term, rather than giving short term financial support.

What scope is there for local authorities to reduce business rates in terms of the impact on their own funding?

There are now much greater freedoms to reduce business rates available to local authorities. As Government grant is cut back local authorities are expected to grow their business rate base as a key part of their income. To give much support in terms of reduced bills would be working against efforts to grow the business rates.

In an area experiencing business rate growth the impact of reducing business rates would be to offset some or all of that growth. This would mean that the costs would be borne as follows:

Central Government	50%
District Council	40%
County Council	10%

While the income has been reduced, the levy that income would otherwise have generated would still have to be paid. This means a district would receive less income from those businesses, but have to pay out to the Norfolk NNDR pool 20% of the income it had not received. The funding implications fall disproportionately on the billing authority.

What is the level of business rates relief and who qualifies?

In terms of existing discretionary business rate reliefs the approach of South Norfolk Council is to provide support in the following areas (under powers that existed prior to the Localism Act 2011):

- Providing further support to charities, charitable bodies and registered Community Amateur Sports Clubs on top of the 80% mandatory relief they are already entitled to.
- Supplementing the 50% mandatory rural rate relief for post offices and village stores to 100% relief
- Supporting some rural pubs which fall within the criteria where discretionary relief may be awarded but not mandatory relief
- Supporting non-profit making organisations and local sports clubs

We attach the guidelines we have developed to determining awards.

Non-Domestic Rates - Mandatory and Discretionary Rate Relief Guidelines

The Local Government Finance Act 1988 requires local authorities to grant “Mandatory rate relief” to the following categories of Business Rates payer:

- Registered charities
- Village Post Offices, general stores, specialist food shops, public houses and petrol filling station – where they are in a designated rural settlement
- Registered Community Amateur Sports Clubs (CASCs)

The Local Government Finance Act 1988 also gives local authorities the power to grant “Discretionary rate relief” as follows:

- To make a further award on top of mandatory relief granted to registered charities
- To village Post Offices, general stores, specialist food shops, public houses and petrol filling station – where they are in a designated rural settlement
- To make a further award on top of mandatory relief granted to registered Community Amateur Sports Clubs (CASCs)
- In respect of sports grounds and clubs
- To other non-profit making organisations

The Local Government Finance Act 1988 also gives local authorities the power to reduce or remit the amount of rates liable to be paid on the grounds of hardship.

Guidelines Aim

These guidelines set out the Council’s intentions for dealing with discretionary rate relief applications from Charities, Community Amateur Sports Clubs (CASC’s), Non-Profit Making Organisations, and other businesses which are situated within the rural settlements of South Norfolk Council.

Through these guidelines, the Council is providing a mechanism to reduce or, remove the business rates liability for such charities, non-profit making organisations and certain rural businesses that are providing valuable facilities and services to communities within the South Norfolk area.

These guidelines aim to provide clarity around the process of administration of applications for Discretionary Rate Relief, consistency in the application of the guidelines and to ensure maximum take-up from potential qualifying organisations, which will in turn make a contribution to achieving the Council’s ambitions for the district.

MANDATORY RELIEFS

Mandatory Relief for registered charities.

Mandatory relief applies to registered charities or trustees for a charity where the rated premises are used wholly and mainly for charitable purposes. In the case of charity shops they must sell goods that have been donated to the charity. (This condition is also necessary for discretionary relief.)

The relief allowed is 80%.

Mandatory Relief for village post offices, general stores, specialist food shops, public houses and petrol filling stations.

The rural business must be in a rural settlement area that has a population of 3,000 or less.

- a) Sole post offices and general stores with a rateable value of £8,500 or less are entitled to 50% relief.
- b) Any village shop that sells food for human consumption but excludes restaurants, tearooms, fast or hot food shops and confectionary shops with a rateable value of £8,500 or less are entitled to 50% relief.
- c) Where there is only one public house in a rural settlement, which has a rateable value not exceeding £12,500, there is an entitlement to 50% relief.
- d) Sole petrol filling stations with a rateable value of £12,500 or less are entitled to 50% relief.

Mandatory Relief for registered Community Amateur Sports Clubs (CASCs)

Sports clubs that have registered with the Inland Revenue as Community Amateur Sports Clubs are entitled to 80% relief.

DISCRETIONARY RELIEFS

All Discretionary Relief applications must be accompanied by a Small Business Rate Relief application where applicable.

Throughout this policy document it shall apply that discretionary relief will be awarded only up to a maximum sum of:

- £4,000 per registered charity or Community Amateur Sporting Club (CASC) in any financial year
- £12,000 per non-profit making organisation or rural business in any financial year (not charities or CASCs)

Applications for relief to be backdated in to the previous financial year may only be accepted if the decision can be made by 1st October of the financial year in which the application is received.

All qualifying businesses and organisations are required to notify The Council of any change in circumstances that may affect their entitlement to Discretionary Rate Relief.

Discretionary Relief for registered charities.

Registered charities may apply for additional 'top-up' discretionary relief where 80% mandatory relief has been granted.

Applicants will need to demonstrate that the use of the premises is in furtherance of the objects of the charity, and that the property is wholly or mainly occupied by the charity.

Discretionary relief will not usually be granted:

- 1) to charity shops, or
- 2) in respect of periods where any property is unoccupied.

Discretionary Relief for village post offices, general stores, specialist food shops, public houses and petrol filling stations.

The rural business must be in a designated rural settlement area that has a population of 3,000 or less.

- a) Sole post offices and general stores with a rateable value of £8,500 or less qualifying for 50% mandatory relief are eligible for 50% discretionary relief.
- b) Where there is a second post office or general store or the only post office or store has a rateable value above £8,500 but not exceeding £16,500 they are eligible for 50% discretionary relief. Where there are more than two in a rural settlement no relief is granted.
- c) Any village shop that sells food for human consumption but excludes restaurants, tearooms, fast or hot food shops and confectionary shops with a rateable value above £8,500 but not exceeding £16,500 are entitled to 50% relief.
- d) The only public house in a rural settlement, which has a rateable value above £12,500 but not exceeding £16,500 will be awarded 50% discretionary relief.
- e) Sole petrol filling stations with a rateable value of £12,500 or less qualifying for 50% mandatory relief are eligible for 50% discretionary relief.

Discretionary Relief for registered Community Amateur Sports Clubs (CASCs)

Some sports clubs have registered with HM Revenue and Customs as Community Amateur Sports Clubs. CASCs may apply for an additional 20% 'top-up' discretionary relief, in addition to the mandatory relief that CASCS are entitled to.

Discretionary Relief for sports grounds and clubs

Both sports grounds and sports clubs may apply for discretionary relief, with the amount to be awarded being on a sliding scaled percentage related to the balance between sporting and social membership and bar takings. The amounts are as follows:

- 100% relief where there is no bar, or the bar takings are below £10,000.
- 75% relief where bar takings exceed £10,000 but membership is mainly sporting.
- 50% relief where bar takings exceed £10,000 and membership is equally split between sporting and social.

- 25% relief where bar takings exceed £10,000 and membership is mainly social but there is an element of sporting membership.
- 0% relief where the club is operated primarily as a business enterprise and where the level of joining fees excludes membership by the public at large.

Exceptions to the above are:

- sailing, boating, and water sports clubs
- flying and gliding clubs

These will be eligible for 80% relief.

No discretionary relief will be awarded to golf clubs.

Cost to the council is 25% of the discretionary relief granted.

Discretionary Relief for other non-profit making organisations.

Village and Community Halls

a) Where the occupier is a registered charity and there is no bar at the premises an additional 20% discretionary relief may be applied for, on top of the 80% mandatory relief.

No additional relief will be given if there is a bar.

b) Where the occupier is a non-registered charitable group and there is no bar at the premises 100% discretionary relief will be given.

c) Where the occupier is a non-registered charitable group and there is a bar at the premises 80% discretionary relief will be given.

Voluntary Bodies

Applications from non-registered charitable groups are to be considered on an individual basis.

Discretionary relief to a maximum of 100% is granted.

Conservation and Cultural Organisations

Premises will include:

- Museums
- Rehearsal rooms for bands or dramatic societies
- Premises occupied for preservation projects
- Premises occupied by Norfolk based wildlife groups

In addition to the 'top-up' 20% discretionary relief granted to registered charities, 100% discretionary relief will be granted to non-registered charitable groups.

Discretionary relief will not be given to nationally based groups.

Young People's Activities

In addition to the 'top-up' 20% discretionary relief granted to registered charities, 100% discretionary relief will be granted to non-registered charitable groups.

This category excludes any hereditaments occupied for sporting activities.

Discretionary Hardship Relief

Section 49 of the Local Government Finance Act 1988 gives discretion to the billing authority to reduce or remit payments of rates in respect of both occupied and unoccupied premises. This award can be up to 100%. When making an award an authority must be satisfied that:

- 1) the ratepayer would sustain hardship if the authority did not do so, and
- 2) It is reasonable for the authority to do so, having regard to the interests of persons subject to its Council Tax.

Non-domestic Rates discount

The Localism Act 2011 (clause 69) introduced a general power for local authorities to reduce the business rates of any local ratepayer (not just those who could previously be granted discretionary relief). This is a wide power under which each case will need to be treated on its own merits.

Any application under this power must be made by the applicant in writing and will be determined jointly by the Revenues & Benefits Manager and the relevant cabinet portfolio holder.

Period of Award

The award period for new and renewal applications will be for a period ending with the end of the current financial year.

Review of Relief Award

The council will regularly review its approach to the award of relief, and will periodically review the eligibility of qualifying businesses and organisations.

When a review of eligibility is carried out continuation of relief will be subject to satisfactory completion of review forms and provision of requested supporting information. Where a renewal form is not returned, relief will not be awarded and the business or organisation will be sent a rate bill for the full charge.

When completed forms are returned awards will be considered in the light of these or amended guidelines.

Prior to guidelines being revised organisations will be given at least twelve months notice that their eligibility to relief may change.

Cabinet Member feedback on previous Overview and Scrutiny Panel comments

A joint note by the Cabinet Members for Planning and Transportation, Economic Development, Environment and Waste, and Community Protection

The purpose of this note is to provide feedback on items discussed at Cabinet which had previously been discussed at an ETD Overview and Scrutiny Panel meeting.

Environment, transport, development and waste issues

Report/issue **Norwich Area Transportation Strategy (NATS) Implementation Plan**

Date considered by O&S Panel: 26 September 2013

O&S Panel comments: Resolved to:-

- Recommend the adoption of the updated Norwich Area Transportation Strategy (NATS) Implementation Plan to Cabinet.

The Panel also considered a motion that a start date for work to commence on the Northern Distributor Route be agreed as 1 April 2015 or before. This motion was carried.

Date considered by Cabinet: 4 November 2013

Cabinet feedback: Resolved that:-

- The updated NATS Implementation Plan be adopted.
- The revised NDR cost profile be agreed.
- The Development Consent Order for the finalised NDR scheme be submitted.

Note that the report considered by Cabinet also included an update on the NDR, in addition to the information considered by Panel on 26 September 2013.

Economic development issues

Report/issue **Apprenticeships Norfolk – one year on**

Date considered by O&S Panel: 26 November 2013

O&S Panel comments: Resolved to:

- Note the progress of the Apprenticeships Norfolk Programme.
- Approve a review of the final 12 months of the programme, to

take into account the changing local and national landscape, including City Deals, as set out in paragraph 2.5 of the report.

Date considered by Cabinet: 2 December 2013

Cabinet feedback: Resolved that:-

- The progress of the Apprenticeships Norfolk Programme be noted;
- The review of the final 12 months of the programme be approved, to take into account the changing local and national landscape, including City Deals, as set out in paragraph 2.5 of the Cabinet report;
- The performance and outcomes within the Cabinet report be noted.

Public protection issues

No items discussed at Cabinet.

Officer Contact

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

Name	Telephone Number	Email address
Sarah Rhoden	01603 222867	sarah.rhoden@norfolk.gov.uk



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Forward Work Programme: Scrutiny

Report by the Interim Director of Environment, Transport and
Development

Summary

This report asks Members to review and develop the programme for scrutiny.

Action required

Members are asked to:

- i) consider the attached Outline Programme (Appendix A) and agree the scrutiny topics listed and reporting dates.
- ii) consider new topics for inclusion on the scrutiny programme in line with the criteria at para 1.2.

1. The Programme

1.1. An Outline Programme for Scrutiny is included at Appendix A.

1.2 Members of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel can add new topics to the scrutiny programme in line with the criteria below: -

i) High profile – as identified by:

- Members (through constituents, surgeries, etc)
- Public (through surveys, Citizen's Panel, etc)
- Media
- External inspection (Audit Commission, Ombudsman, Internal Audit, Inspection Bodies)

(ii) Impact – this might be significant because of:

- The scale of the issue
- The budget that it has
- The impact that it has on members of the public (this could be either a small issue that affects a large number of people or a big issue that affects a small number of people)

(iii) Quality – for instance, is it:

- Significantly under performing
- An example of good practice
- Overspending

(iv) It is a Corporate Priority

2. Section 17 – Crime and Disorder Act

- 2.1. The crime and disorder implications of the various scrutiny topics will be considered when the scrutiny takes place.

3. Equality Impact Assessment

- 3.1. This report is not directly relevant to equality, in that it is not making proposals that will have a direct impact on equality of access or outcomes for diverse groups.

Action Required

The Overview and Scrutiny Panel is asked to:

- (i) consider the attached Outline Programme (Appendix A) and agree the scrutiny topics listed and reporting dates;
- (ii) consider new topics for inclusion on the scrutiny programme in line with the criteria at para 1.2.

Officer Contact

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

Name	Telephone Number	Email address
Keith Cogdell	01603 222785	keith.cogdell@norfolk.gov.uk



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Outline Programme for Scrutiny

Standing Item for the Environment, Transport and Development O & S Panel: Update for 14 January 2014

This is only an outline programme and will be amended as issues arise or priorities change

Scrutiny is normally a two-stage process:

- Stage 1 of the process is the scoping stage. Draft terms of reference and intended outcomes will be developed as part of this stage.
- The Overview and Scrutiny (O&S) Panel or a Member Group will carry out the detailed scrutiny but other approaches can be considered, as appropriate (e.g. 'select committee' style by whole O&S Panel).
- On the basis that the detailed scrutiny is carried out by a Member Group, Stage 2 is reporting back to the O&S Panel by the Group.

This Panel welcomes the strategic ambitions for Norfolk. These are:

- A vibrant, strong and sustainable economy
- Aspirational people with high levels of achievement and skills
- An inspirational place with a clear sense of identity

These ambitions inform the NCC Objectives from which scrutiny topics for this Panel will develop, as well as using the outlined criteria at para 1.2 above.

Changes to Programme from that previously submitted to the Panel on 26 November 2013

Added

- None.

Deleted

- None.

Topic	Outline Objective	Cabinet Portfolio Area	Stage 1 (scoping report)	Stage 2 (report back to Panel by Working Group)	Requested by	Comment
Scrutiny Items – Active						
1. Mobile Phone coverage for rural and urban areas in Norfolk, and digital radio	To review provision of effective mobile phone coverage for rural and urban areas in Norfolk.	Economic Development		Various	1 September 2009 (by a Scrutiny Task & Finish Group set up by the former ED&CS O&S Panel).	Progress report to be brought to next meeting of the Panel.
2. Snettisham Access signs	To achieve an agreed, unified view of the signs issue between the key responsible authorities in order to give the police a firm line to prevent further escalation in acts of criminal damage or violence.	Environment and Waste	Councillor Call for Action submitted to Panel by Cllr Dobson		Councillor Call for Action submitted to Panel by Cllr Dobson – October 2012 meeting.	On agenda for the Panel's meeting on 14 January 2014.

Continued.../

Topic	Outline Objective	Cabinet Portfolio Area	Stage 1 (scoping report)	Stage 2 (report back to Panel by Working Group)	Requested by	Comment
3. Fracking	To establish the Council's position on 'fracking' with particular reference to: its potential impact on Norfolk's environment and the county's wider contribution to carbon emissions and; its possible implications for local planning policy."	Environment and Waste Planning and Transportation			County Council, following a motion at the 14 January 2013 meeting.	Progress report to be brought to next meeting of the Panel.
4. Broadband coverage for rural and urban areas in Norfolk	To review broadband coverage for rural and urban areas in Norfolk (following implementation of the Broadband for Norfolk project).	Economic Development	TBC	TBC	14 September 2011 O&S Panel	Combined progress report (with that on mobile phones and digital radio) to be brought to the next meeting of the Panel.
5. The feasibility of supporting local businesses through changes to the current business rates regime	To improve understanding of the impacts that the current business rates regime has on local businesses and be better placed to decide whether any local action to mitigate these impacts would be appropriate.	Economic Development	Agreed 23.7.13	TBC	23 July 2013 O&S Panel	On agenda for the Panel's meeting on 14 January 2014.

Recommendations from the Snettisham Access Working Group

Report of the Snettisham Access Member Working Group

Summary

In October 2012, the Environment, Transport and Development Overview and Scrutiny Panel received a Councillor Call for Action (CCfA) from Cllr John Dobson relating to signage at Snettisham beach/common which has been the subject of an ongoing dispute. Cllr Dobson requested that the County Council seek to achieve a unified view of the signage by bringing together all involved parties at a Panel meeting. As not all involved parties were willing to attend a public meeting to discuss the issue, this Panel agreed to set up a small working group to consider it instead

This report outlines the work of the working group in responding to the original CCfA and recommends a way forward for the Environment, Transport and Development Overview and Scrutiny Panel.

Action required

The Panel is asked to:

- i) note the progress made by the Working Group
- ii) consider the Working Group's suggestion that Officers are asked to contact the owner of the signs and request that they be removed pending the outcome of the Definitive Map Modification Order (DMMO), at which time Officers will seek to erect new definitive signs; and
- iii) if the Panel agrees with the Working Group's suggestion or identifies an alternative course of action, to recommend this course of action to Cabinet.

1. Background

- 1.1 In October 2012, the Environment, Transport and Development (ETD) Overview and Scrutiny Panel received a Councillor Call for Action (CCfA) from Cllr John Dobson relating to signage at Snettisham beach/common which has been the subject of an ongoing dispute between local residents and owners of beach properties about the rights of access to the area. The difference between the two groups is that the local residents feel that they have a right of access to these areas and owners of beach properties on the land, who do not agree. A copy of Cllr Dobson's CCfA is attached at Appendix A. Cllr Dobson requested that the County Council seek to achieve a unified view of the

signage by bringing together all involved parties at a Panel meeting.

- 1.2 Officer advice was that members should wait until the outcome of the related Definitive Map Modification Order (DMMO), currently being processed, was complete so that there could be clarity about the access rights, after which Officers would seek to ensure that appropriate signage was in place. The view of ETD Officers is that while the current signs are not ideal, they are not misleading. An update on the current status of the DMMO is outlined in paragraph 5 of the report.
- 1.3 It was agreed at the Panel meeting that the County Council should show leadership in seeking to achieve an agreed unified view of the signs issue between the key responsible authorities. The Panel agreed that this could be achieved by bringing all involved authorities around a table at a scrutiny panel meeting as allowed for under Appendix 12A of the County Council's Constitution. However as not all involved parties were willing to attend a public meeting to discuss the issue, it was agreed to set up a small working group to consider it instead

2. Working Group Meetings

- 2.1 The membership of the working group was agreed at the Panel meeting on 14th November 2012 as follows:

Hilary Cox (Chairman and member of the working group until May 2013)
Bev Spratt (Chairman from September 2013)
Marie Strong
Tony White

Since October 2012 the working group has met on seven occasions. Some of these meetings have been held with stakeholders from Snettisham and have been constructive in allowing representatives to share their views. Meetings have been held as detailed below:

- **20th December 2012**

Members of the working group held a site visit to Snettisham Beach.

- **8th January 2013**

Members of the working group held a discussion with stakeholders providing an opportunity for them to put forward their views including, what action could be taken to resolve the current issues. The following representatives, who were identified by the working group as key stakeholders from Snettisham, attended:

John Dobson (Local County Councillor)
Natural England
RSPB
Snettisham Parish Council
Snettisham Beach Property Owners Association

- **20th March 2013**

A further meeting was held with stakeholders to try and seek a unified view of a draft sign that could be used as an interim measure between then and the Definitive Map Modification Order (DMMO) being completed. In advance of the meeting the Chairman of the Working group and the Highways Network Manager from ETD met individually with each of the key stakeholders listed above to discuss their views from which a draft sign was drawn up for discussion. The following stakeholders from Snettisham attended this meeting:

John Dobson (Local County Councillor)
Natural England
Snettisham Parish Council

A draft sign was agreed with those present at the meeting. However not all stakeholders attended and in discussions subsequent to the meeting it was clear that there were still differing views that could not be aligned.

- **26th September 2013**

The County Council elections in May delayed the working group meeting again to try and resolve these differing views and in July 2013 the Environment, Transport and Development Overview and Scrutiny Panel agreed that one final meeting should be held with stakeholders to try and seek to agree a unified view of the signs. The working group met on 26th September to discuss arrangements for this meeting.

- **21st November 2013**

The working group met with stakeholders with the aim of seeking to achieve a final unified view of signage. Those stakeholders who were unable to attend were asked to send representatives to attend on their behalf but some were not willing or able to do this and therefore not all of the key stakeholders were represented at the meeting. The following stakeholders attended:

John Dobson (Local County Councillor)
Natural England
RSPB
Norfolk Constabulary
Snettisham Parish Council
McDonnell Caravans

- **26th November 2013**

The working group met on 26th November 2013 in order to consider what recommendations to make to the ETD Overview and Scrutiny Panel. Further information had been requested from the Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) to assist the working group in our deliberations however as this information was not received in time for the meeting it was agreed to meet again in December to consider final options.

- **12th December 2013**

The working group met to consider options and final recommendations.

3. Options relating to the Councillor Call for Action

3.1 The working group held our final meeting on 12th December 2013 to consider the options available to the County Council to try and address the CCfA from Cllr Dobson. These options were as follows:

- That the County Council does not remove the signs currently erected on the beach/common and does not erect the sign agreed with the Parish Council and Natural England on 20th March 2013.
- That the County Council erects the sign agreed by Snettisham Parish Council and Natural England (but not all identified stakeholders) in March 2013.
- That the County Council removes all existing signs at Snettisham beach and does not erect a new sign.

3.2 In considering each of these options the we were mindful of the following issues:

- The cost implications for the County Council of erecting new signs at Snettisham beach, particularly in light of the fact that they may need to be changed pending the outcome of the DMMO public inquiry due to be held in the summer of 2014.
- Despite holding three meetings with stakeholders, no overall consensus could be found between all the local stakeholders involved regarding signs at Snettisham.
- The public inquiry to consider the DMMO is scheduled to begin in June 2014. It is hoped that this will provide clarity on the situation regarding access rights to Snettisham beach/common.
- Advice received from Defra is that as the 'Access Authority' the County Council does not have the power to remove notices on access land even if they contain false or misleading information. This advice is outlined in more detail in section 4 below.
- Erecting new signs in addition to those already erected may lead to a proliferation of signs at Snettisham beach which may be unsightly in the local area and may cause confusion to members of the public if these signs contain conflicting information.

4 Advice from Defra

4.1 The working group requested further information from Defra on the powers of the County Council to remove signs. The response from Defra is outlined below:

“The answer to your question “whether the 'Access Authority' has the power to remove Notices on Access Land which contain false or misleading information” is a

no.

As you know section 14 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 introduces an offence of displaying a notice containing any false or misleading information likely to deter the public from exercising the right of access to access land. Section 14 enables a court to order that an offender should remove the notice, as well as imposing a fine.

Section 40 deals with powers of entry which enable a highway authority under section 40(2) (b) to enter any land for the purpose of ascertaining whether an offence under section 14 has been or is being committed. So the authority has the powers to enter land. But does it then have the power to remove the “offending” notice?

There is nothing I can see in the CROW Act to enable the authority to simply go and remove the notice.

The original Defra guidance to access authorities said that “where access authorities are aware of a possible infringement, the Secretary of State expects them to adopt a fair and transparent procedure for resolving the issue and that prosecution should only be instigated as a matter of last resort”. So in effect the authority would be looking to negotiate firstly with the owner to remove the notice without legal action. You could then if that failed prosecute for the offence through the courts.”

- 4.2 Advice from officers in ETD is therefore that it is highly unlikely that the County Council would secure a court order at this time to remove the private signs that have been erected. Once the Definitive Map Modification Order (DMMO) has been determined matters will be clearer. If the DMMO succeeds, the Council will be able to exert, if still required, the legal channels available to remove any misleading signs. If it fails, and a public right of way is not created, the County Council will be back into the position of deciding whether or not to expend Council resource on trying to get a sign which all parties can agree.

5 Update from the Department of Environment, Transport and Development on the Definitive Map Modification Order (DMMO)

- 5.1 The working group was established with the sole purpose of considering the CCfA from Councillor Dobson as outlined in Appendix A. Any decision by the Overview and Scrutiny Panel will not impact upon the Definitive Map Modification Order process and will not be considered as part of it.
- 5.2 The Modification Order was referred to the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs following receipt of objections and representations. Once an Order has been referred, the Secretary of State has full jurisdiction over the method of determination. In this case, the Secretary of State has ordered a local Public Inquiry to be held. This has been scheduled for 10 June 2014 and has been estimated to last for six days. An Inspector from the Lord Chancellor’s Panel has been appointed to hold the inquiry and will have full discretion as to the proceedings. The Inspector will, in due course, issue his/her Decision on the Order which will either confirm, part confirm or reject the Order. Decision letters can take anything from six weeks to 3 months to be issued. If the Order is confirmed there will be a further period of six weeks, following the

date of publication of the Notice of Confirmation, during which anybody can make an objection to the High Court on the basis that the Order Making Authority (the County Council) did not comply with the regulations or that the Inspector misdirected him/herself as to the law.

- 5.3 Until agreement is reached between all the parties concerned about 'access signing' there remains a risk that conflicts or further acts of criminal damage will arise. While the issues raised are locally contentious, the willingness of all parties to engage in dialogue does indicate that the possibility of conflict is low. There is a possibility that until the DMMO for a route along the coast line is determined, a consensus view may not be found.

6. Conclusions of the Working Group

- 6.1 As outlined in Appendix A Cllr Dobson concludes that the outcome that he hopes to achieve for the CCfA is:

“an agreed, unified view of the signs issue between the key responsible authorities in order to give the police a firm line to prevent further escalation in acts of criminal damage or violence. Norfolk County Council should show leadership in seeking to achieve this by bringing all involved authorities round a table at a Scrutiny Panel meeting as allowed for under section 119 of the Act, which appears to be the ideal instrument for this purpose.”

- 6.2 The preferred solution would therefore be for all involved local stakeholders to agree on a unified sign that could be in place until further clarification is achieved after the public inquiry is held in June 2014. However the working group has been unable to achieve this between all parties involved and it seems unlikely that this would be achieved until clarification on the DMMO is achieved. We are also mindful of Defra's advice to the County Council regarding our powers regarding the removal of signs.
- 6.3 All current signs on the beach are private signs erected by owners of the beach properties on the land. We have noted that that whilst the current signs are not ideal they are not misleading and are an attempt to clarify some complex access rights. The signs were seen in draft form by the County Council and comments were made to improve them. The final signs were not seen by the County Council and therefore were not formally approved by the County Council. As an access authority, we note that the County Council does not have the power to forcibly remove these signs and therefore their removal would require the permission of the sign owner. In the event that the signs are removed it is suggested that neither the County Council nor the other stakeholders erect alternative signs and therefore this would mean that there would be no signs in place until the outcome of the DMMO is known. However, following meetings with local stakeholders from Snettisham, the working group recognises that these signs are causing considerable concern locally.
- 6.4 The working group therefore recommends to the Overview and Scrutiny Panel that all signs at Snettisham beach/common are removed and no further signs be erected until the outcome of the DMMO is known in the summer. We ask Officers to contact the owner of the signs currently erected on the land at the beach/common to ask that they be removed pending the outcome of the DMMO, at which time officers will seek to erect new definitive signs.

7. Resource Implications

Finance – There are no direct financial implications arising from the recommendation of the working group. There is however a possibility that the owner of the private sign may ask the County Council to pay for the removal of the sign if they agree to the request from the County Council that it be removed.

8. Other implications

Legal – The owner of the sign may challenge what authority the County Council has to ask that the signs be removed, particularly when the County Council had originally assisted in providing advice on the wording of the signs. The working group recognise that the County Council has no powers to insist that the signs be removed but we recommend that it be requested that they be removed due to local concern over the impact of the signs in the local area.

Equality Impact Assessment – The access rights to Snettisham Beach are complex and it is difficult to clarify these in advance of the outcome of the DMMO being known. In the meantime there continues to be confusion and local disagreement about the access rights. Although there are no specific equality issues relating to this, this situation is likely to be deterring some people from using the beach/common.

Communications – Any course of action agreed would need to be clearly communicated to all relevant stakeholders to avoid any misinterpretation.

9. Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act

There is anecdotal evidence from some stakeholders that there have been some confrontations as a result of difference of view about the access rights and how they can be enforced. There have also been some instances reported to the Police where signs have been removed or damaged. The DMMO order should resolve access rights by providing a definitive view.

The Police are aware of the remit of the working group and the progress it has made and attended the meeting on 21st November. They have said that there have been no reported instances of crime or disorder officially reported to them for some time.

10 Alternative Options

The Panel could agree to:

- Not remove the signs currently erected on the beach/common and not erect the sign agreed with the Parish Council and Natural England on 20th March 2013; or.
- Erect the sign as agreed by Snettisham Parish Council and Natural England in March 2013.

11 Reason for decision

The original CCfA outlines the details of the dispute in Snettisham between local residents and owners of the beach properties about the rights of access to areas around Snettisham beach/common. The working group believes that until the DMMO process has clarified these rights of access in the Summer of 2014 the most appropriate way forward is for all signs to be removed on the beach/common.

12. Action required:

The Panel is asked to:

- i) note the progress made by the Working Group
- ii) consider the Working Group's suggestion that Officers are asked to contact the owner of the signs and request that they be removed pending the outcome of the Definitive Map Modification Order (DMMO), at which time Officers will seek to erect new definitive signs; and
- iii) if the Panel agrees with the Working Group's suggestion or identifies an alternative course of action, to recommend this course of action to Cabinet.

Officer Contact: Karen Haywood, Scrutiny Support Manager
karen.haywood@norfolk.gov.uk
01603 228913



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Summary of Councillor Call for Action submitted by Cllr John Dobson

Background

Snettisham Common which includes parts of the beach was first registered in 1766. More recently it was registered under the Commons 1965 Registration Act. A dispute has now arisen because a few owners of chalets located on the beach under the auspices of the Snettisham Beach Property Association have erected signs on the common which are misleading and thus contravene the CROW Act 2000 section 14. The signs are misleading because they seek to deny access to the public illegally, in that they are showing that access is forbidden to land which is officially open for access to public. It is alleged that they are doing this because they appear not to want the public to walk in front of their chalets. Natural England, The Open Spaces Society and Norfolk County Council Access Officer agree that these signs are misleading and therefore contravene the CROW Act section 14.

Furthermore, Natural England and The Open Spaces Society contend that the signs are additionally misleading in respect of Public Access and completely understate the access to the Public under the CROW Act 2000. Natural England has asked the official spokesperson of the residents to either remove their logo and/or replace the signs with signs that are not misleading. The spokesman's response has been to put up additional signage which adds to the misleading information by implying that the Parish Council and Natural England have approved the signs. Local activists, working with the Parish Council, claim that they have tried on many occasions without success through communication with Mr. Mills, Mr. Allen, Mr. Jackson of the NCC Transport, Environment & Planning Department to resolve this issue. Furthermore they say they have written to David White Chief Executive of NCC and have involved Henry Bellingham MP but to date this matter has not been resolved.

Norfolk County Council Position

Officer advice is that the dispute has been going on for several years, and has led to a claim for a new Public Footpath which is currently being processed by the Definitive Map team at County Hall. There is a dual issue of whether this linear public right of way exists, and also issues relating to 'Open Access' arrangements on Common land. As a result of the changes introduced by the Big Conversation review, Senior officers advised that as most of NCC's involvement in Common land issues under recent legislation (CROW act 2000) are powers not duties, we would not tend to get involved.

We did not place the signs. We had an input into content, which appeared to be correct on the basis of information available at the time. While the signs have subsequently been shown to be not entirely accurate, these are relatively small details that do not significantly change the general purpose they were designed for, and therefore they do not deliberately mislead people. There are some issues with the mapping of the boundaries of the common, but these are for Natural England to address.

NCC's position is that it does not intend to get involved any further in disputes relating to the common land while it is determining the footpath claim. The Snettisham activists are well aware of that.

Natural England Position

In their latest letter on the subject (May 2012) Natural England contest the County Council's stance as follows:

"As we have previously explained, in terms of wider issues of interpretation it is not our statutory role to approve (or otherwise) the wording of local signage or any policy regarding sign placement, or to adjudicate between local parties on whether particular wordings are lawful or accurate, or on whether particular areas of land have the status of excepted land under CROW. As you know, Norfolk County Council (which is access authority and highway authority for the area) has responsibility for enforcement against any misleading notices in relation to either CROW access rights or public rights of way."

Latest position

The latest position is that Snettisham residents with the common right (registered at County Hall) to access the land for the purpose of collecting shingle and members of the public with the right of access under the CROW Act 2000 are being challenged by individual chalet owners and this has led to altercations, with incidents being reported to the police. Unless firm action is taken as a matter of urgency by a lead authority, acting together with other involved agencies and the police, the situation may well escalate to the commission further acts of criminal damage and threats, with a possibility of people concerned being injured.

OUTCOMES THE LOCAL MEMBER IS HOPING TO ACHIEVE.

The most important outcome is to achieve an agreed, unified view of the signs issue between the key responsible authorities in order to give the police a firm line to prevent further escalation in acts of criminal damage or violence. Norfolk County Council should show leadership in seeking to achieve this by bringing all involved authorities round a table at a Scrutiny Panel meeting as allowed for under section 119 of the Act, which appears to be the ideal instrument for this purpose.

Highways Capital Programme 2014/15/16 & Transport Asset Management Plan

Report by the Interim Director of Environment, Transport and
Development

Summary

This report summarises the Local Transport Plan (LTP) Settlement for 2014/15. The report details the main sources of funding and budget allocations, and describes how these are allocated between the main types of scheme. The Government transport funding allocations for 2014/15 are:

- £19.296m allocation to structural maintenance and bridges;
- £7.487m allocation to integrated transport schemes.

In December 2012, Government announced an additional £215m funding for local road maintenance, as part of a £333m fund announced in the Chancellor's Autumn Statement. The Norfolk allocation was £5.678m, comprising £3.701m in 2013/14 and £1.977m in 2014/15. Therefore, total funding for 2014/15 is £28.76m

The outcome of the Strategic Review workstream on the highways capital programme suggested that due to the maintenance backlog, structural maintenance should be prioritised to ensure the integrity of the highway network. As for the past three years, it is therefore proposed to allocate £2m to highway improvements, and retain flexibility to increase this to £2.5m by reducing the structural maintenance allocations if major scheme cost pressures emerge.

The service continues to seek efficiencies and value for money. Significant savings of £4.4m resulted from the reprocurement of highway services, associated with the works contract awarded to Lafarge Tarmac which commences on April 1st 2014.

There is likely to be some deterioration of highway condition as the annual need is calculated to be in the region of £36m to maintain current condition levels. Therefore, the revised recommended allocations for 2014/15 are:

- £25.379m allocation to structural maintenance (distribution given in Appendix B)
- £1.381m allocation to bridges;
- £2m allocation to integrated transport schemes

Action Required. That this Overview and Scrutiny Panel:

- (i) is invited to comment on the contents of this report, in particular the reallocation of integrated transport funding to structural maintenance to partially address the deterioration in highway condition, and recommend it to Cabinet for approval;
- (ii) is invited to comment on the proposed changes to the Transport Asset Management Plan for 2013/14 to 2017/18 and recommend it to Cabinet for

approval;

- (iii) recommends to Cabinet the use of Chief Officer delegated powers, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Environment, Transport, Development and Waste, to manage the two year programme, including the possible increase in the Integrated Transport programme to £2.5m to deal with any major scheme cost pressures if they arise.

1.0 **Background**

- 1.1. The 2011/12 Local Transport Plan Capital Settlement was confirmed on 13 December 2010. This covered allocations for the next four years for integrated transport, structural maintenance and bridges, and resulted in a substantial budget reduction.
- 1.2. 2014/15 is the fourth year of the third Local Transport Plan (LTP) for Norfolk, Connecting Norfolk. The Plan has six main aims which are:
- managing and maintaining the transport network;
 - delivering sustainable growth;
 - enhancing strategic connections;
 - improving accessibility;
 - reducing transport emissions; and
 - improving road safety.
 -
- 1.3 At its meeting of 4th March 2013 Cabinet approved the further allocation of £2m to support highways, divided equally between:
- £1m for delivering local highway improvements in partnership with Town and Parish Councils (“Parish Partnerships”). Details are provided in section 5.
 - £1m for other highway improvements that support communities and business. Allocation of this was delegated to the Director of ETD, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Environment, Transport, Development and Waste.
- 1.4 These latter improvements are in hand and include:
1. Early completion of the road improvement between Hockering and Lenwade. This will enable 2-way use by HGVs and the introduction of an HGV ban through Hockering, which will benefit local communities.
 2. Pedestrian crossing improvements at Hunstanton and Shipdham
 3. A contribution to Hunstanton High Street improvements to complement extensive improvement works being delivered by the Borough Council
 4. Interactive signing to warn of flood water depth at Welney Wash causeway

5. Streetlighting- LED schemes on non-residential roads, to reduce energy consumption, maintenance, and carbon footprint

6. Surfacing improvements to Public Rights of Way (PROW) paths in urban areas, to improve access and reduce maintenance

7. 20mph zones at schools, to deliver improvements at around 5 priority sites

8. Contribution to support the over-subscribed "parish partnerships" initiative.

1.5 The County Councils "Highways and Related Services" contract expires on 30th March 2014. As 2013/14 is the final year of the present contract, savings for that year have not yet been confirmed. At its meeting of 5th August 2013, Cabinet resolved to approve the award of the Works contract. The award of Professionals Services and the Traffic Signals contracts was delegated by Cabinet to the Director of Environment, Transport and Development (ETD) in consultation with the Head of Procurement and Cabinet Member for Environment, Transport, Development and Waste at its meeting of 3rd December 2012.

These contracts take effect from April 1st 2014 when the relevant service providers will be:

Highways service area	Service provider
Works	Lafarge Tarmac
Professional Services	Mouchel
Traffic Signals	(To be confirmed)

1.6 A shortfall in government funding of £189m led to the County Council embarking on a public consultation exercise on proposals for savings in September 2013. Significant savings of £4.4m have resulted from the reprocurement of highway services, associated with the works contract awarded to Lafarge Tarmac, which will contribute toward the required highways service savings.

1.7 The County Councils new administration has identified three priorities under the banner "*Putting people first*". The highways service contributes directly and significantly to supporting the following priority:

"Good infrastructure – We will make Norfolk a place where businesses can succeed and grow. We will promote improvements to our transport and technology infrastructure to make Norfolk a great place to do business."

2.0 The Settlement

2.1. As detailed in the award letter from the Department for Transport (DfT), the 2014/15 allocation for structural maintenance and bridges is £19.296m (allocations for future years are still to be confirmed). Although additional DfT

funding of £1.977m awarded the previous year increases this to £21.273m, this is still £1.18m less than the base 2011/12 allocation (which excludes the additional funding awarded for winter damage repairs). This allocation includes an allowance for the detrunked road network which passed from Highways Agency control to the County Council in 2001. In real terms the current structural maintenance budget has reduced by around 39% since 2004.

2.2. The allocation for integrated transport in 2014/15 is £7.487. Although increased from £5.324m the previous year, this still represents a 32% reduction compared to the 2010/11 original award of £10.965m (before it was reduced to £7.22m).

2.3. The table below summarises the allocation for 2014/15. The figures for 2010/11 (post June 2010 in-year budget reductions) and 2012/13 are included for comparison. This shows a year on year decline in overall funding since 2010/11.

	2010/ 11 £m (reduced)	2011/ 12 £m	2012/ 13 £m	2013/ 14 £m	2014/ 15 £m
Structural Maintenance & Bridges	22.134	22.456	22.135	20.529	19.296
Additional DfT grant for structural maintenance	0	0	0	3.701	1.977
DfT road safety grant				0.085	
Integrated Transport	7.22	4.992	5.424	5.324	7.487
NCC contribution to Structural Maintenance/improvements	7.0	0	5.7	2	0
De-trunked Roads	5.3	Inc. above	Inc. above	Inc. Above	Inc. above
Winter Damage funding	4.014	6.900	0	0	0
Total £m	45.668	34.348	33.259	31.639	28.76

2.4 The Strategic Review in examining the highways capital programme, reported its conclusions to Overview & Scrutiny Panel in November 2010. This suggested that within a given capital programme, priority should be given to maintenance and a targeted integrated transport programme of around £2m should be implemented. Within this, priority should be given to strategic interventions, walking schemes, small scale traffic management works and safety schemes.

2.5 As highway condition is critical for all road users, including cyclists,

pedestrians and public transport users, it is recommended that £5.487m of the above integrated transport funding be reallocated to structural maintenance in line with the Strategic Review conclusions.

2.6 Therefore, the revised 2014/15 recommended allocations as detailed in the summary table in Appendix A are:

- £25.379m allocation to structural maintenance;
- £1.381m allocation to bridges;
- £2m allocation to integrated transport schemes

2.7 **Future settlement (post 2015)- Local Growth Fund**

2.8 From April 2015, there will be major changes to funding arrangements. Following Lord Heseltine's Review, Government announced that it would make available at least £2bn annually from 2015-21 in local devolved funding. This devolved funding will be paid directly to Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs) with the amount received based on the quality of Strategic Economic Plans, which LEPs are presently working up.

2.9 The devolved funding stream, known as the Local Growth Fund (LGF), comprises several existing streams. For transport these are (per annum nationally):

- £200m sliced from the Local Transport Plan integrated transport allocation
- £819m major transport scheme funding
- £100m Local Sustainable Transport Funding (confirmed for the first year only).

2.10 Local Transport Funding allocations for 2015/16 and beyond could be announced by the end of 2013. As government is putting more funding nationally into the LTP maintenance allocation (and this has not been top-sliced for LGF), we would hope to receive a total settlement that is comparable to 2014/15.

2.11 In addition to the LTP allocation, we would seek and expect to receive funding for transport measures from LGF, which could support a combination of large and small schemes. Whilst the LGF New Anglia LEP funding will not be confirmed until July 2014, Government has confirmed that at least £26m will be available across Norfolk and Suffolk for major transport schemes as part of the LGF allocation between 2015 and 2019. The following priorities for funding have been submitted for Norfolk:

- Thickthorn Junction (A47/A11 junction, Norwich)
- Norwich Area Transportation Strategy measures
- Scheme development costs for Third River Crossing Great Yarmouth
- Easton / Longwater Junction (A47, Norwich)
- Lynn Sport Access Road, King's Lynn

- A47 Blofield to Burlingham dualling
- Great Yarmouth rail station improvements.

2.12 Work is underway to identify a delivery programme and cost profile for these schemes, and where other funding may come from. This work should be completed next summer after government confirm the total LGF allocation in July 2014.

3.0 **Structural Maintenance and Bridge Strengthening**

3.1. It is proposed to split the revised allocation of £26.76m for 2014/15 down to:

• Principal Roads surfacing	£4.527m
• Non-Principal Roads surfacing	£13.329m
• Footways & drainage	£3.388m
• Bridges	£1.381m
• Traffic Signals	£0.640m
• Contract management charges, fees, etc	£3.243m
• Vehicle restraint systems	£0.195m
• Park and Ride	£0.057m

Savings achieved in the new Highway Works contract (section 1.6) have allowed us to deliver £4.4m of savings within the revenue account and still sustain the same level of highways maintenance works in the highways capital programme.

Further details of the allocation of this budget are given in Appendix B. The allocations reflect the priorities supported by the Overview and Scrutiny Panel in the report on the Highway Asset Performance in July 2013. In addition, it reflects the information published as part the Structural Maintenance Members Book issued on Members Insight in October 2013.

3.2. Changes in the highway maintenance backlog over recent years suggest that a budget between £36m (to keep highway condition at a reasonable level) and £47m (to prevent deterioration) is required. The maintenance backlog was estimated to be some £82.5m in July 2013.

3.3. Reducing the investment will inevitably lead to further deterioration in highway condition, despite significant progress made in allocating funding through our approach to asset management. Lower cost treatments will be used, where appropriate, to maintain the serviceability of the asset but these will not address the underlying deterioration, potentially leading to increased costs in future years.

3.4. Fen roads on poor soils in West Norfolk have been damaged by previous drought conditions. A bid by the County Council and other Fenland authorities for additional government funding was unsuccessful. A further approach was made to Government following discussion at the Cabinet Scrutiny Committee on 18th December 2012. £2.35m was allocated to Fen Road repairs in 2012/13 which funded half of the identified schemes, further mitigating risks.

Remaining schemes have been prioritised and programmed, with a further £1.37m allocated in 2013/14. This approach strikes a reasonable balance in terms of risk, and should prevent potential road closures. However, the condition of the roads continues to be of concern, and future investment above levels in the rest of the county may be required..

3.5. Following the 19 September 2007 Overview and Scrutiny Panel report on Highway Asset Performance, Members agreed to an investment of £1m per year for five years from 2008/09 to ensure obsolete traffic signal equipment is replaced. So far all 75 of the original traffic signal installations needing replacement have been upgraded, with consequent reductions in energy use. However, as equipment ages and becomes obsolete it is still necessary to continue this investment, albeit at a lower level. In light of financial constraints a lower allocation of £0.65m was introduced in 2012/13. It is proposed to allocate £0.64m in 2014/15.

3.6. **National Highways & Transport Network (NHT) Public Satisfaction Survey 2013**

3.7. Results from the last survey were reported to Panel in the “Highway Asset Performance” report of 23 July 2013. Results from the 2013 survey show 70 Local Authorities took part, five in the Eastern Region and overall 21 County Councils. Over 4,500 Norfolk residents and road users took part. Summarised findings are:

- Norfolk was rated fifth for overall satisfaction out of the County Councils and 23rd out of the local authorities taking part.
- Biggest gap between importance and satisfaction, both nationally and in Norfolk, across all highway functions continues to be highway condition.

3.8 There has been further decline in Norfolk residents’ satisfaction with highways maintenance, specifically:

- The condition of road surfaces
- Speed of repair to damaged roads/pavements
- Quality of repairs to damaged roads/pavements

3.9 43% of respondents placed roads and footpaths as in most need of improvement. This, coupled with declining public satisfaction with highway condition supports the prioritisation of funding to highway maintenance set out in section 2.5.

4.0 **Integrated Transport - general**

4.1. Integrated transport funding covers all expenditure on new infrastructure such as improvements at bus interchanges and rail stations, local safety schemes, pedestrian crossings, footways, traffic management, route and junction improvements, and cycleways.

- 4.2. The proposed allocation, taking account of the Strategic Review workstream on the capital programme, is £2m, which now only covers a range of low cost new improvement schemes and potential contributions to developing major schemes. Budget summaries and breakdown of the proposed programme by scheme type is detailed in Appendix A. A more detailed scheme implementation programme is detailed in Appendix C.
- 4.3. Due to the tight financial situation, it is increasingly important to work in partnership with other stakeholders and to maximise external funding opportunities (which generally require part or match funding).
- 4.4. There may be a requirement to cover additional costs of £145,000 for further blight costs for the Gt Yarmouth Third River Crossing. This follows the Cabinet decision in December 2009 to announce a preferred route for the crossing, which subsequently blighted several properties. Blight costs (£1.883m up to 2010/11, £458,000 in 2011/12, and £480,000 in 2012/13, and £175,000 in 2013/14) have been contained within the overall highways programme by switching funding from the structural maintenance budget, within limits agreed by Cabinet. Otherwise, costs would need to be funded from the £2m integrated transport budget, which would result in programmed schemes being deferred.

5.0 **Integrated Transport - Parish Partnerships**

- 5.1 In December 2013 the County Council again invited Parish and Town Councils to submit bids for small highway improvement schemes, offering to support up to half the cost of successful bids from a £100,000 fund, with Town/Parish Councils contributing the balance. The intention was to ensure that limited funds could be used to meet local needs, helping promote the developing localism agenda. The offer was the same as that proposed the previous year when 32 viable bids were supported.
- 5.2 In January 2013, the County Council increased the available funding to £1,000,000 and, to help make the initiative even more accessible, agreed to support up to 75% of the cost. The 30 April deadline was extended into May to accommodate some Parishes who needed more time to assemble their bids. 179 bids were received and assessed for compliance with the funding criteria. The total value of bids was around £3,000,000, meaning the available funding was well oversubscribed.
- 5.3 All schemes were assessed against their contribution towards the six main aims that support the vision in the Local Transport Plan (LTP), Connecting Norfolk. The use of lower cost trods (low cost, unbound footways) will allow us to consider using them, where appropriate, in the future footways programme to help deliver savings. With limited funds available, it is more essential than ever to ensure schemes deliver value for money and deliver the required outcomes in the Connecting Norfolk vision.
- 5.4 30 bids were for Vehicle Activated Signs (VAS) which flash up warnings to drivers. After being assessed against road safety criteria, 12 of these bids

were fully funded, 16 partly funded (ie only some of the requested VAS were supported), and 2 bids were not supported. A further 15 bids for SAM” (mobile VAS units which flash vehicle speed as a reminder to the driver.) were fully funded. All bids helped support road safety.

- 5.5 51 bids were for installation of low-energy LED lighting in streetlights owned by parish/town councils, to help cut energy bills, maintenance, and carbon footprint. With a total bid value of £1,200,000, rationing was applied. A maximum of 30 streetlight installations was supported for all bids. This is delivering some 1250 lamp replacements with annual associated energy savings of 100,000 kwh equivalent to a carbon reduction of 50 tonnes for Town/Parish councils.
- 5.6 The above approach meant that all remaining, viable highway related bids could be supported. From 179 bids, 129 were fully funded, 45 partly funded, and 5 were not taken forward. £1.7m worth of bids are being delivered, from the £3,000,000 worth of bids made. The County Council are funding around £1.26m, with Parish/Town Councils funding the remaining £440,000.
- 5.7 Most schemes have now been successfully delivered. This, and encouragingly positive feedback from Town and Parish Councils underline the continuing success of this initiative in helping deliver highway schemes that are a priority for local communities, attracting additional match funding in doing so, and helping advance the localism agenda.
- 5.8 An announcement in October 2013 to repeat the initiative in 2014/15 with funding of £200,000 has again been welcomed by Parish/Town Councils. This £200,000 comprises £150,000 of LTP funding plus £50,000 from the Norfolk Safety Camera Partnership to provide SAM2 The County Council will support up to 50% of bid costs, which this time excludes fitting low-energy LED lighting to parish owned streetlights. Bids are to be submitted by 30 January 2014. The Director of Environment, Transport and Development (ETD) in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Environment, Transport, Development and Waste will determine which proposals will be funded in Spring 2014.

6.0 **Other Funding**

6.1. **Supplementary County Council Funding**

6.1.1 **Northern Distributor Road (NDR) and Postwick Hub**

At its meeting of 4th November 2013, Cabinet agreed to adopt the updated NATS Implementation Plan and agreed a revised NDR cost profile.

Appendix A of this report includes (under the heading Other Funding) the approved funding of £27.55m in 2014/15 and £28.5m in 2015/16. The NDR and Postwick Hub junction are a key part of the Norwich Area Transport Strategy (NATS) and the Joint Core Strategy for Greater Norwich, crucial to delivering housing and jobs growth in the greater Norwich area.

6.1.2 DfT confirmed in December 2011 that it was providing £86.5m towards the cost of delivering the NDR and Postwick Hub junction (which accounts for £19m of the DfT contribution). This is a major vote of confidence in the project by the Government, and recognises its strategic importance and value for money. This funding will provide the potential to unlock growth that as a conservative estimate amounts to £1.3bn of additional investment in the Norfolk economy.

6.1.3 **RAF Coltishall**

In December 2012, Cabinet agreed to allocate £572,500 to enable a dedicated project team to be formed, develop the Master Plan and to identify, market and progress the best opportunities to develop the site and generate income for the Council. A further £1m has been allocated from the Norfolk Infrastructure Fund to support the delivery of essential infrastructure required to improve the site and bring forward its beneficial reuse at the earliest opportunity, whilst exploring other funding sources. We expect the site to eventually generate an income stream in the medium term, helping reduce reliance on Government funding. In addition, we estimate the site is capable of sustaining several hundred jobs in the longer term.

6.2. **Developer Funded Schemes (Section 106 & 278 Agreements)**

6.2.1. Highway schemes are also delivered as a result of planning permissions for development. The County Council has no direct influence on the timing of this expenditure, which is dependent on phasing of developments. There is also no guarantee that any of the obligations or works secured in agreements will come to fruition if, for instance, the planning permission was allowed to lapse and the development did not take place.

6.2.2. A significant number of major, development led highway schemes are tentatively programmed for 2014/15. With a total value of nearly £8m this is indicative of positive economic activity, and ties in with the County Councils priority of providing good infrastructure.

6.2.3. Developer funded schemes are listed in Appendix C, under “other funding”, mostly in the “Traffic Management, Road Improvements & Safety Schemes” section. Other planning applications may result in further work on the highway in 2014/15.

6.3 **Department for Transport (DfT) Cycle Safety Fund**

6.3.1 In July 2012 DfT announced a £15 million capital fund to support safety improvements at junctions for cyclists, with an expectation of match funding from local authorities or partners. Whilst the DfT list of “accident black spots” (3 or more cyclists killed or seriously injured within the past 5 years) did not include any sites in Norfolk, cyclist accidents still happen.

6.3.2 The annual highways improvement programme includes funding for Local Safety Schemes (LSS) to address accident problems with low cost solutions. A number of planned LSS that included measures to address cyclist accidents were packaged as a bid. Whilst the whole County was examined, the sites

meeting LSS intervention criteria are in Norwich. The bid successfully secured £85,000 of DfT funding, which supported delivery of £170,000 worth of LSS schemes in 2013/14. The bid also sought funding for the Councils ongoing road safety campaign, however this element was not supported.

6.4 **Department for Transport (DfT) City Cycle Ambition**

At its meeting of 4th November 2013, Cabinet agreed to adopt the updated NATS Implementation Plan and agreed a revised NDR cost profile. The report to Cabinet referred to the recent successful Cycle City Ambition Grant, which secured £3.7m of government funding which will allow acceleration of schemes to upgrade cycling infrastructure across Norwich, including an eight-mile route through the city centre linking people with growth areas from the Norwich Research Park to Heartsease. Details have also been reported to the Norwich Highways Agency Joint Committee (NHAC).

6.4.1 Working with partners at Norfolk County Council, Broadland District Council, the Clinical Commissioning Group, the Public Health Authority and the University of East Anglia the City Council put together a package of 22 interventions that will complete the “pink pedalway”, which runs from the Norwich Research Park (NRP) and the Norfolk and Norwich Hospital, through the university to the city centre and then out towards Rackheath via Mousehold Heath. The package was entitled “Push the Pedalways”

6.4.2 A series of reports will be presented to NHAC to consider the results of public consultations and the determination of any objections to the legal orders associated with the delivery of individual project elements.

6.4.3 The total project cost of £5.553M is mainly funded by £3.7m DfT grant, with the balance coming from a range of partners including Norfolk County Council, Norwich City Council; developer funding; Broadland district council; the clinical commissioning group; Norfolk public health; and the University of East Anglia. The grant terms require that the works must be completed by the end of September 2015.

6.4.4 £240,000 of LTP funding is allocated toward schemes in 2014/15, and a further £100,000 in 2015/16.

6.5 **Department for Transport (DfT) – pinch point funding**

6.5.1 Government invited bids for local pinch point funding to be submitted by February 2013 “*to remove bottlenecks on the local highway network which are impeding growth.*” Three bids were submitted;

1. ASDA and Fullers Hill junctions, Great Yarmouth, to increase capacity for traffic on pinch points on the local road network
2. King’s Lynn access to Lynn Sport, to open up a site for housing.
3. Beacon Park to A143 link road Great Yarmouth, to open up and accelerate housing delivery

- 6.5.2 Although the national fund was more than twice oversubscribed, the £5.5m bid for the Beacon Park to A143 link road Great Yarmouth was successful. As well as relieving morning rush hour congestion, the scheme will unlock land for up to 1,000 new homes and 15 hectares for businesses and jobs at a time when good quality land for the offshore energy industries is in short supply.
- 6.5.3 The required local funding contribution will be underwritten by Great Yarmouth Borough Council on the basis that they will receive some back from developers. Whilst the County Council is not contributing funding, Officers have worked closely with Great Yarmouth Borough Council on developing the proposal, and are undertaking the scheme design. To meet funding deadlines, the scheme must be completed by March 2015.
- 6.5.4 Government announced a further round of pinch point funding in October 2013, offering authorities the opportunity to submit (or resubmit) bids. It was not practicable to assemble detailed supporting information and submit a new bid within the short timescale available. Whilst we can undertake detailed feasibility scheme development work where delivery is a realistic proposition, we do not have the resources to develop a range of schemes to a shovel-ready state specifically in case a funding bid – or other opportunity – arises.
- 6.5.5 We did not resubmit the unsuccessful bids (see 6.6.1) because:
- Government had assessed the King's Lynn scheme as offering low value for money (in terms of its congestion benefits on the wider network). As government had indicated that only schemes assessed as high value for money would be considered, and there was no prospect of reworking the scheme to achieve this, the bid was not resubmitted. However this scheme is identified as a potential major transport scheme that (subject to a business case) could be funded in part from LGF due to the wider economic benefits that it would deliver.
 - Although the Great Yarmouth scheme was assessed as very high value for money by DfT it was not resubmitted for two reasons. Firstly, it would have required a match-funding contribution of around £700k from the 2014/15 capital programme. It was not considered that this could easily have been accommodated. Secondly, there were major risks for the authority committing to delivering this scheme before the deadline of April 2015.

Although we did not make a bid, we did highlight the strength of our bids, particularly Great Yarmouth, and outlined that we wished to explore with the Department how we might deliver such projects within a timeframe that we would be confident be achievable. We have not yet had a response.

6.6 Central Government - City Deals

- 6.6.1 Through separate arrangements the County Council has been working with Broadland District Council, Norwich City Council and South Norfolk Council to agree a City Deal with Government. Negotiations and progress over the past year, have been reported to Cabinet. The predicted outcomes of the Deal are;

- 3,000 additional jobs at the NRP
- 400 new business and 3000 high value jobs across the New Anglia LEP area
- £100m additional private investment to support jobs growth
- Over £2.3bn investment in private sector housing
- A step change in housing delivery
- Acceleration of planned growth
- 13,000 additional jobs across Greater Norwich

The deal document has been signed, and there is an implementation plan with actions that the local authorities and central government will carry out. The deal includes an infrastructure element, through which the authorities aim to secure a £440m strategic infrastructure programme by 2026, to deliver and accelerate planned growth. A significant section of this programme comprises transport projects.

The infrastructure programme and its funding will be managed through the City Deal governance arrangements which are still being developed. The City Deal will have a significant influence on future transport programmes.

6.7 **Norwich Better Bus Area Funding Award**

6.7.1 In March 2012, Norfolk County Council secured £2.6m of Government funding for a series of major public transport improvements that will improve bus travel for passengers, visitors and commuters in Norwich, as well as delivering a boost to the city's economy. The County Council's bid, worth £2.9m in total, was described as 'impressive' by the Department for Transport and effectively allows the authority to fast track a range of transport improvements previously agreed in the Norwich Area Transport Strategy (NATS).

6.7.2 As funds could only be spent in areas of population greater than 100,000 the bid was limited to the Norwich Policy Area and monies are to be spent during the period 2012/13 to 2014/15. £773,000 is allocated in Appendix C to deliver the following key schemes (Public Transport) in 2014/15:

- BBA1 Removal of general traffic from St Stephens Street and consideration of removal of general traffic from Surrey Street (£110,000)
- New up-hill bus lane on Grapes Hill with retention of existing highway traffic lanes (£663,000)

6.8 **Other contributions**

6.8.1 Other potential sources of capital funding included in the proposed 2014/15 Capital Programme (included under the heading 'Other Funding' in Appendices A and C) include:

- £90,000 developer contributions to support Demand responsive Transport
- £20,000 match funding from Parish Councils toward bus shelter grants

- £2.391m of Moving Thetford Forward funding for a new bus interchange in the town.
- £250,000 funding for Parish partnerships (£50,000 from Norfolk Safety Camera partnership plus £200k match funding from Town/Parish Councils) (See Section 5)
- £32,000 from North Norfolk District Council to complete the “Leadership of Place Pilot Project (Pedestrian Accessibility & Signing Improvements)” in North Walsham.
- £440,000 from Kings Lynn Borough Council for Kings Lynn Saturday Marketplace
- £220,000 from Kings Lynn Borough Council for Lynnsport Car Park- Car park modification and resurfacing
- £1.175m for Diss "Heritage Triangle" town centre enhancements (majority funding from Heritage Lottery for Diss Town Council)

7.0 **Transport Asset Management Plan 2013/14-2017/18 (TAMP)**

- 7.1. The TAMP is updated annually and approved by Cabinet and Full Council. A hardcopy of the TAMP approved by full Council on 25th March 2013 is available in the Members Room.
- 7.2. Following the revised arrangements for the maintenance and inspection of PROW's in 2011 we are confirming the inspection requirements for bridges, culverts and footbridges.

General Inspections are carried out by the bridge team :-

- Bridges - two yearly
- Culverts - three yearly
- Public Right of Way (PROW) footbridges (including simple timber ligger bridges with an integral handrail) - two yearly

Exceptions are simple timber ligger bridges up to 5m overall length which do not have an integral handrail. These are inspected by Highway Inspectors as part of routine PROW inspections which take place annually or five yearly depending on the status of the PROW.

8.0 **Conclusion**

- 8.1. A summary of the recommended budgets, and a programme for 2014/15 and a provisional programme for 2015/16 is included in Appendices A, B and C. These programmes are subject to change depending on the progress of individual schemes through the design and consultation process. In addition, the programme may vary depending on the level of contributions to the programme from other funding sources. If there are significant changes these will be reported to Cabinet. The Director of Environment, Transport and Development will manage the two year programme under Chief Officer delegated powers, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Environment, Transport, Development and Waste, to maximise value for money, scheme

delivery and budget utilisation.

9.0 **Resource Implications**

9.1. **Finance:** Cabinet will ultimately consider the overall Capital Programme which will include the contents of this report. This report does not recommend any borrowing. If any borrowing costs are incurred in delivering the capital programme, they will have to be accommodated within departmental budgets. Proposed changes to the TAMP will be accommodated within the Highway Maintenance Fund.

9.2. **Staff:** There are no direct staffing implications arising from this report

9.3. **Property:** Some of the schemes will require the acquisition of land.

9.4. **IT:** There are no direct IT implications arising from this report

10.0 **Other Implications**

10.1. **Legal Implications :** The legal implications of individual schemes will be evaluated as part of the project delivery process.

10.2. **Human Rights:** There are no direct Human Rights implications arising from this report.

10.3. **Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) :** The suggested programme reflects the priorities agreed as part of the Strategic Review, which was concluded early 2011.

The priorities will help ensure that existing levels of access, in terms of the highway, do not significantly decline, by prioritising work to maintain the existing asset. The extent to which accessibility can be improved or increased through improvements to infrastructure, or provision of new infrastructure, will be reduced as a result of reduced funding being available for this purpose and an increase in the use of lower cost options. A detailed equality impact assessment completed as part of the Strategic review did not identify any significant areas of concern.

There is further opportunity for consideration of potential impacts part of the development of individual schemes as the programme is implemented.

10.4. **Communications:** Customer expectations must continue to be sensitively managed in light of reduced budgets, especially as a significant amount of highways related correspondence, petitions, and issues raised at Town and Parish Council meetings revolve around the need for new infrastructure.

10.5. **Health and Safety implications:** There are no direct Health and Safety implications arising from this report.

10.6. **Environmental implications:** All proposed schemes would fit with the objectives of Norfolk's 3rd Local Transport Plan, Connecting Norfolk which describes the county's strategy and policy framework for transport up to 2026. Connecting Norfolk is underpinned by a sustainability appraisal, which incorporates a Strategic Environmental Assessment, Carbon Impact

Assessment and Health Impact Assessment. This assessment process was undertaken to ensure that sustainability principles, including those relating to the environment, economy and social objectives, have been adhered to and helped inform the plan's development. Overall the strategy and implementation plan is projected to have a beneficial impact on the sustainability baseline, carbon reduction and health of the population.

Large schemes such as the NDR are subject to individual environmental impact assessments. On all schemes we seek to promote re-use or recycling of materials, minimise energy consumption, and make use of sustainable systems (eg drainage) as appropriate.

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

10.0 **Section 17 – Crime & Disorder Act**

10.1 Transport schemes which are developed through the Local Transport Plan capital programme will be individually assessed for their crime and disorder implications.

11.0 **Risk Implications/Assessment**

11.1 The main risk to the 2014/15 programme is the extent of any further Great Yarmouth Third River Crossing Blight costs. To mitigate this and their potential impacts on the Integrated Transport programme, it is suggested that if necessary, the Director of Environment Transport and Development, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Environment, Transport, Development and Waste, could increase the Integrated Transport programme up to £2.5m by reducing the structural maintenance allocation.

11.2 There is a risk with the larger, non-Local Transport Plan funded, schemes that if they overspend, any shortfall may need to be funded from the Highways Capital Programme. To accommodate this, programmed schemes may need to be deferred to prevent an overspend on the overall Highways Capital Programme. The risk is mitigated by effective project and programme management

11.3 Any scheme specific risks and implications will be assessed and mitigated during the development of each scheme.

12.0 **Alternative options**

12.1 The suggested allocations of funding could be varied to suit local requirements, progress towards national indicators, corporate targets and other local performance targets.

13.0 **Reason for Decision**

13.1 The proposed allocation of the Government grants has been varied, to give priority to maintaining the highway assets. This is consistent with the outcome of the Highways Strategic Review. The proposed level of

investment of £25.379m is still below that required to keep the assets in their current condition, this would require in excess of £36m. It is hoped that in the next Spending Review period, grant levels will be increased to help rectify any such deterioration.

- 13.2 The need to prioritise investment in the existing highway asset, other than strategic interventions linked to growth or regeneration, is reflected in the LTP and Implementation Plan.
- 13.3 The proposed changes to the service standards in the Transport Asset Management Plan can be achieved without putting the County Council at more risk of third party claims for injury / damage.

Action Required

That this Overview and Scrutiny Panel:

- (i) is invited to comment on the contents of this report, in particular the reallocation of integrated transport funding to structural maintenance to partially address the deterioration in highway condition, and recommend it to Cabinet for approval;
- (ii) is invited to comment on the proposed changes to the Transport Asset Management Plan for 2013/14 to 2017/18 and recommend it to Cabinet for approval;
- (iii) recommends to Cabinet the use of Chief Officer delegated powers, in consultation with the Cabinet Member, to manage the two year programme, including the possible increase in the Integrated Transport programme to £2.5m to deal with any major scheme cost pressures if they arise.

Background Papers

Norfolk's 3rd Transport Plan- Connecting Norfolk

Transport Asset Management Plan 2014/15-2018/19 (TAMP)

Highways Capital Programme for 2014/15/16 and Transport Asset Management Plan – (Cabinet - 5th March 2013)

Officer Contact

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

Name	Telephone Number	Email address
Paul Donnachie	01603 638030	paul.donnachie@norfolk.gov.uk



If you need this report in large print, audio, Braille, alternative format or in a different language please contact Paul Donnachie on 01603 223097 or textphone 0844 8008011 and we will do our best to help.

APPENDIX A: Norfolk County Council- highways Capital programme- 2014/15 to 2015/16

Scheme Type	2014/15	OTHER FUNDING	2015/16	OTHER FUNDING
Major schemes	0	27,795	0	28,500
Public Transport Schemes	525	3,274	520	305
Pedestrian & Cyclist Improvements	716	3,782	755	1,432
Traffic Management, Road Improvements & Safety Schemes	704	15,900	650	1,200
Other Schemes, Future Fees & Carry Over Costs	55	25	75	25
Integrated transport	2,000	50,776	2,000	31,462
Detruncked Roads & Bridges	0	0	0	0
Structural Maintenance (inc DfT & NCC Winter Damage funding)	25,379	0	25,379	0
Bridge Strengthening / Bridge Maintenance	1,381	0	1,381	0
Totals:	28,760	50,776	28,760	31,462

Notes:

1. Above figures in £000's
2. DfT (Local Transport Plan) funding detailed under main year headings i.e. 2013/14
3. Other Funding includes Section 106, Section 278, County Council & Major Scheme funding

Structural Maintenance Budget Proposed Allocations 2014/15 (City & County)	
Funding	£
LTP Structural Maintenance Grant	19,296,000
County Contribution	0
Capital Integrated Transport Contribution	5,487,000
Additional Capital Integrated Transport Contribution	0
Supply Chain contribution	0
Winter damage Government Grant	0
Winter Damage Council additional contribution	0
Additional structural Mt grant autumn statement	1,977,000
	26,760,000
Spending	
Countywide specialist	
Bridges	1,380,960
Traffic Signal Replacement	640,380
Traffic Management	
HGV Signing	
Park & Hide	56,991
sub total	2,078,331
Roads	
Datruink Principal Roads (Surfacing)	
Principal Roads (Surfacing)	2,653,137
Principal Roads (Surface Treatment)	1,662,020
Principal Roads (Joint repair)	15,462
Principal Roads (SCHIM)	196,360
sub total	4,526,979
B roads (surfacing)	915,249
B roads (surface treatment)	974,224
sub total	1,889,473
C roads (surfacing and haunch)	948,084
C roads (surface dressing)	3,097,196
sub total	4,045,280
U roads (surfacing and haunch)	132,324
U roads (surface dressing)	3,049,395
sub total	3,181,719
Capital Structural Funding transferred to the Highways Maintenance Fund for Patching	4,212,772
sub total	4,212,772
	17,866,224
Contract costs etc.	3,243,000
Vehicle Restraint Systems	
Risk Assessment,	32,000
Design & works	163,000
	195,000
Footways & Drainage	
Area Managers Schemes	180,000
Footways - Category 1 & 2	450,000
Footways Category 3 & 4	2,268,990
Drainage	488,466
	3,387,446
Summary	
Total Structural Maintenance & Bridges Spending	26,760,000
Probable final budget	26,760,000

APPENDIX C: Proposed Highways Capital Improvements Programme 2014/15/16

Integrated transport - Scheme Type	Location / Description	2014/15	OTHER FUNDING	2015/16	OTHER FUNDING	Comments
Major schemes	Norwich Northern Distributor Road and Postwick Hub(Dft and NCC Corporate funding)	£0	£27,550,000	£0	£28,500,000	2014/15 funding comprises £5m DfT funding + £15m Postwick Hub CIF funding + £7.55m NCC (LA Contribution) funding supported by GNDP funding up to £40m
	NDR - feasibility studies for associated, essential schemes	£0	£100,000	£0	£0	
	Great Yarmouth - Third River Crossing - Preliminary Design & Blight	£0	£145,000	£0	£0	final property purchases relating to blight (if not covered in
Public Transport Schemes	Norwich DDA Bus stop upgrades	£20,000	£0	£10,000	£0	
	County- DDA Bus stop upgrades	£55,000	£0	£40,000	£0	
	Diss - Vincas Road / Gilray Road DDA improvements to improve access to railway station car park	£35,000	£0	£0	£0	Improves access to railway station
	Norwich- Removal of general traffic from St Stephens Street and consideration of removal of general traffic from Surrey Street ("Better Bus Area" funded)	£0	£110,000	£0	£0	Scheme delivery is dependant on the outcome of a Judicial Review hearing in February.
	Norwich- New up-hill bus lane on Grapes Hill with retention of existing highway traffic lanes ("Better Bus Area" funded)	£0	£663,000	£0	£0	This project aims to cut bus journey times, improve reliability, with better access for taxis/bicycles in to the city. Scheme delivery is dependant on the outcome of a Judicial Review hearing in February.
	County- Strategic Traffic Light Priority	£10,000	£0	£10,000	£0	10-15 sites across SCOOT Norwich, King's Lynn & Gt Yarmouth - location being supplied by bus operators
	County- DRT (Demand Responsive Transport)	£0	£90,000	£0	£90,000	to be progressed via developer contributions secured where DRT may be developed.
	County- Bus Shelter grants	£15,000	£20,000	£15,000	£20,000	No ongoing revenue costs and boosts localism by ensuring PC are involved contribute 50% with work kept local
	County- Advertising within bus station(s) outside norwich e.g. HD screens.	£25,000	£0	£0	£0	income to offset against on going revenue costs - opportunity to earn advertising income and also displaying County Council and other messages locally
	County- Footways which would allow a route to school to be declared safe to save revenue	£155,000	£0	£155,000	£0	contributes to reducing on going revenue costs of school transport provision which is a major area of spend for the authority.
	Norwich- coach parking site	£25,000	£0	£0	£0	Depends on outcome of study-provision for coach parking in the city
	Thetford - New Bus Interchange (Partnership scheme with Moving Thetford Forward)	£0	£2,391,000	£0	£0	NCC contribution of £300k committed in previous in previous years
	Norwich - Anglia Square / Edwards Street - Bus Interchange (part S106 funded)	£0	£0	£25,000	£195,000	
	Dereham - Town Centre Bus Interchange	£0	£0	£15,000	£0	
	North Walsham bus interchange	£10,000	£0	£150,000	£0	Dependant on identifying feasible site and detailed costs
	Diss Railway Station - Access Improvements between Car Park & New Housing Development	£0	£0	£0	£0	Long term aspiration for bus access - first item is improved footway cycle link
	Public transport information technology	£50,000	£0	£50,000	£0	Use of technology to improve passenger information (and NCC corporate information/messages where appropriate eg network disruption)
	Thetford- CCTV at bus station	£50,000	£0	£0	£0	to enhance public safety at unmanned station
	Countywide Public Transport Interchanges	£75,000	£0	£50,000	£0	small measures across all inter changes

APPENDIX C: Proposed Highways Capital Improvements Programme 2013/14/15

Integrated transport - Scheme Type	Location / Description	2014/15	OTHER FUNDING	2015/16	OTHER FUNDING	Comments
Pedestrian & Cyclist Improvements	Rackheath - Eco town to Sprowston - Cycle Link (Other funding from Broadland DC)	£0	£0	£50,000	£900,000	Other funding from Broadland DC. Funding in year 2 of programme as scheme unlikely to proceed in year 1
	Norwich- NATS IP – Cycle network implementation	£0	£0	£0	£0	
	Thetford - Queensway First & Middle School - Shared Use Cycle Facility between Fulmerston Road and Bury Road	£0	£50,000	£0	£0	Will only be progressed if Sustrans / Thetford Growth Point funding is available
	Wymondham- Harts farm cycle link - partnership with SUSTRANS	£15,000	£0	£85,000	£100,000	Joint funded with SUTRANS
	Fakenham infant and junior schools cycle link- partnership with SUSTRANS	£5,000	£0	£10,000	£0	
	Future Cycling Schemes	£15,000	£0	£20,000	£0	
	Dereham - Station Road / Norwich Road - Shared Use Facility (Part funded by S106 contributions)	£10,000	£0	£30,000	£40,000	
	Dereham-FP10 shared use footway-conversion to cycleway	£3,000	£0	£0	£20,000	
	Gt Yarmouth – Burgh Road to Harrey's Road - Shared Use Link	£3,000	£0	£10,000	£0	joint funded with S106 funds
	Norwich- Cycle City Ambition-Magdalen Street contra flow	£100,000	£110,000	£0	£0	Other funding from DfT, City council and partners
	Norwich- Cycle City Ambition-Earham road (Gipsy Lane-Christchurch rd)	£90,000	£380,000	£0	£0	
	Norwich- Cycle City Ambition-Tombland and Palace St	£25,000	£295,000	£0	£0	
	Norwich- Cycle City Ambition-Heathgate- Valley Drive	£25,000	£485,000	£0	£0	
	Norwich- Cycle City Ambition-Salhouse Road (Hammond Way / Racecourse Inn)	£0	£183,000	£100,000	£122,000	
	Norwich- Cycle City Ambition-The Avenues	£0	£650,000	£0	£0	
	Norwich- Cycle City Ambition-Park Lane/Vauxhall Street	£0	£100,000	£0	£0	
	Norwich- Cycle City Ambition-Vauxhall Street/ Bethel Street	£0	£819,000	£0	£0	
	Norwich- Cycle City Ambition-20mph areas	£0	£300,000	£0	£0	
	Norwich- Cycle City Ambition-Simplify cycling and loading in pedestrian areas	£0	£55,000	£0	£0	
	Norwich- Cycle City Ambition-Directional signage and clutter removal (to be done in phases)	£0	£50,000	£0	£0	
	Public Rights of Way in Towns & Villages - Urban Path Improvements	£30,000	£0	£30,000	£0	
	Cromer - Hall Road (A148 to Meadow Close) footway (47pts = joint 3rd priority)	£50,000	£0	£0	£0	
	South Walsham - School Road footway (school to Broad Lane) - (47pts = joint 3rd priority)	£10,000	£0	£60,000	£0	
	Future Footway Feasibility Schemes Fees	£10,000	£0	£10,000	£0	Allowance for 3 studies based on assessment points and buildability
	Hethersett - Henstead Road - Footway (links to potential)	£20,000	£0	£0	£0	
	Holt - Grove Lane (Pearson's Road to Meadow Close) - Footway phase 2 (50pts = 3rd priority)	£67,000	£0	£60,000	£0	
	Hempnall Coronation Crescent footway	£3,000	£0	£10,000	£0	42 points and joint 11th priority on footway database
	Foulsham - Claypit Road Footway - (66pts = 1st priority)	£10,000	£0	£0	£0	
	Norwich- NATS IP- future walking schemes	£0	£0	£0	£0	
	Future Walking Schemes	£0	£0	£0	£0	
	Delivering local highway improvements in partnership with Town and Parish Councils	£150,000	£250,000	£150,000	£250,000	"other funding" includes £50k contribution from Norfolk Safety Camera partnership for SAM2 (Mobile "Flashing" signs) plus £200k match funding from Town/Parish Councils
	South Wootton - Castle Rising Road Pedestrian crossing	£5,000	£0	£50,000	£0	Potential zebra crossing on table; follow up to earlier pedestrian improvements (VAS; 30mph limit; wig-wags) to improve safety for school children
	Diss -A1066 Park Road Pedestrian Crossing (developer funded)	£0	£55,000	£0	£0	
	Gorleston - Cliff Park Infant & Junior School Pedestrian Improvements (formerly SHJ2S)	£0	£0	£10,000	£0	To aid schoolchildren and elderly residents crossing marine esplanade
	Future Road Crossing Schemes	£10,000	£0	£10,000	£0	
	Norwich- St Augustine's zebra crossing	£30,000	£0	£0	£0	
	Norwich- Aylsham Road by Buxton Rd pedestrian refuge	£30,000	£0	£0	£0	
	Norwich-NATS IP- future road crossings	£0	£0	£60,000	£0	

APPENDIX C: Proposed Highways Capital Improvements Programme 2013/14/15

Integrated transport - Scheme Type	Location / Description	2014/15	OTHER FUNDING	2015/16	OTHER FUNDING	Comments
Traffic Management, Road Improvements & Safety Schemes	A47 (Honingham) to A1067 (Lenwade) Link Road - post completion "lock-in" measures	£20,000	£0	£0	£0	Further measures- if required- to lock in benefits of re-routed traffic
	NATS IP Schemes - future design & implementation of schemes	£30,000	£0	£220,000	£0	
	Norwich- Hall Road ASDA- Signal crossings and junction improvements with cycle tracks to new supermarket (S278 funded)	£0	£900,000	£0	£0	
	Norwich- NATS IP- Chapelfield North & Westgate Public Transport Improvements (GNDF/S106/City Council funded)	£50,000	£929,000	£0	£0	Scheme delivery is dependant on the outcome of a Judicial Review hearing in February.
	Diss-Frenze hall Lane- carriageway and footway improvements S106	£65,000	£65,000	£0	£0	Joint funded with £75k S106 funds and £70k LTP funds
	Great Yarmouth/Gorleston- A12/A143 link road (DfT "pinch point" scheme)	£0	£5,944,000	£0	£0	Funded by DfT/developer/GYBC
	Wymondham Postmill Close- Signal controlled and uncontrolled crossings and footway improvements.- (S278 funded)	£0	£100,000	£0	£0	
	Colney NRP Project 26 S278 Highway Infrastructure (S278 funded)	£0	£1,100,000	£0	£0	Improvement works in relation to Norwich research park
	Colney B1108 Watton Road Widening and Surfacing Works (developer funded)	£0	£850,000	£0	£0	Improvement works in relation to Norwich research park
	Keswick A140/B1113 junction improvements	£0	£0	£10,000	£0	Reduces congestion, and complement 12/13 signal improvements at nearby TESCO junction
	Thorpe Griffin Lane-New roundabout to housing development (S278 funded)	£0	£500,000	£0	£0	
	RAF Coltishall- site development- highway related improvements (NCC corporate funding)	£0	£500,000	£0	£0	Corporate project to develop RAF Cotishall site
	Kings Lynn Saturday Marketplace- Paving enhancement (KLBC funded)	£60,000	£440,000	£0	£0	Contribution to scheme funded by Kings Lynn Borough Council- contains highway improvements that will reduce future maintenance commitments
	Kings Lynn- Lynnsport Car Park- Car park modification and resurfacing (KLBC funded)	£0	£220,000	£0	£0	Funded by Kings Lynn Borough Council
	Thetford Mundford Road- Roundabout access to new supermarket (S278 funded)	£0	£800,000	£0	£0	
	Costessey (Longwater) Lodge Farm Phase 1 and 2- Road widening, junction improvements, traffic signals to housing development.(S278 funded)	£0	£1,900,000	£0	£0	
	Costessey - William Frost Way- slip road onto Dereham Road - (S106 funded)	£0	£300,000	£0	£0	
	Norwich - Future Waiting Restrictions / Minor Traffic Management schemes	£10,000	£0	£10,000	£0	
	North Walsham - Leadership of Place Pilot Project - Pedestrian Accessibility & Signing Improvements (part funded by NNDC)	£39,000	£32,000	£0	£0	
	Diss "Heritage Triangle" town centre enhancements (majority funding from Heritage Lottery for Diss Town Council)	£25,000	£1,175,000	£25,000	£1,175,000	Contribution to support Diss Town Council scheme funded by Heritage lottery. Benefits to pedestrian safety and traffic management
	Cantley and Beighton- highway improvements including VAS (S106 funded by British sugar)	£0	£120,000	£0	£0	Various highway safety/surfacing improvements funded by British Sugar £100k S106 fund
	Unallocated Traffic Management funding	£20,000	£0	£20,000	£0	
	Norwich- improvements to estate road corners to accommodate HGV over-run	£20,000	£0	£0	£0	Improved corners for all vehicles, particularly cyclists, reduced future maintenance
	Minor Traffic Management Schemes- county	£115,000	£0	£115,000	£0	
	Safety Partnership Schemes / contribution to maintenance schemes	£25,000	£0	£25,000	£0	
	Local safety schemes Feasibility / Preliminary Design	£0	£25,000	£0	£25,000	
	B1108 Bodney Bends AIP Study – £19k	£19,000	£0	£0	£0	
	A1075 Route Improvements (local Safety scheme)	£80,000	£0	£0	£0	
	A1151 Route Improvements (local safety scheme)	£80,000	£0	£0	£0	
	Hempton: B1146 crossroads (local safety scheme)	£14,000	£0	£0	£0	
	Unallocated Local Safety Schemes	£32,000	£0	£225,000	£0	To be allocated to low cost Safety schemes with high rates of return identified through the year
	Other Schemes, Future Fees & Carry Over Costs	Fees for future schemes (studies/preliminary Design)	£35,000	£0	£35,000	£0
Pre-feasibility work		£0	£25,000	£0	£25,000	
Retention / Land costs on completed schemes		£20,000	£0	£40,000	£0	
Totals:		£2,000,000	£50,776,000	£2,000,000	£31,462,000	Total

Putting People First – Service and Budget Planning 2014/17

Report by the Director of Environment Transport and Development

Summary

At its November meeting, the Panel considered a report on proposals for service and financial planning for 2014-17. This report sets out the latest information on the Government's Local Government Finance Settlement and specific information on the financial and planning context for Environment Transport and Development for the next 3 years. It also contains sets out any changes to the budget planning proposals for Environment Transport and Development and the proposed cash limit revenue budget for the service based on all current proposals and identified pressures and the proposed capital programme.

Action Required

Members are asked to consider and comment on the following:

- The provisional finance settlement for 2014-15 and the latest planning position for Norfolk County Council
- The updated information on spending pressures and savings for Environment Transport and Development and the cash limited budget for 2014-15 in context with the feedback from the consultation reported elsewhere on this agenda.
- If savings proposals are identified for removal, Members are asked for further suggestions or alternative ideas to equal the amounts identified.
- The proposed list of new and amended capital scheme and the proposed capital programme for Environment Transport and Development.

1. Background

- 1.1. A report to Cabinet on 2 September confirmed that the projected funding gap for planning purposes should be increased from £182m to £189m over the three year period 2014/17 based upon information from the Department for Communities and Local Government (CLG).
- 1.2. On 19 September the County Council launched Putting People First, a consultation about the future role of the County Council, and about specific budget proposals for 2014/17. The context for this consultation is the Council's need to bridge a predicted budget gap over the next three years, due to increasing costs, increased demand for services, inflation and a reduction in Government funding.
- 1.3. This paper brings together for Panel Members the following:
 - Financial and planning assumptions agreed by Cabinet in September to

inform the Council's budget proposals

- An updated budget position for Environment Transport and Development based on the local government settlement published in December
- A detailed list of costs and pressures facing Environment Transport and Development
- A detailed list of proposals for savings

2. **Latest Planning Position**

2.1 Since release of the consultation proposals, changes to pressures and financial risks have emerged. Changes to budget planning assumptions for Environment Transport and Development that have arisen since those previously reported at the meeting in November are reflected in Section 7.

2.2 In addition, we await a decision from the Secretary of State regarding the called-in planning application for the Willows (Energy from Waste).

3. **Provisional Local Government Settlement 2014-15 and the Autumn Statement 2013**

3.1. The Chancellor of the Exchequer announced his Autumn Statement on 5th December. Following the statement, our planning assumptions remained broadly the same. The Chancellor confirmed that key announcements of an additional £3bn cuts to public sector funding, would not affect local government, but there may be some reductions due to cuts in the Department of Education funding (£167m 2014-15 and £156m 2015-16). We await further details.

3.2 Following earlier consultation on the use of New Homes Bonus Grant to fund the Single Local Growth Fund from 2015-16, it was announced that the funding will not be transferred to the local growth fund except £70m for the London Local Enterprise Partnership. This equates to a reduction in pressures of £1.3m in 2015/16 for NCC as the assumed reduction based on the earlier proposed transfer will not now take place.

3.3. There were a number of announcements affecting Business Rates. As part of the changes to local government funding and the introduction of the Business Rates Retention Scheme in 2013/14, Council's funding is now linked to collection and growth in business rates. The 2013/14 business rate multiplier was due to increase by 3.2% reflecting the September 2013 RPI figure, which has been confirmed by ONS. However, the RPI increase in business rates will be capped at 2% for 1 year from 1 April 2014. Fully funded business rate policy changes such as:

- Small Business Rates Relief will be extended to April 2015; it was due to end April 2013
- A 50% business rates relief for 18 months up to the state aid limits will be available for businesses that move into retail premises that have been empty for a year or more.

The provisional settlement provided details of a new Section 31 grant of £1.466m to fund these changes. At present, it is unclear as to whether this will cover the full cost

and we are seeking further information as to the breakdown and the timing of this grant.

3.4 Earlier in the year, the Government consulted on plans to give local authorities some flexibility to use capital receipts for service reform. This was confirmed within the Autumn Statement and nationally, total spending of £200m will be permitted across 2015-16 and 2016-17. Local authorities will have to bid for a share of this flexibility.

3.5 Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) announced the detailed finance settlement for local government on 18th December 2013. This provided provisional details for 2014-15 and the indicative position for 2015-16. Detailed information is included in the Provisional Local Government Finance Settlement 2014-15 paper taken to Cabinet 06 January 14. Headline information is included below.

3.6 The Settlement Funding Assessment is the amount of funding a council will receive through the Business Rates Retention Scheme and Revenue Support Grant. For Norfolk County Council, our total Settlement Funding Assessment is:

2013-14 £338.980m
2014-15 £314.154m
2015-16 £274.730m

3.7 In relation to our plans, the settlement funding assessment is £0.295m higher than expected in 2014-15 and £0.464m less in 2015-16. This does not take into account the settlement adjustment grant to compensate for loss of business rates of £1.466m, which is additional to our planned funding forecast in 2014-15.

3.8 The Government has announced that council tax freeze funding will continue and that council tax freeze funding, equivalent to a 1% increase, for 2014-15 and 2015-16 will be built into the spending review baselines for subsequent years. In addition, the Government plans to calculate the 1% increase on the higher taxbase (i.e. the taxbase is not reduced for the element of the taxbase receiving council tax support), this increases funding above our forecast by £0.526m. The government has not yet made any announcement on Council Tax referenda limits, this is expected in January.

3.9 Norfolk County Council currently is part of a business rates pool with Broadland District Council. Cabinet, jointly with other Norfolk councils, agreed to seek Secretary of State approval for the creation of a wider business rates pool from April 2014. This was designated for the following councils:

- Breckland District Council
- Broadland District Council
- Borough Council of Kings Lynn and West Norfolk
- North Norfolk District Council
- Norfolk County Council
- South Norfolk District Council

3.10 The settlement includes information for both individual councils and pools. Individual Councils within the pool have until 14 January 14 to notify DCLG if they no longer want to be part of the pool. If any Council requests to leave the pool prior to this date, the rest of the pool cannot continue.

4. **Implications of the settlement for Environment Transport and Development**

4.1. The Department for Transport has confirmed the Local Transport Settlement for 2014/15 which is in line with the planning assumptions and totals £26.773m

There are no other impacts from the settlement that change the previous planning assumptions for this panel

5. **Type of savings**

5.1 To provide some context as to the type of savings to be made by Environment Transport and Development , the savings have been categorised as follows:

	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	Total 2014-17
Savings Category	£m	£m	£m	£m
Organisational Change - Staffing	1.250	0.000	0.000	1.250
Organisational Change - Systems	3.340	-0.880	1.349	3.809
Procurement	6.400	0.500	0.350	7.250
Shared Services with External Organisations	0.050	0.040	0.205	0.295
Capital	0.200	0.040	0.000	0.240
Terms & Conditions of Employment	0.038	0.034	0.031	0.103
Income and Rates of Return	1.623	0.632	0.614	2.869
Assumptions Under Risk Review	0.150	0.000	0.000	0.150
Front Line - Reducing Standards	1.274	-0.305	0.280	1.249
Front Line - Cease Service	0.300	0.147	0.090	0.537
Total Savings	14.625	0.208	2.919	17.752

6. **Overview and Scrutiny Panel comments**

6.1 On the basis of the planning context and budget planning assumptions, Panels in November considered planning proposals and issues of particular significance. At the Environment Transport and Development Overview and Scrutiny Panel meeting on 26 November, the following issues were identified as having particular impact on service delivery and achievement of the Council’s priorities and the Panel asked that the following points be forwarded to the Cabinet Member for Environment Transport and Development for him to request Cabinet reconsider some of the options proposed in the Norfolk Putting People First consultation:

- The Panel were against a reduction in the refilling of grit bins, as they felt this could be a danger, especially if prolonged wintery conditions were experienced this winter.
- Revisit the £2 recycling charge as the Panel felt this could result in more instances of fly-tipping which could cost the Council additional money to clean up.

- Parish Council contributions to schemes under the Parish Partnership Fund to remain at 25%.
- Delete the £1m saving from the maintenance budget as this was only for one year and maintenance on some roads was urgently required.

7. **Timetable**

7.1 Earlier comments and any arising from this meeting will be reflected in the budget Report, along with other Overview and Scrutiny Panel comments, to Cabinet on 27 January 2014.

7.2 Cabinet will then make their recommendations to County Council meeting 17th February 2014

8 **Budget Proposals for Environment Transport and Development**

8.1 **Revenue Budget**

8.2 The attached proposals set out the proposed cash limited budget. This is based on the cost pressures and budget savings reported to this Panel in November which have been updated to reflect cost neutral changes, there are no other changes to update the panel.

9 **Capital Budget**

9.1 The outline capital programme is shown in Appendix B.

9.2 The Highways capital programme is reported in detail elsewhere on this agenda. There are no new additional schemes for the other services.

10 **Putting People First - consultation**

10.1 On 19 September 2013 we launched the Putting People First budget consultation about the future role of the County Council and specific budget proposals for 2014/17. The consultation closed on 12th December. A paper setting out the equality impact assessment of the budget proposals and a summary of the responses relevant to this Overview and Scrutiny Panel is reported to the Panel elsewhere on this Agenda.

11 **Resource Implications**

11.1 **Finance** : Financial implications are covered throughout this report

11.2 **Staff** : A number of the savings proposals may impact on staffing levels which will be subject to separate consultation as appropriate. .

11.3 **Property** : Property implications have been reviewed as part of the overall assessment for individual proposals

11.4 **IT** : IT implications have been reviewed as part of the overall assessment for individual proposals

12 **Other Implications**

12.1 **Legal Implications** : Legal implications have been reviewed as part of the overall assessment for individual proposals

12.2 **Human Rights** : Human Rights implications are being assessed on an individual budget proposal basis as part of the Equality Impact Assessment process.

12.3 **Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA)** : The assessment of equality impact of the budget proposals is included in a separate report to this Panel.

12.4 **Health and Safety Implications** : Health and Safety implications will be reviewed as part of the overall assessment for individual proposals

12.5 **Environmental Implications** : Environmental implications will be reviewed as part of the overall assessment for individual proposals

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

13 **Section 17 – Crime and Disorder Act**

13.1 Issues in relation to the Crime and Disorder Act will be reviewed as part of the overall assessment for individual proposals.

14 **Risk Implications/Assessment**

14.1 The scale of potential change associated with the budget proposals, there are a series of risks which are generic to all services and against which each individual proposal is being evaluated. These are:

Service performance: the risk that the scale of change will impact on performance and on user satisfaction with services.

Staffing: the risk that skills and knowledge may be lost as people leave or are made redundant and that staff morale is adversely affected.

Capacity for Change: the proposals require significant transformation and change to services and there is a risk that there will be insufficient capacity to re-design services and implement new ways of working.

Increasing demand: there is a risk that where preventative services are being scaled back, there may - in future – be an increased risk in demand as people's needs become more pressing.

15 **Alternative Options**

15.1 This report covers all savings proposals considered for this panel and there are no alternative option proposed. Should Members not wish to take forward any of the proposals they are asked to identify alternative proposals of an equivalent value.

16 **Reason for Decision**

16.1

Action Required

Members are asked to consider and comment on the following:

- (i) The provisional finance settlement for 2014-15 and the latest planning position for Norfolk County Council
- (ii) The updated information on spending pressures and savings for [Service] and the cash limited budget for 2014-15 in context with the feedback from the consultation reported elsewhere on this agenda.
- (iii) If savings proposals are identified for removal, Members are asked for further suggestions or alternative ideas to equal the amounts identified.
- (iv) The proposed list of new and amended capital scheme and the proposed capital programme for Environment Transport and Development

Background Papers

Provisional Local Government Finance Settlement 2014-15 – Cabinet - 06 January 2014

Officer Contact

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

Name	Telephone Number	Email address
Andrew Skiggs	01603 223144	andrew.skiggs@norfolk.gov.uk



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

Appendix A

Proposed Budget Changes for 2014-17

ENVIRONMENT, TRANSPORT AND DEVELOPMENT

		2014-15	2015-16	2016-17
		£m	£m	£m
	BASE BUDGET	116.609	108.467	109.755
	ADDITIONAL COSTS			
	Economy			
	Basic Inflation - Pay (1% for 14-17)	0.284	0.287	0.290
	Basic Inflation - Prices	1.170	1.209	1.249
	Additional Costs for Concessionary Fares travel Scheme	0.900		
	Government / Legislative requirements			
	Landfill Tax Increase	1.656		
	Demand			
	Increase in Tonnages to Landfill	0.725		
	NCC Policy			
	Release of fleet repair and renewal reserve	1.725		
	Release of part of ICT reserve	0.200		
	Re-opening Norwich Bus Station Sundays and bank holidays	0.020		
	Total Additional Costs	6.680	1.496	1.539
Ref	BUDGET SAVINGS			
2	Replacement of BusNet system with SMART ticket machines	-0.060	-0.100	
2	Use of alternative existing technology to provide transport monitoring data and changes to how the council procures traffic surveys			-0.135
3	Procurement of new contracts to deliver highway and related services	-4.400		
4	Reduction in the number of hired highway vehicles	-0.150	-0.150	
4	Reducing the costs of business travel	-0.038	-0.034	-0.031
7	Ongoing review of ETD reserves	-0.150		
8	Re-organise the way we deliver some services and associated back office redesign.	-0.150		
8	Organisational redesign and associated changes.	-1.100		
8	Review budget allocations for economic development projects		-0.147	-0.090
13	HRWC: Invest to Save	-0.300		
16	Collaboration with peer authorities for delivery of specialist minerals and waste			-0.005

	services			
16	Enhanced multi-agency working on emergency planning		-0.040	
17	Renegotiate concessionary travel schemes with bus operators	-0.350	-0.350	-0.350
20	Changes to the delivery of road safety education and evaluation to make greater use of community resources			-0.200
20	Attract and generate new income for Environment services with a view to service becoming cost neutral in the long term.	-0.010	-0.041	-0.072
20	Attract and generate new income for Historic Environment services with a view to service becoming cost neutral in the long term.	-0.007	-0.026	-0.046
20	Full cost recovery for staff in Smart ticketing project	-0.040	-0.250	
20	Full cost recovery for delivery of travel plans with developers	-0.048	-0.050	-0.052
20	Reduce NCC subsidy for park and ride service by ongoing commercialisation.	-0.275	-0.075	-0.075
20	Enhanced Street Works Regulatory regime (introduce cost recovery)	-0.400		
20	Increased income from delivery of specialist highway services to 3rd parties		-0.050	-0.100
20	Generation of external funding and grant programme management efficiencies			-0.100
20	Review of fees and charges to enable full cost recovery	-0.400		
	Improving processes and working arrangements in ETD	-3.000	1.000	
20	Review NCC technical capabilities to see whether services that are currently contracted out could be delivered in house	-0.050		
47	Scale back Trading Standards advice to focus on the things we have to do by law	-0.123	-0.250	
48	Charge for advice to business from our Trading Standards Service			-0.020
49	Charge people for the advice they receive from us prior to submitting a planning application	-0.013	-0.010	
49	Charge people for the advice they receive from us prior to submitting a planning application - pre-application services	-0.100	-0.125	-0.150
50	Reduce our costs of consulting on planning applications	-0.037		
51	Scale back planning enforcement		-0.037	
52	Charge for site inspection reports for operators of mineral and waste sites		-0.005	
53	Reduce our subsidy for the Coasthopper bus service	-0.075	-0.075	
54	Reduce highway maintenance for one year	-1.000	1.000	
59	Cut the cost of providing school transport	-0.250	-0.060	-0.020
60	Charge for the disposal of tyres at recycling centres	-0.039		
61	Stop routine disposal of paint at recycling centres	-0.300		
62	Charge at some recycling centres			-0.280
63	Reduce opening hours at some recycling		-0.167	

	centres			
5	Recycle street sweepings	-0.230		
5	Vary existing disposal contract to reduce costs on 40,000 Tonnes of Waste	-0.080		
		2014-15	2015-16	2016-17
		£m	£m	£m
5	Renegotiate existing contracts to reduce the cost of 10,000 Tonnes of Waste	-0.020		
5	New Service level agreement for County Council recycling centres	-1.400		
20	Use closed landfill sites to generate additional income	-0.030		
16	Harmonisation of statutory recycling credit payments		-0.166	
65	Deliver the Willows energy from waste plant in King's Lynn			-1.194
	Putting People First proposals sub total	-14.625	-0.208	-2.920
	COST NEUTRAL ADJUSTMENTS i.e. which do not have an impact on overall Council Tax			
	*Depreciation	0.155		
	*REFCUS	0.050		
	Debt Management Expenses	-0.002		
	To Finance General: Interest payable	-0.442		
	Public Rights of Way	0.010		
	To Resources: Transfer of Carrow reception staff	-0.009		
	Office Accommodation Depreciation	0.031		
	From Resources: Information management	0.010		
	Sub total Cost Neutral Adjustments	-0.197		
	BASE ADJUSTMENTS			
	Sub total Base Adjustments	0.000		
	TOTAL	108.467	109.755	108.374

Appendix B

A. Capital overview and context: [Service specific]

The proposed 2014/15 Highways Capital programme is reported elsewhere on the this panel agenda and is not repeated in detail here.

There are no new schemes for Environment and Waste or Economic Development, only the continuation of schemes that have previously been approved by cabinet.

B. Summary of existing capital programme

The following table shows the latest position in relation to the existing capital programme.

Table A[x]1: [Service] capital programme summary as at 30 November 2013

Summary of current scheme/block/programme	Revised budget 2013-14 £m	Spend to date 2013-14 £m	Revised budget 2014-15 £m	Revised budget 2015-16 £m
Highways				
Bridge Strengthening	1.400	0.798	1.381	1.381
Bus infrastructure schemes	0.437	0.135		
Bus Priority schemes	0.230	0.185		
Cycling	1.675	0.052		
Pedestrian and Cycle improvements			4.498	2.187
Local road schemes	8.044	5.800		
Local Safety	0.329	0.136		
Other Schemes	1.579	0.259	0.080	0.100
Park and Ride	0.087	0.002		
Public transport schemes	0.802	0.111	3.799	0.825
Road Crossing	0.480	0.060		
Safer and Healthier journeys to schools	0.070	0.018		
Structural Maintenance	25.494	18.825	25.379	25.379
Traffic management and Calming	0.983	0.305	16.604	1.850
Walking schemes	0.538	0.088		
Third River Crossing	0.015	0.009		
Northern Distributor Road	3.550	3.142	12.550	28.500
Norwich A47 Postwick Hub	4.065	1.149	15.000	
Civil Parking Provision	0.046	0.058		
IT Exor Upgrades	0.015			
Subtotal Highways	49.819	31.133	79.291	60.222

Summary of current scheme/block/programme	Revised budget 2013-14 £m	Spend to date 2013-14 £m	Revised budget 2014-15 £m	Revised budget 2015-16 £m
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Environment and Waste & other projects				
Closed Landfill sites capping and restoration	0.460	0.022	0.070	
Drainage improvements	0.500	0.125	1.756	
Investment fund for ESCO		0.003	7.750	
Sparham Footpath	0.006	0.008		
Saddlebow Caravan Park	0.004			
Thetford Recycling centre	0.023			
RAF Coltishall	0.847	0.366	0.087	
Hardley Flood Bridge Improvements	0.020	0.020		
HWRC Invest to Save	1.850	0.976		
RAF Coltishall HGV link road	0.010	0.012		
RAF Coltishall off site works	0.010	0.004		
CERF Ketteringham	0.007	0.006		
Subtotal	3.738	1.543	9.663	
NORA	0.250	0.250		
Hethel Engineering	3.770			
Beach Coach Station	2.076			
Subtotal	6.096	0.250		
Total	59.653	32.926	88.954	60.222

C. Schemes to be funded from borrowing – all services

In accordance with the Capital Strategy, departments have submitted bids for corporate capital funding or prudential borrowing to the Corporate Capital and Asset Management Group (CCAMG). These bids relate in the main to schemes or services for which direct Government support is not available but which are nevertheless considered to be a priority.

The following table sets out existing and proposed schemes to be funded from borrowing.

Table A[x]3: [Service] capital programme proposed new schemes

Service	Scheme	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17
		£m	£m	£m
New bids considered by CCAMG September 2013				
Resources	County Hall security and fire safety measures	1.490	1.000	
Resources	Equality Act (DDA) Works			0.130
Resources	Corporate Minor Works (CMW)			0.600
ETD	Dual Carriageway NDR including Postwick Hub, future year's funding		9.500	20.000
Sub-total new items		1.490	10.500	20.730
Items funded from borrowing included in on-going 2013-16 capital programme				
Resources	Equality Act (DDA) Works	0.130	0.130	
Resources	Corporate Minor Works (CMW)	0.600	0.600	
Resources	Carbon and energy reduction fund	1.100		
Resources	Asbestos Survey & Removal	0.620		
Resources	Better Broadband (excluding externally funded element)	3.011	11.197	
Resources	Investment fund for Norfolk Energy Futures Ltd	3.600		
Resources	County Hall strategic maintenance	7.125	4.575	
ETD	Dual Carriageway NDR including Postwick Hub	7.654		
Items re-profiled from earlier capital programmes				
ETD	Drainage improvements	1.656		
Community Services	Libraries Refurbishment	0.200		
Fire and Rescue	Fire Training Building	0.100		
Children's services	Schools construction	0.034		
Sub-total existing		25.830	16.502	
Total		27.320	27.002	20.730

The incremental future revenue cost associated with the borrowing required for the items above is approximately 10% of the total borrowed each year as illustrated by the following table:

Scheme/programme	New schemes 2015-16 £m	New schemes 2016-17 £m	New schemes 2017-18 £m
Annual additional revenue costs of borrowing	2.732	2.700	2.073
Cumulative		5.432	7.505

Notes [to be developed, eg better analysis between “spend to save” and others].

- 1) County Hall security and fire safety measures: costs subject to confirmation.
- 2) DDA: Historically £0.13m per annum has proved sufficient in this fund, with the need likely to continue hence the estimate for 2016-17. Allocations are proposed on a rolling three year cycle but subject to annual approval.
- 3) CMW: After adjusting for asset disposals, £0.6m per annum has proved sufficient in this fund, with the need likely to continue hence the estimate for 2016-17. Allocations are proposed on a rolling three year cycle but subject to annual approval.
- 4) CERF: 2014/15 is the final year of the existing CERF bid.
- 5) Better Broadband bid: endorsed by Cabinet in July 2011. The amounts included above represent the element of the bid to be funded by prudential borrowing. The borrowing costs will be funded by the Norfolk Infrastructure Fund and savings in the ICT Services budget when the council's data contract is re-let in 2014.
- 6) NEFL: an “investment fund” to be allocated to projects as opportunities arise.
- 7) County Hall strategic maintenance: originally introduced in Cabinet report 9 July 2012 with the project amended such that expenditure originally forecast to be spent over the 22 years from April 2015 has been accelerated to the second and third years of the project, and further elements have been added to the overall project. The figures in the table above represent only amounts in addition to funds previously approved or allocated. Total costs and borrowing requirements will be finalised based on detailed proposals being reported separately to this committee.
- 8) NCC corporate funding for Dual Carriageway NDR includes Postwick Hub, and capital implications of the Airport Radar System as discussed by Cabinet on 3 September 2013. In addition to the above, further capital expenditure to be funded by borrowing is forecast to be £17.28m in 2017-18 and £0.650 in later years. The NCC contribution is supported by GNDP funding of £40m over the period 2014-15 to 2017-18. The figures in the table above do not include elements of the project funded from CIF and from reserves.
- 9) Expenditure re-profiled to 2014-15 from earlier capital programmes.
- 10) Project funded by a revenue contribution from the service. This contribution was used to reduce the Authority's previous year's borrowing requirement and therefore the project will be funded through future borrowing.
- 11) Strong and Well partnership: Cabinet report 28 January 2013, allocated £0.5m capital per annum for 5 years for prevention services for vulnerable older people. Funding was identified for the first year, but not for subsequent years. In line with the revenue budget proposals, the programme from 2014-15 has been withdrawn.

Norfolk - Putting People First

Findings from the public consultation and the outcome of the Equality Impact Assessments for proposals affecting Environment, Transport, Development and Waste

1. Introduction

The proposals for Environment, Transport, Development and Waste (11)

- P49 Charge people for the advice they receive from us prior to submitting a planning application (£0.398 million)
- P50 Reduce our costs of consulting on planning applications (£0.037 million)
- P51 Scale back planning enforcement (£0.037 million)
- P52 Charge for site inspection reports for operators of mineral and waste sites (£0.005 million)
- P53 Reduce our subsidy for the Coasthopper bus service (£0.150 million)
- P54 Reduce highway maintenance for one year (£1.0 million)
- P59 Cut the cost of providing school transport (£0.330 million)
- P60 Charge for the disposal of tyres at recycling centres (£0.039 million)
- P61 Stop routine disposal of paint at recycling centres (£0.300 million)
- P62 Charge at some recycling centres (£0.280 million)
- P63 Reduce opening hours at some recycling centres (£0.167 million)

- 1.1 On 19 September the County Council launched Putting People First, a consultation about the future role of the County Council, and about specific budget proposals for 2014/17.
- 1.2 The proposals set out the Council's initial plans for bridging a £189 million budget gap in the next three years. This gap is made up of things like increasing costs, rising demand for services, inflation and reduced government funding. More details about the financial context for the proposals can be found in the financial planning report to Cabinet on 2 September, and in the Financial & Service Planning reports on the agenda at each Overview & Scrutiny Panel meeting in January.
- 1.3 This paper outlines the approach taken to the consultation and impact assessment of proposals. It summarises the main impacts as well as points and contentions raised about the overall approach proposed in Environment, Transport, Development and Waste. It then summarises for each proposal two main things:
- The findings from the consultation; and
 - The outcome of the Equality Impact Assessments (EQIAs)
- 1.4 Finally, Appendices A to K present for each proposal more detailed summaries of the consultation findings and Equality Impact Assessments.
- 1.5 This paper should also be read in conjunction with the report 'Findings from the public consultation and the outcome of the Equality Impact Assessments for proposals affecting Public Protection - Trading Standards' elsewhere on this agenda. Together, these two papers set the context to, and should be read in conjunction with, the finance and service planning report being presented to Overview & Scrutiny Panel.
- What is the difference between the consultation findings and the Equality Impact Assessments?**
- 1.6 It is important that we present the findings from both the consultation and from the equality impact assessment process.
- 1.7 In analysing and reporting the consultation findings we have sought to present what people think of the proposals. In

most cases this will mean their personal opinions and views.

- 1.8 Equality Impact Assessments are evidence based, incorporating analyses of user and service data as well as the views of people who could be affected, to determine the likely impact of proposals. They are the way we pay due regard, as required by the Equality Act 2010, to the impact that services changes might have on different groups of people. In addition, where the equality impact assessment process shows that changes may have a disproportionate negative impact on specific groups, it then also identifies mitigating actions that might be taken to reduce the impact. These mitigating actions are not formal recommendations at this stage, though Members may want to take them into account.
- 1.9 Responses to the consultation and the outcomes of the EQIAs are two of several factors that Members will consider as they set the budget. As outlined in the Putting People First proposals document, the other factors are:
- The evidence of need and what is proven to work effectively and well
 - The financial position and constraints at the time
 - Any potential alternative models or ideas for making the savings

2. How was the consultation conducted?

- 2.1 Full details of the Council's future role, and of its proposals for saving money, were published at the start of the consultation period here: http://www.norfolk.gov.uk/Council_and_democracy/Interact_with_us/Norfolk_putting_people_first/index.htm.
- 2.2 The web site includes copies of all of the proposals and links to videos of each Cabinet Member explaining the approach in their area.
- 2.3 People were encouraged to respond in any of a number of ways including via the Council's web site, letter, email, telephone (via the Customer Service Centre) and through social media such as Twitter and Facebook.
- 2.4 A range of measures were put in place to publicise the proposals, and significant coverage in the local press has helped generate responses. Response forms were made available in libraries for service users who preferred to reply in writing instead of completing the on-line survey.
- 2.5 In addition we organised or took part in a series of consultation events that people could attend to have their say. In many instances these events were organised to engage with specific groups of people – for example older people, people with disabilities and carers. This has enabled us to understand, through

Equality Impact Assessments

An equality assessment of each proposal has been undertaken to determine any disproportionate impacts on people with protected characteristics.

When making decisions the Council must give due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity and eliminate unlawful discrimination of people with the protected characteristics of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.

Equality assessments are evidence based, taking into account analysis of user data and the views of residents and service users.

Where disproportionate impacts are identified consideration has been given to how these can be avoided or mitigated. It is recognised that it is not always possible to adopt the course of action that will best promote equality; however the equality impact assessment process enables informed and transparent decisions to be made.

Rural 'proofing'

An assessment of the rural issues arising from proposals has also been undertaken to determine the impact on rural communities. The rural proofing exercise has been integrated with equality impact assessments.

our equality impact assessments, whether our proposals are likely to have a disproportionate impact on particular groups.

3. How the Council has analysed people's views

3.1 Every response the Council has received has been read in detail and analysed. This analysis identified:

- The range of people's views on the proposal/s
- Any repeated or consistently expressed views, and whether or not the responses represented a consensus of views
- The reasons people support or object to the proposal/s
- The anticipated impact of proposals on people
- Any alternative suggestions

4. Who responded?

- 4.1 Overall, there were 2,583 responses to the proposals relating to the Environment, Transport, Development and Waste portfolio. These were made by 619 individuals or organisations.
- 4.2 In submitting their responses we asked people to tell us the basis upon which they were responding – for example whether they were responding as a member of the public, a service user or a carer. We also asked them about their age, gender and other background information.
- 4.3 Of those that were happy to tell us this information, respondents were typically: members of the public, as opposed to members of businesses, constituted bodies or organisations; white British; male; and 45 to 64 years of age.
- 4.4 For all of the responses to the proposals, about 10% (61) stated that they either had a disability or a caring responsibility.
- 4.5 Those people who identified themselves as NCC employees ranged from 7% or 43 people (P54 Reduce highway maintenance for one year) to 12 % or 74 people (P61 Stop routine disposal of paint at recycling centres).

Groups and organisations

4.6 A total of 51 organisations made formal submissions on the proposals, as below:

- Acle Parish Council
- Aylsham Aprish Church Choir
- Beeston with Bittering Parish Council
- Beetley Parish Council
- Blakeney Parish Council
- Blofield Parish Council
- Borough Council of King's Lynn and West Norfolk
- Broadland District Council
- Burnham Overy Parish Council
- Carers Council for Norwich
- County Community Safety Partnership
- CPRE Norfolk
- Cromer Town Council
- Diss Town Council
- Flagship housing group
- Great Ellingham Parish Council
- Great Yarmouth College
- Hemblington Parish Council

- Horsford Parish Council
- Kickstart Norfolk
- Leziate Parish Council
- Litcham Parish Council
- Member Parliament for Great Yarmouth
- Motor Neurone Disease Association
- National Farmers Union
- Needham Village Hall
- Norfolk Community Law Service and Norfolk Community Advice Network
- Norfolk Neurology Network & MS Society
- Norfolk Older People's Strategic Partnership
- Norfolk Rural Community Council
- North Norfolk District Council
- North Walsham Town Council
- Norwich City Council
- Rescue Wooden Boats Charity
- Retired members section of the Norfolk County branch of Unison
- Royal National Institute of Blind People
- Sheringham Town Council
- Shropham Village Hall Committee
- Snettisham Parish Council
- South Norfolk District Council
- Stop Norwich Urbanisation
- Syderstone Parish Council
- Taverham Brass Band
- Taverham Parish Council
- Terrington St John Parish Council
- The Norfolk Waste Partnership Board
- The Waveney Choir of Diss
- Upper Sheringham Parish Council
- Wiggshall St Germans Parish Council
- Woodton Parish Council
- YMCA & Rethink mental health and riversdale.

4.7 As part of the online consultation form, we asked people to indicate if they were responding on behalf of an organisation. There are a small number of such responses where it is not clear how widely the respondent's views reflect the collective view of their organisations, particularly as some of the respondents referred to their individual views and drew upon personal examples.

Consultation Events

4.8 Views on all of the proposals in the Putting People First consultation, were gathered through a series of general public consultation events over October, November and December 2013. Whilst none of these were specific to the proposals in the Environment, Transport, Development and Waste portfolio, they were the source of a significant number of responses to the proposals. Responses to the proposals were noted from the following:

- Staff Consultation events at King's Lynn and Norwich
- Norfolk Association of Local Councils consultation events at Swaffham and Norwich
- Norfolk Older People's Forum meetings in Breckland, Broadland, Cromer and South Norfolk
- Children's Takeover Day 12 to 17 year olds
- Regular users of the Icen centre 12 – 15 year olds
- Great Yarmouth Children and Young People's event

- Norfolk and Suffolk Foundation Trust Locality Group - Bickley Day Hospital
- Great Yarmouth Black and Minority Ethnic (BAME) community event

- 4.9 The Portfolio holder for Environment, Transport, Development and Waste attended a number of public consultation events.
- 4.10 In addition, an Assistant Director from the Environment, Transport and Development department attended consultation events at Hunstanton, Sheringham and Wells-next-the-sea to answer specific queries about the following proposals:
- P53 Reduce our subsidy for the Coasthopper bus service
 - P59 Cut the cost of providing school transport.

5. What did people think about the Council's priorities and overall approach?

- 5.1 As part of the consultation people were asked to comment on the Council's priorities, approach, overall package of proposals, and the specific proposal to freeze Council Tax. They were also asked to consider what else the Council might do deliver savings. To summarise the findings from these questions:
- 5.2 **The Council's three priorities (Excellence in Education, Real Jobs, and Good Infrastructure).** A significant number of respondents – around 30% of people who commented on the priorities – said that they agreed with them. A smaller proportion – around 5% – clearly stated that they didn't support them (with the remainder not stating support or otherwise). Respondents, including some educational organisations, felt particularly strongly about "Excellence in Education" with many highlighting its importance as a building block for improving Norfolk's long term prospects. There were more mixed views about the importance of "Good Infrastructure" and "Real Jobs". Many people supported the idea of improving infrastructure particularly given Norfolk's rural nature, but others suggested that it wasn't as important as some other areas of council business. Those agreeing with "Real jobs" felt strongly about supporting the economy, whereas others question whether this was the role of County Council. In addition to the three priorities outlined, a high proportion of respondents felt that the Council should also be prioritising vulnerable people, particularly given the county's high and growing number of older people. A smaller number of people felt that public safety or the environment should be priorities. Several respondents also felt, irrespective of their support for the priorities, that they are "aspirational", "fine in principle" or "easy to say". Others said they found it difficult to comment due to a lack of detail on how the priorities will be achieved.
- 5.3 **The council's approach and strategy for bridging the funding gap.** Again, a higher proportion of respondents that answered this question clearly stated that they accepted the approach and strategy (around 25%) than rejected it (around 4%). Those in support felt it was a "sound", "pragmatic" or "common sense" approach, with some reflecting that the Council has limited options. Of those who didn't agree with the approach, several suggested that it was not radical enough. Others said that the council was "salami slicing" services bit-by-bit when a bolder approach was required. Some people also said that they were worried that changes in one part of the organisation might create demand in another part, or in other public sector organisations. A number of 'hot topics' emerged in the responses. For some of these there were differing views – for example several people argued for and against the increased use of technology, the sale of assets and the outsourcing of services. Other 'hot topics' generated a more consistent response. There was a broad consensus that the Council should collaborate more with other organisations, improve its processes, get better at procurement and do more to lobby central government. Finally a large number of responses suggested that the council should address what many

regarded as problems with public sector organisational culture. Suggestions included reducing officer and member pay, reducing bureaucracy and 'red tape', having fewer meetings and stopping 'silo working'.

- 5.4 **The overall package of proposals.** Some proposals clearly generated more responses than others. The most responded-to proposal was 'P27 Reduce the transport subsidy provided to students aged 16-19". All of the proposals relating to libraries received a high number of respondents (partly because library users were able to respond as part of their visit to the library during the consultation period). Other proposals or issues prompting a high number of responses include those to stop subsidising the School Music Service, to reduce funding for wellbeing services for people receiving social care through a personal budget, and to introduce charging at household recycling centres. People were asked to consider the balance and overall impact of all of the proposals together. Responses generally reflected those about the council's priorities and approach, and in particular people felt that overall the proposals would disproportionately affect vulnerable people. Several organisations described their anxiety about the impact of proposals on vulnerable people – for example a response from Clinical Commissioning Groups and NHS providers in Norfolk outlined their concerns about the impact of cuts in Childrens and Community services on their own services (for example GP surgeries and hospitals). People were also worried about the cumulative impact of proposals – where individuals are simultaneously affected by cuts to different services they receive. Some organisations were concerned about cost-shifting and requested that the County Council engage with them more in the future design of service delivery.
- 5.5 **The council's proposal to freeze its share of Council Tax.** Around 515 people responded to the question about freezing Council Tax, with about 26% of people stating that they agree with the proposal. A small proportion felt that Council Tax should be cut. Those agreeing with the freeze either felt that an increase in Council Tax would be unaffordable and unfair, or disagreed with an increase because they principally or ideologically felt that tax should be kept to a minimum. Around 55% of people stated that they disagree with the freeze (with the remainder neither agreeing nor disagreeing). Those rejecting the Council Tax freeze had quite consistent views, with most suggesting that a small increase of 1 or 2%, or in line with inflation, would be better. They felt that the increase would be justified on logical or commercial grounds. Many people qualified their support for an increase stating that it should be directly spent on vulnerable people or on specific service areas. Some also suggested that the council would need to be very clear about what an increase would be spent on. Of those people who neither agree nor disagree with the proposal, several acknowledged the practical and political difficulties of 'unfreezing' Council Tax given central government pressure and incentives. Others felt that a Council Tax freeze is appropriate now, but that an increase should be applied in future years. A number of people felt that increasing Council Tax should have been an option in the consultation.
- 5.6 **Any other things they think we should consider.** A huge range of alternative suggestions for saving money were received. Many of these relate to very specific areas of service and are covered in the detail of this and other Cabinet Portfolio reports. In terms of more general ideas several people suggested:
- Transferring services to the voluntary or community sector
 - 'Decentralising' services by moving away from single buildings (County Hall) and into communities
 - Moving to a strictly 'statutory minimum' level of service – so not providing non-statutory services
 - Making all non-statutory services self-funding
 - Being more energy efficient
 - Stopping printed council publications and translation services

- Changes to staffing arrangements – so pay freezes, redundancies, moving to a 35 hour week and staff parking charges
- Reducing opening times for council buildings and services.

- 5.7 **What did people think of the council’s approach to the consultation?** Alongside comments about the proposals over 240 respondents commented on how the Council went about the consultation
- 5.8 Some people felt that consultation documents were inaccessible, finding both the web sites and the document difficult or too large to navigate. Some feedback was received about the format and delay in making easy read consultation documents available, which could have disadvantaged some disabled residents. Others challenged the language used in the proposals, suggesting that they should use more plain English. A relatively large number of respondents, whilst expressing their concerns about proposals, suggested that the Council would not listen to the views expressed in the consultation, and that decisions had already been made.
- 5.9 A number of positive comments were also received. Some respondents were pleased to be able to respond via social media sites, and others suggested that the consultation document was comprehensive and considered. In addition, positive feedback was received from many of those involved in consultation events, with participants stating that they welcomed the opportunity to explore the proposals with council elected Members.

6. What did people think about the council’s proposals for Environment, Transport, Development and Waste

- 6.1 Overall, there were 2,583 responses to the proposals relating to the Environment, Transport, Development and Waste portfolio. These were made by 619 individuals or organisations.
- 6.2 Looking at the strength of opinion, the three proposals that prompted the most responses were:
- P62 Charge at some recycling centres (395)
 - P53 Reduce our subsidy for the Coasthopper bus service (294)
 - P63 Reduce opening hours at some recycling centres (285)
- 6.3 The three proposals that prompted the least responses were:
- P52 Charge for site inspection reports for operators of mineral and waste sites (147)
 - P50 Reduce our costs of consulting on planning applications (160)
 - P51 Scale back planning enforcement (160)
- 6.4 Analysis of responses did reveal some confusion or uncertainty in relation to the way in which some proposals were described. For example, terms like ‘scale back’ or ‘reduce’ seem to have been interpreted by some respondents as complete withdrawal of the service. Some respondents commented that they found it difficult to comment fully on the proposal without fully understanding what ‘scale back’ or ‘reduce’ meant. Due to the technical nature of some of the proposals, such as minerals and waste planning, some respondent’s views were expressed based upon their own experience of the subject matter rather than of the specific proposal. For example, the majority of respondents based their view on proposals connected with planning on domestic planning, usually dealt with by District Authorities rather than the large scale developments covered by the proposal.
- 6.5 **Themes**
- 6.6 Some common themes emerged across the 11 proposals relevant to Environment, Transport, Development and Waste from the analysis of responses. These were:
- 6.7 **Charging for Services**

- Charging for some services was seen as a practical way to maintain service delivery, particularly in relation to services given to businesses or commercial operators involving technical advice. Respondents qualified this by equating it to similar services/specialisms within the Private Sector that they would expect to be charged for. Where possible respondents said that these kinds of services should be self-financing in order to allow for funding to be spent on services to assist individuals, particularly the vulnerable. In particular the following proposals were mentioned:
 - P49 – charging for planning advice,
 - P52 – charging for site inspections,
 - P53 – reducing Coasthopper subsidy,
 - P60 – charging for tyre disposal,
 - P61 – stop paint disposal at recycling centres, and
 - P62 – charge at some recycling centres
- However concern was also expressed in relation to charging for services as respondents said that in some cases the amount of savings identified was not practical or could damage the County Council’s relationship with local businesses or residents leading to additional cost rather than savings. In particular the following proposals were mentioned:
 - P49 – charging for planning advice,
 - P52 – charging for site inspections,
 - P60 – charging for tyre disposal, and
 - P62 – charge at some recycling centres

6.8 **Responsibility**

- Linked to the concept of charging respondents said that certain groups or services should either be withdrawn or reduced as individuals should take more responsibility rather than relying upon the County Council. Groups included businesses, schools and parents. In particular the following proposals were mentioned:
 - P59 - cut the cost of providing school transport,
 - P60 – charging for tyre disposal, and
 - P61 – stop paint disposal at recycling centres.
- This also linked to proposals where we would look to reduce the level of service provided to a statutory minimum. Although reluctantly, in some cases, respondents said that this was acceptable in view of the scale of the overall savings being sought as this was a trade off in order to maintain more vital services. In particular the following proposals were mentioned:
 - P50 – reduce our costs of consulting on planning, and
 - P51 – scale back planning enforcement.
- However, the County Council’s role as an enabler in the community for things like championing the Localism Act and promoting the economy appeared contrary to some of the proposals. In particular the following proposals were mentioned:
 - P49 – charging for planning advice,
 - P50 – reduce our costs of consulting on planning,

- P51 – scale back planning enforcement, and
 - P52 – charging for site inspections.
- The fact that some of the proposals could result in cost shifting, specifically related to concerns over fly-tipping, was also a concern. As well, the potential environmental impact of proposals related to waste recycling were raised. In particular the following proposals were mentioned:
- P60 – charging for tyre disposal,
 - P61 – stop paint disposal at recycling centres,
 - P62 – charge at some recycling centres, and
 - P63 – reduce opening hours at some recycling centres.

6.9 **Practicality**

- Linked to the concerns expressed under the other two themes respondents highlighted practical concerns over some of the proposals. Short termism resulting in increased costs in the long term, shifting costs on to others and the fact that some savings may not be realised as individuals choose not to use services were all highlighted by respondents. This also linked to people's perception of safety. In particular the following proposals were mentioned:
- P51 – scale back planning enforcement,
 - P54 – reduce highway maintenance for one year,
 - P59 – cut the cost of providing school transport,
 - P60 – charging for tyre disposal,
 - P61 – stop paint disposal at recycling centres,
 - P62 – charge at some recycling centres, and
 - P63 – reduce opening hours at some recycling centres.
- The practicality of some proposals and the impact upon people using services came through. For example, a number of people highlighted concerns about the amount of bags and equipment that children had to carry to school and how this may impact upon their choice of travel options and in turn their parent/guardian's employment (P59 - cut the cost of providing school transport). Also, respondents linked P62 – charge at some recycling centres with P63 – reducing opening hours at some recycling centres. Individually respondent's views differed but in many cases respondents linked the knock on effect of shifting customers from charging to free sites along with reduced opening hours and the current economic situation to a reduction in recycling overall and therefore increased landfill.

7. The proposals

- 7.1 A brief summary of responses by proposal is given below. The full analysis of responses by proposal is contained in the appended 'Consultation responses summaries' and the 'Full Equality Impact Assessments'.
- 7.2 **P49 - Charge people for the advice they receive from us prior to submitting a planning application (£0.398 million)**
- 7.3 There was a general acceptance of this proposal with over 133 people out of a total of 175 responding in favour. Of those that were in favour of the proposal, most said that they agreed without providing rationale for their support. Respondents stated that the level of charging should be "reasonable" and requested that homeowners be excluded from any charge.

- 7.4 Of the 17 respondents that expressed their opposition to the proposal, most provided no rationale. Those that did said that the proposal could lead to commercial developers receiving little or no advice as a result of trying to avoid paying for the service leading to increased cost for them and the authority.
- 7.5 The analysis also found that 9 respondents felt unqualified to comment and 13 respondents could not decide or distinguish between different aspects of the proposal (Part a) advice upon request and Part b) advice on transport implications).
- 7.6 A total of 12 organisations formally responded to this proposal, including: five community groups, four Parish Councils, a District Council, a College of Further Education, and a Trade Union. The majority expressed opposition to the proposal.
- 7.7 There was limited feedback on this proposal from the general Norfolk Putting People First consultation events.
- 7.8 **P50 - Reduce our costs of consulting on planning applications (£0.037 million)**
- 7.9 About half of the respondents who responded to this proposal were in favour of it, 76 respondents out of 160. Of those that were in favour of the proposal, most said that they agreed without providing any reasons for their support. Those who provided an explanation said that the minimum statutory standards were an acceptable level of service and that the onus should be on individuals to find out about developments that may impact upon their local area.
- 7.10 Of the 55 respondents who expressed their opposition to the proposal, a large proportion stated that consultation and engagement with local communities over planning issues was an important part of developing a strong relationship between the County Council and the Community.
- 7.11 The analysis also found that 13 respondents did not feel qualified to comment, 9 respondents did not comment on the proposal itself but highlighted the importance of robust planning processes, and 4 suggested that the Council in general did not effectively engage with communities.
- 7.12 A total of 8 organisations formally responded to this proposal, including: three Parish Councils, three community groups, one national body and one College of Further Education. Four of them expressed support for the proposal.
- 7.13 There was limited feedback on this proposal from the general Norfolk Putting People First consultation events.
- 7.14 **P51 - Scale back planning enforcement (£0.037 million)**
- 7.15 The majority of people who responded to this proposal expressed their opposition to it. Of 160 responses, 93 were against it with 57 in favour. Most of the respondents who were against the proposal expressed concerns about the potential for unregulated and illegal developments that would be more costly to resolve in the longer term. Others did not give any reason for their opposition and a small number of respondents stated that the scale of the savings did not merit the associated risks.
- 7.16 Of the 57 respondents in favour of the proposal, most agreed without providing an explanation or a rationale. Those that did suggested that any reduction in what was perceived to be an overly long planning process was welcome.
- 7.17 A number of respondents felt unable to comment either because they did not understand planning processes or because they did not see what impact that it would have on them or their local community.
- 7.18 In some cases, respondents have commented based upon the planning process connected to housing and commercial developments, rather than NCC developments like schools, libraries and roads and planning applications for quarries and sites for waste processing.

Where this has clearly been the case each response has been analysed according to the principles stated rather than the example given.

- 7.19 A total of 12 organisations formally responded to this proposal, including: five Parish Councils, four community groups, one District Council, one village hall committee and one national body. The majority opposed the proposal.
- 7.20 There was limited feedback on this proposal from the general Norfolk Putting People First consultation events.
- 7.21 **P52 - Charge for site inspection reports for operators of mineral and waste sites (£0.005 million)**
- 7.22 Of the 147 responses to this proposal, 129 were supportive of it. The majority agreed without explanation or rationale. Those that did provide a rationale suggested that charging was appropriate, albeit on a sliding scale depending upon the size of the operation or site involved, with the highest charges for the largest sites. A small number of respondents raised a question as to why this had not been done before.
- 7.23 3 respondents did not support the proposal as the saving was too small and had the potential to damage the working relationship between the authority and operators.
- 7.24 General comments by 15 respondents were that they either felt unqualified to comment or did not fully understand the current practices and therefore the impact of any proposed changes.
- 7.25 A total of 7 organisations formally responded to this proposal, including: two Parish Councils, two community groups, one Trade Union, one Village Hall Committee and one College of Further Education. The majority were supportive of the proposal.
- 7.26 There was limited feedback on this proposal from the general Norfolk Putting People First consultation events.
- 7.27 **P53 - Reduce our subsidy for the Coasthopper bus service (£0.150 million)**
- 7.28 The majority of people who responded to this proposal did not support it. Of the 294 people who responded to this proposal, 158 respondents stated their opposition to it. The concerns raised included: increasing rural isolation; that changes in the timetable will make it unsustainable; the negative impact on tourism and local businesses; and the loss of a service in winter that provided local people with “necessary trips” as opposed to the perceived tourist service in the summer.
- 7.29 A total of 95 respondents expressed their support for the proposal. Of these, the majority agreed without providing an explanation or a rationale. Those that provided some explanation suggested that the service was primarily for tourists, concessionary bus pass holders and that fares should be increased to make it economically viable. Some suggested that it was regrettable but, in light of the budget pressures, should be accepted. A number stated that the Coasthopper bus route should not be treated differently to any other.
- 7.30 A number of respondents made more general comments about how the service is operated and funded, how it compares to other services in Norfolk and levels of use, without stating either their opposition or support for the proposal.
- 7.31 As part of the proposal we asked for businesses to come forward who might be interested in sponsoring or supporting the service in some way to help with running costs. In response, three small businesses suggested that this is something they could consider. One response suggested using sponsorship like that in Blackpool to support the running of the trams. Another that local communities could come together to support the running of the Coasthopper. New ways of raising funds to support the ongoing costs of running the winter service are still being explored.

- 7.32 A total of 20 organisations formally responded to this proposal, including: 9 Parish and Town Councils; one District Council; one Village Hall Committee; one Trade Union; one partnership; one national body; and 6 community groups. All of the organisations, except for one were against the proposal.
- 7.33 The feedback from the general Norfolk Putting People First consultation events and specific consultation events held in Hunstanton, Sheringham and Wells-next-the-sea suggested a general opposition to the proposal. At a number of events, questions were raised about the level of savings identified and how these had been calculated.
- 7.34 Generally respondents both in favour and opposing the proposal asked whether it was possible to instigate a minimal charge for concessionary bus pass holders for use of the service in some form. Respondents also asked whether it would be possible to charge visitors or tourists a different rate to local people, recognising the popularity amongst tourists for the service.
- 7.35 **P54 - Reduce highway maintenance for one year (£1.0 million)**
- 7.36 The majority of respondents, 169 out of a total of 262, who commented on the proposal stated their opposition to it. One of the main reasons given was that Norfolk's roads are in a poor state and that any further reduction in maintenance, whilst making short term savings, would result in more expense in the long term. The impact on road safety was also identified as a key reason why the proposal should not go ahead, as was concerns about possible reduction to gritting.
- 7.37 A total of 45 respondents cited their support for the proposal, most simply agreeing with no rationale or explanation being given. Those that did provide an explanation suggested that it was necessary, albeit for one year only, bearing in mind the scale of savings being sought by the Council.
- 7.38 A significant number of respondents, 48, made general comments about the state of the roads in the County, highway maintenance regimes and street-lighting, some of which did not relate to the scope of the proposal.
- 7.39 A total of 14 organisations formally responded to this proposal, including: 7 Parish Councils; one Town Council; one Trade Union; one national body; and 4 community groups. All of the organisations were against the proposal.
- 7.40 The responses to this proposal focussed strongly upon the impact of the funding reduction upon road surfaces and gritting but little comment on the other aspects of the proposal (reduced safety barrier replacement, less replacement of road markings, reduced bridge maintenance and traffic signal replacement).
- 7.41 Included in the highways proposal, was a suggestion that an annually recurring budget of £75,000 be created for proactive maintenance of Public Rights of Way (PROW). Of the 262 respondents commenting on P54 Reduce highway maintenance for one year, very few commented on this subsidiary proposal. Those that did were supportive but limited their response to the proposed increase in proactive maintenance of PROW only and did not comment on the reduction of the highways maintenance budget.
- 7.42 There was limited feedback on this proposal from the general Norfolk Putting People First consultation events.
- 7.43 **P59 - Cut the cost of providing school transport (£0.330 million)**
- 7.44 Just over half of the people who responded to this proposal, 115 out of a total of 222, supported it. About half of these gave no explanation or rationale. The rest of those in favour gave a range of reasons, including: parental responsibility; health benefits; and choices made as to where people live. A proportion of those in favour of the proposal qualified their support by expressing some concerns about the safety of children walking, cycling and taking public buses to school.
- 7.45 Of those who stated their opposition to the proposal, 49, safety was cited as a key concern as was the practicality of cycling to school with multiple school bags, the lack of public bus

routes and affordability. A large proportion of respondents, 58 out of the total of 222, made more general comments about the proposal, raising similar issues to those cited by those people who stated their opposition. These comments included: safety; practicality; lack of infrastructure; and affordability.

- 7.46 Three respondents made links across to other proposals that are being consulted on, citing a potential cumulative impact. These were: P27 Reduce the transport subsidy to students aged 16 to 19 years; and P29 Reduce funding for school crossing patrols.
- 7.47 A total of 9 organisations formally responded to this proposal, including: two Parish Councils; four community groups; one Trade Union; one College of Further Education; and one multi-agency partnership. Most expressed their opposition to the proposal.
- 7.48 There was limited feedback on this proposal from the general Norfolk Putting People First consultation events.
- 7.49 **P60 - Charge for the disposal of tyres at recycling centres (£0.039 million)**
- 7.50 Half of the people who responded expressed support for this proposal, 120 people out of 239. Typically, support for this proposal was based upon the assertion that the issue was one for commercial tyre fitters and that it was their responsibility to recycle old or used tyres, albeit that they are likely to pass on the cost to the customer.
- 7.51 A total of 76 respondents stated their opposition to the proposal. Of these, the majority raised concerns relating to a perceived increase in fly-tipping, environmental damage and increased disposal costs.
- 7.52 A large proportion of respondents, 43 out of 238, made more general comments about the proposal. Many of these comments were similar to those cited by those people who stated their opposition to the proposal, covering fly-tipping and the responsibilities of commercial tyre fitters.
- 7.53 A total of 13 organisations formally responded to this proposal, including: three Parish Councils; two District Councils; four community groups; one Village Hall Committee; one multi-agency partnership; and two branches of a Trade Union. Most of these organisations were opposed to the proposal.
- 7.54 There was limited feedback on this proposal from the general Norfolk Putting People First consultation events.
- 7.55 **P61 - Stop routine disposal of paint at recycling centres (£0.300 million)**
- 7.56 About half of the responses to this proposal, 127 out of 238, stated their opposition. The main reason given was that this would lead to an increase in fly-tipping, environmental damage and disposal costs being passed onto District Councils. A number of people suggested that if the proposal was implemented, then paint would go into domestic waste bins and so end up in landfill, increasing the cost to the Council.
- 7.57 Those respondents who were supportive of the proposal, 58 out of 238, either simply agreed and made no comment or stated that it would not change people's behaviour as most old paint did not go to main recycling centres but ended up in domestic waste bins.
- 7.58 A large proportion of respondents, 53 out of 238, made more general comments about the proposal, raising similar issues to those cited by those respondents who stated their opposition.
- 7.59 There were also 2 responses from people who described themselves as 'waste disposal professionals', one of whom identified themselves as the current service provider. These responses suggested that the rationale behind the proposal was flawed. Specifically, that the advice to let paint dry before going into domestic waste was misleading for members of the public, because of the length of time this would take in reality and the practise's potential to lead to the release of volatile organic compounds.

- 7.60 A total of 15 organisations formally responded to this proposal, including: three Parish Councils; two District Councils; five community groups; one Village Hall Committee; two multi-agency partnership; and two branches of a Trade Union. Most of these organisations stated their opposition to these proposals.
- 7.61 There was limited feedback on this proposal from the Norfolk Putting People First consultation events.
- 7.62 **P62 - Charge at some recycling centres (£0.280 million)**
- 7.63 The majority of responses, 268 out of 394, did not support this proposal. Most of the responses that were against it cited concerns about fly-tipping and cost shunting to the City, District and Borough Councils. A total of 44 responses noted the apparent unfairness of charging for a service that is already paid through Council Tax revenues. A smaller number of responses queried whether this was setting a precedent that would be extended to all recycling centres.
- 7.64 Of those in favour, 69, the majority were regular users of recycling centres in the county. A proviso was made that the introduction of charges should be accompanied by a relaxation of the rules about what could and could not be taken, including the amount of waste as the majority of respondents felt that charging would lead to less visits.
- 7.65 A significant proportion of responses, 58 out of 394, made more general comments about the proposal, including the potential for fly-tipping, and the practicality or efficiency of collecting and processing small cash payments.
- 7.66 A total of 26 organisations formally responded to this proposal, including: 12 Parish and Town Councils; 2 District Councils; 6 community groups; 2 multi-agency partnerships; two branches of a Trade Union; one village hall committee; and one national body. The majority were against the proposal on the basis that it would lead to increased fly-tipping and subsequent shifting of costs on to District and Parish Councils and landowners. The following recycling centres were mentioned specifically: Worstead; Docking; and Heacham.
- 7.67 There was limited feedback on this proposal from the Norfolk Putting People First consultation events.
- 7.68 In some responses a link was made between proposals P62 Charge at some recycling centres and P63 Reduce opening hours at some recycling centres. The rationale being that 4 out of 5 Main Recycling Centres where reduced opening hours are being considered (Ashill, Heacham, Strumpshaw and Worstead) are also being considered for the introduction of charging. There was the suggestion that people would move from these sites to others that were open longer and did not charge, increasing distances travelled and congestion at already busy sites.
- 7.69 **P63 - Reduce opening hours at some recycling centres (£0.167 million)**
- 7.70 The total number of responses to this proposal was 285. Opinion about this proposal was split, with 120 responses expressing some support and 106 responses expressing some opposition.
- 7.71 Of those who expressed support, most either simply agreed or agreed subject to the reduced hours being during the working week and not during the weekend.
- 7.72 Those who expressed opposition to the proposal raised concerns about fly-tipping and the associated financial and environmental costs.
- 7.73 A total of 59 respondents made more general comments about the proposal. These comments included: the increased potential for fly-tipping; whether the small savings were worth the inconvenience and cost; and that the reduction in hours should apply across all recycling sites and not just five sites named in the proposal.
- 7.74 A number of people stated that it was difficult to comment on the proposal as there were no details of the hours that were being considered.

- 7.75 Some respondents made the link with P62 Charge at some recycling centres, suggesting that it was only appropriate to implement one of these change to services at recycling centres and not both.
- 7.76 A total of 19 organisations formally responded to this proposal, including: seven Parish Councils; one District Councils; six community groups; one Village Hall Committee; one multi-agency partnership; two branches of a Trade Union; and a national organisation. Most of these organisations stated their opposition to these proposals.
- 7.77 There was limited feedback on this proposal from the general Norfolk Putting People First consultation events.

8. Alternatives

8.1 Alternatives to the proposals that were suggested are:

- Maintain some level of free advice - P49 Charge people for the advice they receive from us prior to submitting a planning application
- Developers to pay for public consultation on planning applications - P50 Reduce our costs of consulting on planning applications
- Use of volunteers and adopt a high profile enforcement approach where there are infringements, with high levels of fines - P51 Scale back planning enforcement
- Scale charges according to the size of the site - P52 Charge for site inspection reports for operators of mineral and waste sites
- Sponsorship and charging concessionary bus pass holders - P53 Reduce our subsidy for the Coasthopper bus service
- Use of volunteers (P54 subsidiary proposal on PROW proactive maintenance) and staffing of Main Recycling Centres - P54 Reduce highway maintenance for one year and P63 Reduce opening hours at some recycling centres.
- Means test school transport provision, as opposed to basing it on distance travelled - P59 Cut the cost of providing school transport
- Applying a standard policy across all Main Recycling Centres in Norfolk for charging, opening hours and what is accepted.

9. The outcome of the Equality Impact Assessments

9.1 Detailed Equality Impact Assessments (EqIAs) have been carried out on each of the proposals relevant to the Environment, Transport, Development and Waste portfolio; these are presented in the appendices. A summary of the key findings of the EqIAs suggest that a number of protected groups may be disproportionately affected by proposals. These are detailed below:

- P50 Reduce our costs of consulting on planning applications - there is likely to be an impact on people with access requirements, which mean they require information in alternative formats or need to discuss issues in person. Any reduction in the range of methods and time given to consultation may exclude these people from engaging. Given the nature of the applications determined by the Council, the impact has not been assessed as significant.
- P53 Reduce our subsidy for the Coasthopper bus service – as the primary users of this bus service, any changes to the Coasthopper will have an impact on older and disabled people. For those living in villages along the North Norfolk coast this could lead to poorer accessibility to services, and has the potential to increase in rural isolation during the winter months. As the bus will continue to operate and offer good levels of service the impact has not been assessed as significant.
- P59 Cut the cost of providing school transport - this proposal will impact on children, particularly those in rural communities and those with a disability, some of whom may

lose their entitlement for free school transport because there is an appropriate walking or cycling route they can use instead. Transport applications will be reassessed in cases where pupils have a physical disability or other severe medical condition which means they are unable to walk or cycle to school. The proposal will not disadvantage children in rural areas over others in Norfolk, as the travel policy will remain the same for all school children regardless of where they live. As such, the impact has not been assessed as significant.

9.2 A number of proposals have been assessed as having no adverse disproportionate impacts on protected groups, this includes:

- P49 Charge people for the advice they receive from us prior to submitting a planning application
- P51 Scale back planning enforcement
- P52 Charge for site inspection reports for operators of mineral and waste sites
- P54 Reduce highway maintenance for one year
- P60 Charge for the disposal of tyres at recycling centres
- P61 Stop routine disposal of paint at recycling centres
- P62 Charge at some recycling centres
- P63 Reduce opening hours at some recycling centres

9.3 In addition to assessing each proposal independently we have considered the cumulative impact of proposals. Any changes to local bus services (P53 Reduce our subsidy for the Coasthopper bus service) that will reduce people’s ability to access services independently could have a cumulative impact on people affected by proposed changes to adult social care (Proposals P30 to P37). As part of these proposals people may have less money to spend on care services (including money allocated for travel) and will be required to access mainstream services more often – which will mean some people rely more on public transport. The proposal around school transport should be considered alongside P29 Reduce funding for school crossing patrols, which may also impact on children’s ability to get to school independently – and particularly those attending rural schools where the majority of crossing patrols are.

10. Supporting papers

10.1 The appendices accompanying this report present more detailed summary information for both the consultation responses and the equality impact assessments. There is a separate appendix for each report, as follows:

Appendix Aii: P49 Charge people for the advice they receive from us prior to submitting a planning application – Full Equality Impact Assessment	20
Appendix Bi: Consultation responses summary for P50 Reduce our costs of consulting on planning applications	23
Appendix Bii: P50 Reduce our costs of consulting on planning applications– Full Equality Impact Assessment	25
Appendix Ci: Consultation responses summary for P51 Scale back planning enforcement	28
Appendix Di: Consultation responses summary for P52 Charge for site inspection reports for operators of mineral and waste sites	32
Appendix Eii: P53 Reduce our subsidy for the Coasthopper bus service – Full Equality Impact Assessment	38
Appendix Fi: Consultation responses summary for P54 Reduce highway maintenance for one year	42

Appendix Fii: P54 Reduce highway maintenance for one year – Full Equality Impact Assessment	44
Appendix Gi: Consultation responses summary for P59 Cut the cost of providing school transport	49
Appendix Hi: Consultation responses summary for P60 Charge for the disposal of tyres at recycling centres	56
Appendix Hii: P60 Charge for the disposal of tyres at recycling centres - Full Equality Impact Assessment	58
Appendix Ii: Consultation responses summary for P61 Stop routine disposal of paint at recycling centres	61
Appendix Iii: P61 Stop routine disposal of paint at recycling centres - Full Equality Impact Assessment	63
Appendix Ji: Consultation responses summary for P62 Charge at some recycling centres.....	67
Appendix Jii: P62 Charge at some recycling centres - Full Equality Impact Assessment	69
Appendix Ki: Consultation responses summary for P63 Reduce opening hours at some recycling centres	73
Appendix Kii: P63 Reduce opening hours at some recycling centres - Full Equality Impact Assessment	75

Appendix Ai: Consultation responses summary for P49 Charge people for the advice they receive from us prior to submitting a planning application

Analysis of responses

Feedback from consultation events

Whilst no specific events were organised to discuss this proposal, it was raised at one event for NCC staff.

There was limited feedback on this proposal from the general Norfolk Putting People First consultation events.

Organisation, group or petition responses

A total of 12 organisations formally responded to this proposal, including: Taverham Brass Band; Taverham Parish Council; Terrington St John Parish Council; Blofield Parish Council; YMCA & Rethink mental health and riversdale; Norfolk Neurology Network & MS Society; Retired members section of the Norfolk County branch of Unison; Broadland District Council; Great Ellingham Parish Council; Great Yarmouth College; Stop Norwich Urbanisation.

No petitions were received.

The majority expressed opposition to the proposal.

Consistent, repeated or notable views from people who agreed with the proposal

Proposal 49 was accepted by 133 people, with a range of views and a number of provisos made, including:

- 85 respondents said that the proposal was “good” or “sensible”
- 38 respondents said that they agreed with the principle of the proposal but voiced concern at the level of charging in that it should be “reasonable”. They also said that the proposal seemed appropriate depending upon the size of business or development, with potentially a sliding scale of charges
- One respondent agreed on the basis that other Councils already do this
- 8 respondents, although in favour of the proposal, stated that homeowners / private individuals should not be charged.

Consistent, repeated or notable views from people who did not agree with the proposal

Proposal 49 was not accepted by 17 people, with a range of views and a number of provisos made, including:

- 7 respondents said they disagreed with the proposal with no further detail
- 4 respondents did not support the proposal on the grounds of it being short-sighted and that individuals would no longer seek advice leading to potential issues in the future
- Several respondent raised concerns that this would lead to people not getting essential advice, leading to poorer developments and a confrontational rather than co-operative relationship between the authority and individual developers
- A number suggested that the saving might not be realised if developers choose not to use the service because of the charge.

Other comments

A total of 25 responses were more general in nature, including:

- 9 respondents said that they were unsure or felt unqualified to comment on the proposal
- 13 respondents made comment that they might accept some parts of the proposal but overall it might not work.

Alternative suggestions

Alternative ideas included:

- There should be some level of advice which remains free – one respondent felt this should relate to informal advice / guidance, another that this should relate to telephone advice only
- Charge for commercial developments and not domestic ones
- Increase application fees so it can offset the charge for local amenities / facilities that will be incurred in the near future whether due to the development or not
- Offer a consultancy service to developers.

Responses relevant to the Equality Impact Assessment

No adverse disproportionate impacts on protected groups have been identified for proposal 49 - charge for advice to business from our Trading Standards Service.

None of the respondents to this proposal made any comments relevant to the EQIA.

Analyst notes

Some respondents seemed unsure what we mean by planning applications i.e. the size / type of development covered plus the level of charging. Also, where planning responsibilities sit.

Appendix Aii: P49 Charge people for the advice they receive from us prior to submitting a planning application – Full Equality Impact Assessment

Key findings:

Norfolk County Council is facing a budget gap of £189 million over the next three years, due to a reduction in Government funding, increasing council costs, inflation and demand for services. To address this, the Council has proposed and is consulting on a number of service changes and cuts, which includes this specific savings proposal.

This impact assessment looks in more detail at a proposal to introduce a charge for providing advice to large scale developers prior to them submitting a planning application.

No adverse disproportionate impacts on protected groups have been identified through the impact assessment.

Directorate:	Environment, Transport and Development
Lead officer:	Nick Johnson
Other officers:	Neil Howard, Louise Cornell
Date completed	30 December 2013

1. Overview of Proposal

There are two elements to this proposal:

1. Norfolk County Council's Planning Services section currently determines planning applications for development carried out by the County Council for schools, libraries and roads. The service also works with individuals and companies seeking planning permission on sites for the extraction of minerals and facilities for the processing of waste. This proposal involves us introducing a fee for providing advice prior to the submission of a planning application.
2. As the Local Transport Authority we are also a statutory consultee in the planning process, commenting on the **highways and transport** impacts of planning applications and pre-application enquiries. If the proposal goes ahead we would introduce a fee for providing advice prior to the submission of a planning application, on Transport Assessment scoping considerations and the 'in principle' acceptability of large scale, commercial development proposals. Advice to householders and to those proposing smaller developments would remain free.

A charging structure has yet to be determined but it will be fair and reasonable and set at a level that seeks only to recover actual staff costs.

2. Who will be affected

This Equality Impact Assessment considers the likely impacts of the proposal on all protected groups under the Equality Act 2010.

It also reviews the impact on people in rural communities. Norfolk is predominantly a rural county with just over half of the population (52.5%) living smaller towns and their fringes,

villages and hamlets. Older people aged 65+ are more likely to be living in rural as opposed to urban areas - almost a quarter of people living in a rural areas over the age of 65. There are around 21,950 households in rural areas in Norfolk that have no access to a car or van. People living in these rural areas may face challenges accessing key services and amenities.

No disproportionate adverse impacts on protected groups are anticipated.

Age (people of different age groups; older & younger etc)	NO
Disability (people who are wheelchair or cane users; blind, deaf, visually or hearing impaired; can't stand for a long time; have a long-term illness i.e. HIV or a neurological condition such as dyslexia; learning difficulties; mental health etc)	NO
Gender reassignment (people who identify as transgender)	NO
Marriage/civil partnerships	NO
Pregnancy & Maternity	NO
Race (different ethnic groups, including Gypsies & Travellers)	NO
Religion/belief (different faiths, including people with no religion or belief)	NO
Sex (i.e. men/women)	NO
Sexual orientation (all, including lesbian, gay & bisexual people)	NO

3. Context to the proposal

1. Planning Services

We receive approximately 250 applications for planning permission each year. Of these, approximately 150 relate to the County Council's own development and 100 relate to minerals extraction and waste management facilities.

At present, we provide free pre-application advice on all County Council and business led developments for the extraction of minerals and management of waste. This pre-application advice is not necessary in all cases, but it can help speed up the planning process by avoiding unnecessary work being carried out or delays being incurred by the applicant.

If this proposal goes ahead we will introduce a fee for providing all pre-application advice. The fee is yet to be determined, but would cover the associated cost of providing advice.

2. Highways and transport

We currently consider the highway and transport impacts of approximately 5,000 development related applications each year. These applications are determined by the District Councils as Local Planning Authorities. Of these, approximately 400 submissions are classed as 'major developments', for example a new supermarket or residential estate. Around 80 of these come through to us as preliminary enquiries before they are submitted to the District Council for permission. In most cases these enquires involve detailed investigation to consider potential safety issues and transport sustainability.

Pre-application advice is not necessary in all cases, but it helps speed up the planning process for the applicant. It avoids unnecessary work being carried out or delays being incurred by the applicant because they need to revise their development proposal at a later date.

At present, this service is provided free of charge on all pre-application enquiries. The intention is to introduce a charge for large, commercial development proposals only, with advice to householders and to those proposing smaller developments remaining free.

4. Potential impact

If this proposal is delivered it means that anyone seeking pre-application advice from us for mineral and waste extraction sites or the County Council's own developments will have to pay for this in future. The cost will be proportionate to the time it takes for us to provide the advice. The impact is not likely to be significant but it could mean that developers decide not to seek pre-application advice, or receive this elsewhere. Advice is often sought to help with the smooth submission and determination of planning applications, so the introduction of a charge could impact on this. It should be noted that the majority of minerals and waste extraction sites are located in rural areas – which means there is potential for the impact to be rural biased, but the impact has not been assessed to be significant.

The proposal will also impact on large scale developers – such as supermarkets – who will have to pay for any pre-application highways advice they receive from us in future. Developers would be charged a rate that reflects the time it takes to provide this advice. It is anticipated that large commercial developers will be able to absorb this cost.

The proposal will not impact on householders submitting applications for small scale developments – such as an extension. Due to this there will not be any adverse disproportionate impacts on people with protected characteristics.

As part of determining the impacts of proposals for the 2014-17 budget a 12 week public consultation was undertaken between Thursday 19 September and Thursday 12 December. No responses were received that identified impacts on protected groups or rural communities.

5. Mitigating actions

No adverse disproportionate impacts have been identified for this proposal, so no mitigating actions are required.

6. Further information

For further information about this Equality Impact Assessment please contact the Planning, Performance and Partnerships service on

Tel: 01603 228891

Email: PPPService@norfolk.gov.uk

¹ Census 2011, www.norfolkinsight.org.uk

Appendix Bi: Consultation responses summary for P50 Reduce our costs of consulting on planning applications

Feedback from consultation events

Whilst no specific events were organised to discuss this proposal, it was raised at one event for NCC staff.

There was limited feedback on this proposal from the general Norfolk Putting People First consultation events.

Organisation, group or petition responses

A total of 8 organisations formally responded to this proposal, including: Terrington St John Parish Council; Blofield Parish Council; CPRE Norfolk; YMCA & Rethink mental health & riversdale; Norfolk Neurology Network & MS Society; Great Ellingham Parish Council; Great Yarmouth College; Stop Norwich Urbanisation.

No petitions were received.

Half expressed support for the proposal.

Consistent, repeated or notable views from people who agreed with the proposal

Proposal 50 was accepted by 76 people, with a range of views and a number of provisos made, including:

- 58 respondents said either “yes” or “agree” with no further explanation
- 13 respondents were in favour of the proposal on the grounds that the current system is too bureaucratic or complicated and that scaling back may help to simplify the process for the public
- Some respondents supported the minimum legal standards approach and suggested that local people needed to take responsibility for knowing about what is going on in their area and to keep themselves informed.

Consistent, repeated or notable views from people who did not agree with the proposal

Proposal 50 was not accepted by 55 people, with a range of views and a number of provisos made, including:

- 39 respondents rejected the proposal on the grounds of a perceived reduction in consultation and highlighted the importance of consultation to local communities
- Others emphasised the need to ensure scrutiny of planning applications
- 4 respondents said that the saving identified is too small to be worth the potential issues caused in local communities
- 14 respondents said “no” or that they did not agree with the proposal with no further explanation.

Other comments

A total of 29 responses were more general in nature, including:

- 13 respondents said they were unable to comment – either through lack of knowledge or the lack of impact on them as individuals
- 4 respondents commented on the perceived failings of the current system of consultation with communities on planning applications
- 9 respondents commented upon the current process rather than any changes and made general statements about the importance of planning.

Alternative suggestions

Alternative ideas included:

- Significant planning schemes should have some way of funding public consultation built in
- Charge for the service – one respondent felt that we should also reduce the amount of advertising around schemes, another felt that we should increase it and shift the focus on to improving self-serve options
- One respondent suggested that local residents could have the first decision on all new building developments which affect their community
- Make better use of technology such as email/websites etc to communicate information
- Combine District and County planning functions.

Responses relevant to the Equality Impact Assessment

A summary of the key findings of the EqlAs suggest that there is likely to be an impact on people with access requirements, which mean they require information in alternative formats or need to discuss issues in person. Any reduction in the range of methods and time given to consultation may exclude these people from engaging. Given the nature of the applications determined by the Council, the impact has not been assessed as significant.

None of the respondents to this proposal made any comments relevant to the EQIA.

Analyst notes

One respondent said that the proposal runs against the spirit of the Localism Act.

Appendix Bii: P50 Reduce our costs of consulting on planning applications– Full Equality Impact Assessment

Key findings:

Norfolk County Council is facing a budget gap of £189 million over the next three years, due to a reduction in Government funding, increasing council costs, inflation and demand for services. To address this, the Council has proposed and is consulting on a number of service changes and cuts, which includes this specific savings proposal.

This impact assessment looks in more detail at a proposal to reduce the level of public consultation we undertake for the planning applications we are responsible for determining.

If implemented the proposal could impact on people who may need more time to engage in the process, information in a different format or a face to face conversation with planners to enable them to respond. This may include people with a disability or those whose first language is not English. Mitigating actions have been identified to address this.

Directorate:	Environment, Transport and Development
Lead officer:	Nick Johnson
Other officers:	Shaun Norris, Sophie Leney, Neil Howard, Louise Cornell
Date completed	31 December 2013

1. Overview of Proposal

The City, District and Borough Councils in Norfolk deal with 95% of all planning applications. These typically relate to individual housing improvements and commercial developments, such as housing estates, supermarkets and warehousing.

We deal with planning applications that relate to the development of buildings that we need to deliver our own services, such as schools, libraries and roads, and planning applications for quarries and sites for processing waste, such as agricultural, industrial, commercial and sewage sludge.

Currently we have a Statement of Community Engagement that sets out how we will consult with communities on the planning applications we are responsible for. At the moment we often go beyond this and consult with communities more than we need to legally.

We propose to limit all future public consultation to the minimum legal standards. This would save us £37,000 during 2015/16.

2. Who will be affected

This Equality Impact Assessment considers the likely impacts of the proposal on all protected groups under the Equality Act 2010.

It also reviews the impact on people in rural communities. Norfolk is predominantly a rural county with just over half of the population (52.5%) living smaller towns and their fringes, villages and hamlets. Older people aged 65+ are more likely to be living in rural as opposed to urban areas - almost a quarter of people living in a rural areas over the age of 65. There are

around 21,950 households in rural areas in Norfolk that have no access to a car or van. People living in these rural areas may face challenges accessing key services and amenities.

The following protected groups are likely to be disproportionately affected:

Age (people of different age groups; older & younger etc)	NO
Disability (people who are wheelchair or cane users; blind, deaf, visually or hearing impaired; can't stand for a long time; have a long-term illness i.e. HIV or a neurological condition such as dyslexia; learning difficulties; mental health etc)	YES
Gender reassignment (people who identify as transgender)	NO
Marriage/civil partnerships	NO
Pregnancy & Maternity	NO
Race (different ethnic groups, including Gypsies & Travellers)	YES
Religion/belief (different faiths, including people with no religion or belief)	NO
Sex (i.e. men/women)	NO
Sexual orientation (all, including lesbian, gay & bisexual people)	NO

3. Context to the proposal

We consult the community on all planning applications that we are responsible for. The amount of consultation and how we consult varies. Sometimes planning officers attend meetings, go to see individuals or respond in detail to queries from individuals and groups before and after a planning decision is made. Our current consultation process and Statement of Community Engagement which we are required to have by law, includes a number of activities which are in excess of what we legally need to do.

If the proposal goes ahead we will reduce the level of engagement undertaken with third parties. For example, we would only acknowledge letters rather than respond in detail, we would not generally attend parish council meetings or meet with concerned individuals on site, and would not use external specialist resources.

We propose to adopt a narrower set of standards in our Statement of Community Engagement. These would still meet our legal obligations under Article 13 of the Development Management Procedure Order, which sets out who must be consulted and how they must be consulted, including the publication of notices in local newspapers, putting up notices on sites and sending letters to neighbouring residents.

These new standards would also set out when a planning officer would attend a parish council meeting, and how we will deal with letters requesting planning information (including provision of information in an alternative format or language).

4. Potential impact

If the proposal goes ahead it will mean that the public have fewer opportunities to engage in the planning process for the planning applications that we determine – which includes minerals extraction and waste management sites as well as the Council's own development, like schools.

In particular there could be an impact on people who need information in a different format or would need a face to face discussion to enable them to respond. This may include people with a disability or whose first language is not English. For example some people with a learning disability would be less likely or able to give their views on a planning application in writing, and are more likely to need support in enabling their views to be considered – which is best done at a face to face meeting.

This would also apply to some Black and Minority Ethnic communities and Deaf people who first language is not English and would rely on information being provided in an accessible format or being supported to understand the information through a specialist or community support network.

Given the nature of applications determined by us the impact will likely not be significant, but it is important that the process remains accessible.

As part of determining the impacts of proposals for the 2014-17 budget a 12 week public consultation was undertaken between Thursday 19 September and Thursday 12 December. No responses were received that identified impacts on protected groups or rural communities.

5. Mitigating actions

The following actions will be delivered if this proposal goes ahead to mitigate the adverse impacts identified through this assessment:

Action/s	Lead	Date
1. As part of our standard process, ensure organisations and individuals access requests are considered and supported where appropriate	Nick Johnson	Ongoing

6. Further information

For further information about this Equality Impact Assessment please contact the Planning, Performance and Partnerships service on

Tel: 01603 228891

Email: PPPService@norfolk.gov.uk

¹ Census 2011, www.norfolkinsight.org.uk

Appendix Ci: Consultation responses summary for P51 Scale back planning enforcement

Feedback from consultation events

Whilst no specific events were organised to discuss this proposal, it was raised at one event for NCC staff. Otherwise, there was limited feedback on this proposal from the general Norfolk Putting People First consultation events.

Organisation, group or petition responses

A total of 12 organisations formally responded to this proposal, including: Taverham Brass Band; Taverham Parish Council; Leziate Parish Council; Terrington St John Parish Council; CPRE Norfolk; YMCA & Rethink mental health & riversdale; Borough Council of King's Lynn and West Norfolk; Norfolk Neurology Network & MS Society; Snettisham Parish Council; Sheringham North Ward, North Norfolk District Council; Great Ellingham Parish Council; Stop Norwich Urbanisation; Shropham Village Hall Committee.

- No petitions were received.
- The majority opposed the proposal.

Consistent, repeated or notable views from people who agreed with the proposal

Proposal 51 was accepted by 57 people, with a range of views and a number of provisos made, as follows:

- 45 respondents said either "yes" or "agree" with no further information
- 5 respondents agreed with the proposal on the basis that the current process is too long / complicated
- One respondent said that we should implement the proposal but then monitor the impact, going back to the original way of working if the proposal does not work out.

Consistent, repeated or notable views from people who did not agree with the proposal

Proposal 51 was not accepted by 93 people, with a range of views and a number of provisos made, including:

- 26 respondents said either "no" or that they "disagreed" with no further explanation
- 61 respondents said that the proposal was short-sighted and had the potential to lead to unconstrained / illegal development
- 3 respondents said it was a small saving for a potentially large negative impact.

Other comments

A total of 28 responses were more general in nature, including:

- 10 respondents said that they were unsure or unable to comment on the proposal
- 13 respondents were unsure about what was meant by the proposal and asked questions about what this meant for the future of planning at the Council.

Alternative suggestions

Alternative ideas included:

- Use volunteers / County Councillors to carry out inspections
- 22 respondents suggested introducing some kind of penalty charges for those who breach warnings and/or recovering the full cost of inspections from the developer.

Responses relevant to the Equality Impact Assessment

No adverse disproportionate impacts on protected groups have been identified for proposal P51 - Scale back planning enforcement.

None of the respondents to this proposal made any comments relevant to the EQIA.

Appendix Cii: P51 Scale back planning enforcement – Full Equality Impact Assessment

Key findings:

Norfolk County Council is facing a budget gap of £189 million over the next three years, due to a reduction in Government funding, increasing council costs, inflation and demand for services. To address this, the Council has proposed and is consulting on a number of service changes and cuts, which includes this specific savings proposal.

This impact assessment looks in more detail at a proposal to scale back the action we take when notified about potential breaches in planning conditions for minerals and waste sites we have granted planning permission to. It involves focusing enforcement action on the most serious breaches in planning permission.

The assessment has not identified any adverse disproportionate impacts on protected groups.

Directorate:	Environment, Transport and Development
Lead Officer	Nick Johnson
Other officers	Shaun Norris, Sophie Leney, Neil Howard, Louise Cornell
Date completed	31 December 2013

1. Overview of Proposal

The City, District and Borough Councils in Norfolk deal with 95% of all planning applications. These typically relate to individual housing improvements and commercial developments, such as housing estates, supermarkets and warehousing.

We deal with planning applications that relate to the development of buildings that we need to deliver our own services, such as schools, libraries and roads, as well as planning applications for quarries and sites for processing waste, such as agricultural, industrial, commercial and sewage sludge.

When people are granted planning consent for mineral quarries and waste processing sites, there may be conditions about work on the site, for example the hours they are allowed to operate. We have a role in ensuring that conditions are met, and that people only work on sites that have planning permission. Currently, where this is not the case we investigate and then work with the people involved to resolve the issue. When someone contacts us with an alleged breach of planning we respond within three working days.

We propose to scale back our planning enforcement so that we target our activity on the more serious breaches of planning permission. We estimate that the proposal would save £37,000 in 2015/16.

2. Who will be affected

This Equality Impact Assessment considers the likely impacts of the proposal on all protected groups under the Equality Act 2010.

It also reviews the impact on people in rural communities. Norfolk is predominantly a rural county with just over half of the population (52.5%) living smaller towns and their fringes, villages and hamlets. Older people aged 65+ are more likely to be living in rural as opposed to urban areas - almost a quarter of people living in a rural areas over the age of 65. There are around 21,950 households in rural areas in Norfolk that have no access to a car or van. People living in these rural areas may face challenges accessing key services and amenities.

No protected groups are likely to be disproportionately affected by this proposal.

Age (people of different age groups; older & younger etc)	NO
Disability (people who are wheelchair or cane users; blind, deaf, visually or hearing impaired; can't stand for a long time; have a long-term illness i.e. HIV or a neurological condition such as dyslexia; learning difficulties; mental health etc)	NO
Gender reassignment (people who identify as transgender)	NO
Marriage/civil partnerships	NO
Pregnancy & Maternity	NO
Race (different ethnic groups, including Gypsies & Travellers)	NO
Religion/belief (different faiths, including people with no religion or belief)	NO
Sex (i.e. men/women)	NO
Sexual orientation (all, including lesbian, gay & bisexual people)	NO

3. Context to the proposal

We ensure that planning consent and conditions are enforced appropriately for minerals extract, waste management and County Council planning around non-building changes and developments such as parking and landscaping. For County Council developments it is down to the relevant project team to ensure that action is taken to ensure compliance.

We propose to scale back our planning enforcement so that we target our activity on the more serious breaches of planning permissions. This means that we will:

- Base the time it takes us to respond to alleged incidences of planning breaches on how serious the allegation is.
- Take no further action on alleged breaches that we decide fall below our threshold for intervention.

We would set the threshold for intervention after considering the impact that the breach is having, along with the intent of the person or organisation that has committed the breach. We would ensure that our programme of pro-active site monitoring to ensure compliance at the most sensitive sites is maintained.

4. Potential impact

If the proposal goes ahead it is likely that there will be some breaches in planning consent for minerals and waste sites, which depending on their nature could impact on the local community. We will continue to undertake pro-active monitoring of more sensitive sites to ensure there are no breaches at these. Our assessment is that protected groups will not be disproportionately affected by this proposal.

For the Council's own developments, we will continue to take the approach that the relevant project team within the Council is responsible for ensuring compliance with conditions. Although we do not anticipate that there will be a disproportionate impact on any protected group, it will remain important that accessibility for all users is considered.

As part of determining the impacts of proposals for the 2014-17 budget a 12 week public consultation was undertaken between Thursday 19 September and Thursday 12 December. No responses were received that identified impacts on protected groups or rural communities.

5. Mitigating actions

If this proposal is delivered no adverse disproportionate impacts on protected groups are anticipated, but the following action will be delivered to ensure that accessibility continues to be considered through the Council's own developments.

	Action/s	Lead	Date
1	Guidance around Norfolk County Council Accessibility Standards to be incorporated within any project or development scheme	Nick Johnson	April 2014

6. Further information

For further information about this Equality Impact Assessment please contact the Planning, Performance and Partnerships service on

Tel: 01603 228891

Email: PPPService@norfolk.gov.uk

¹ Census 2011, www.norfolkinsight.org.uk

Appendix Di: Consultation responses summary for P52 Charge for site inspection reports for operators of mineral and waste sites

Feedback from consultation events

Whilst no specific events were organised to discuss this proposal, it was raised at one event for NCC staff. Otherwise, there was limited feedback on this proposal from the general Norfolk Putting People First consultation events.

Organisation, group or petition responses

A total of 7 organisations formally responded to this proposal, including: Taverham Parish Council; YMCA & Rethink mental health & riversdale; Norfolk Neurology Network & MS Society; Retired members section of the Norfolk County branch of Unison; Great Ellingham Parish Council; Great Yarmouth College; Shropham Village Hall Committee.

- No petitions were received.
- The majority were supportive of the proposal.

Consistent, repeated or notable views from people who agreed with the proposal

Proposal 52 was accepted by 129 people, with a range of views and a number of provisos made, including:

- 85 respondents said that they “agreed” or were “ok” with the proposal but did not give any further information
- 6 respondents said that the service should be self-funding
- 12 respondents made reference to it being right to charge commercial businesses but 5 respondents said that charging should be done on some kind of sliding scale proportionate to the size of the business
- 3 respondents commented, with some surprise, on why this had not been done before.

Consistent, repeated or notable views from people who did not agree with the proposal

Proposal 52 was not accepted by 3 people, who made general statements about the consultation and the approach to budget savings taken by the Council.

Other comments

A total of 15 responses were more general in nature, including:

- 7 respondents said that they were “not sure” or did not feel qualified or able to comment on the proposal as it did not affect them
- 2 respondents said “maybe” and “possibly”
- 6 respondents were unsure about current practice and questioned the need for a report to be sent out.

Alternative suggestions

Alternative ideas included:

- 6 respondents (both for and against) said that we should charge for the service
- 5 of these said to only charge depending upon the size of the operation i.e. only charge if they own more than one site or have a sliding scale of charges
- 2 respondents said to charge more than the identified amount
- 2 respondents said to fine people who are found to be in breach
- One respondent suggested a quality charter or standards that all businesses need to sign up to which has a membership fee

Responses relevant to the Equality Impact Assessment

No adverse disproportionate impacts on protected groups have been identified for proposal P52 Charge for site inspection reports for operators of mineral and waste sites.

None of the respondents to this proposal made any comments relevant to the EQIA.

Appendix Dii: P52 Charge for site inspection reports for operators of mineral and waste sites – Full Equality Impact Assessment

Key findings:

Norfolk County Council is facing a budget gap of £189 million over the next three years, due to a reduction in Government funding, increasing council costs, inflation and demand for services. To address this, the Council has proposed and is consulting on a number of service changes and cuts, which includes this specific savings proposal.

This impact assessment looks in more detail at a proposal to introduce charges for copies of inspection reports prepared by Council officers following an inspection of sites where waste management or non-extractive mineral operations are underway

No disproportionate impacts on protected groups are anticipated if this proposal goes ahead.

Directorate:	Environment, Transport and Development
Lead officer:	Nick Johnson
Other officers:	Shaun Norris and Sophie Leney, Neil Howard, Louise Cornell
Date completed	31 December 13

1. Overview of Proposal

The City, District and Borough Councils in Norfolk deal with 95% of all planning applications. These typically relate to individual housing improvements and commercial developments, such as housing estates, supermarkets and warehousing.

We deal with planning applications that relate to the development of buildings that we need to deliver our own services, such as schools, libraries and roads, and planning applications for quarries and sites for processing waste, such as agricultural, industrial, commercial and sewage sludge.

We propose to introduce charges for copies of inspection reports prepared by County Council officers, following an inspection of sites where waste management or non-extractive mineral operations are underway. This proposal would save £5,000 in 2015/16.

2. Who will be affected

This Equality Impact Assessment considers the likely impacts of the proposal on all protected groups under the Equality Act 2010.

It also reviews the impact on people in rural communities. Norfolk is predominantly a rural county with just over half of the population (52.5%) living smaller towns and their fringes, villages and hamlets. Older people aged 65+ are more likely to be living in rural as opposed to urban areas - almost a quarter of people living in a rural areas over the age of 65. There are around 21,950 households in rural areas in Norfolk that have no access to a car or van. People living in these rural areas may face challenges accessing key services and amenities.

No adverse disproportionate impacts on protected groups are anticipated.

Age (people of different age groups; older & younger etc)	NO
Disability (people who are wheelchair or cane users; blind, deaf, visually or hearing impaired; can't stand for a long time; have a long-term illness i.e. HIV or a neurological condition such as dyslexia; learning difficulties; mental health etc)	NO
Gender reassignment (people who identify as transgender)	NO
Marriage/civil partnerships	NO
Pregnancy & Maternity	NO
Race (different ethnic groups, including Gypsies & Travellers)	NO
Religion/belief (different faiths, including people with no religion or belief)	NO
Sex (i.e. men/women)	NO
Sexual orientation (all, including lesbian, gay & bisexual people)	NO

3. Context to the proposal

There are a range of different operators of sites for waste management or non-extractive minerals processing, ranging from large multi-national organisations to small, local businesses.

We currently undertake over 400 inspections of sites where waste management or non-extractive mineral operations are underway each year. This is done to ensure that these sites are operated in a way that complies with planning regulations. At present, a detailed report on each site inspection is prepared and given to the site operator, free of charge.

The full inspection report provides a detailed overview of how the site is being operated and any identified areas of concern, including breaches of planning regulations. The reports provide a detailed history of the management of a site and so is a useful business management tool for site operators. We are proposing to introduce a charge for copies of these inspection reports.

4. Potential impact

If this proposal goes ahead it means that operators of mineral and waste sites will be charged for a copy of full inspection reports we undertake on their sites. Should they decide not to pay for the full report we will continue to provide details of any breaches in planning regulations that they need to be aware of.

It is anticipated that charging for the full inspection report could have a bigger impact on smaller operators.

We understand that site inspection reports can provide useful management tools for operators, and help to maintain historical records of operations at given sites. These potentially could be lost to the operator if they are unable or unwilling to pay for inspection reports. We will however, continue to maintain these for our own records.

It is not envisaged that the change in service levels will have any disproportionate impact on individuals or groups with protected characteristics.

As part of determining the impacts of proposals for the 2014-17 budget a 12 week public consultation was undertaken between Thursday 19 September and Thursday 12 December. No responses were received that identified impacts on protected groups or rural communities.

5. Mitigating Actions

No adverse disproportionate impacts have been identified for this proposal, so no mitigating actions are required.

6. Further information

For further information about this Equality Impact Assessment please contact the Planning, Performance and Partnerships service on

Tel: 01603 228891

Email: PPPService@norfolk.gov.uk

¹ Census 2011, www.norfolkinsight.org.uk

Appendix Ei: Consultation responses summary for P53 Reduce our subsidy for the Coasthopper bus service

Feedback from consultation events

In addition to five general consultation events, there were three events held in Hunstanton, Sheringham and Wells-next-the-sea to look specifically at this proposal. The feedback from these events suggested a general opposition to the proposal.

At a number of events, questions were raised about the level of savings identified and how these had been calculated. Also, whether it was possible to charge concessionary bus pass holders.

Organisation, group or petition responses

A total of 20 organisations formally responded to this proposal, including: Taverham Parish Council; Rescue Wooden Boats Charity; Needham Village Hall; Upper Sheringham Parish Council; Burnham Overy Parish Council; Sheringham Town Council; Blakeney Parish Council; Norfolk Older People's Strategic Partnership; Norfolk Area of Ramblers Association; YMCA & Rethink mental health & riversdale; Borough Council of King's Lynn and West Norfolk; Norfolk Neurology Network and MS Society; Snettisham Parish Council; Retired members section of the Norfolk County branch of Unison; Norfolk Community Law Service and Norfolk Community Advice Network; Beetley Parish Council; Cromer Town Council; Royal National Institute of Blind People; Diss Town Council; Norfolk Rural Community Council; North Norfolk District Council.

No petitions were received.

All of the organisations, except for one stated their opposition to the proposal.

Consistent, repeated or notable views from people who agreed with the proposal

Proposal 53 was accepted by 95 people, with a range of views and a number of provisos made, including:

- 54 respondents said that they 'agreed' or that the proposal was 'ok' with no further information
- 6 respondents made reference to the service needing to be self-funding
- 17 respondents made reference to the service only being used by Tourists and concessionary bus pass holders and felt that prices should be increased in order to help pay for the service. This includes charging concessionary bus pass holders
- One respondent suggested that the Coasthopper runs more frequently than when it first started and a return to earlier, more restricted, patterns of service would be feasible
- 12 respondents commented that the proposal was regrettable but in the light of budget reductions the proposal should be accepted
- 7 respondents said that this route should not be treated any differently to any other
- One respondent stated that the subsidy should be withdrawn altogether.

Consistent, repeated or notable views from people who did not agree with the proposal

Proposal 53 was not accepted by 158 people, with a range of views and a number of provisos made, as follows:

- 52 responses stated that the proposal would cause equality issues as the service caters for rural isolated communities
- 36 respondents suggested that the proposal would encourage, those people who owned a car, to drive, thus causing increased pollution and traffic congestion
- The service is referred to as a "lifeline" or "essential" or a "vital service" by 17 responses
- The reduction is stated as being "short-sighted" as it may make the service (in particular

reference to the change in timetable) unsustainable as people will not use it

- Changes specifically to the winter service are mentioned in 28 responses and changes to the summer service in 59 responses. Concerns about the winter service are based upon the effect on local residents, in particular the elderly and those using the bus to commute for work or education needs. Concerns about the summer service are based upon the potential impact on Tourism and because the service is already very busy during these months.
- Concerns about the impact on tourism were cited in 23 responses
- One respondent describes it as a victim of the national concessionary fares scheme.

Other comments

A total of 41 responses were more general in nature, as follows:

- 9 respondents said that they were 'not sure' or did not comment as they said it did not impact upon them
- Frequent statements of appreciation for the Coasthopper service
- Comments about concessionary fares
- 12 of the responders asked questions about the existing service and justification for the level of savings identified.

Alternative suggestions

Alternative ideas included:

- Charging concessionary bus pass holders – specifically in connection with the elderly. 5 respondents said concessionary bus pass holders should be charged 50p per journey, 11 said they should be charged £1 per journey and 3 said they should be charged up to £2 per journey.
- One respondent said to 'means test' individuals to determine whether they should be able to access free travel
- One response said to request that Norfolk Green put on larger vehicles
- Frequent references to charging tourists / out of county visitors a different rate to local people, including charging concessionary bus pass holders from outside of Norfolk but not those resident in the County
- A specialist Coasthopper loyalty or members card
- Sponsorship for the service
- Move people to Dial a bus type of service.

Responses relevant to the Equality Impact Assessment

A summary of the key findings of the EqIAs suggest that a number of groups may be disproportionately affected by this proposal P53 Reduce our subsidy for the Coasthopper bus service. As the primary users of this bus service, any changes to the Coasthopper will have an impact on older and disabled people. For those living in villages along the North Norfolk coast this could lead to poorer accessibility to services, and has the potential to increase in rural isolation. As the bus service will continue to operate the impact has not been assessed as significant.

None of the respondents to this proposal made any comments relevant to the EQIA.

Analyst notes

Three small businesses suggested that sponsorship was something they could consider. One response suggested using sponsorship like that in Blackpool to support the running of the trams. Another that local communities could come together to support the running of the Coasthopper in their local area, possibly as some form of community interest company.

Appendix Eii: P53 Reduce our subsidy for the Coasthopper bus service – Full Equality Impact Assessment

Key findings:

Norfolk County Council is facing a budget gap of £189 million over the next three years, due to a reduction in Government funding, increasing council costs, inflation and demand for services. To address this, the Council has proposed and is consulting on a number of service changes and cuts, which includes this specific savings proposal.

This impact assessment looks in more detail at a proposal to reduce the funding that we provide to support the Coasthopper bus service which operates along the North Norfolk Coast between King's Lynn and Cromer, by £150,000 over 2 years.

Research and discussion during the consultation period has confirmed that the bus service will run on a more commercial basis through the peak season and summer months. This means that the council's residual support will be focussed on providing a winter service. Should the proposal be delivered there will be an impact on older and disabled people who are the primary users of the service during this period. The service may reduce in frequency (back to levels offered in 2010) which could reduce accessibility to essential services for those living in villages along the North Norfolk coast, and has the potential to increase rural isolation. The impact is not anticipated to be substantial given that the service will continue to operate and still offer good levels of service.

Directorate:	Environment, Transport and Development
Lead officer:	Tracy Jessop
Other officers:	Martin Stringfellow, Neil Howard, Louise Cornell
Date completed	30 December 2013

1. Overview of Proposal

The Coasthopper is a bus service that runs along the Norfolk Coast between King's Lynn and Cromer. The Council has subsidised the Coasthopper service since it first started in the 1990s. The service brings some benefits to the wider community in terms of economic development, tourism and well-being. However, the level of funding used to support the service is high when compared to the rest of the bus network that the Council supports.

We propose to reduce the funding that we provide to support the Coasthopper by £150,000 over 2 years: £75,000 in 2014/15 and the same amount in 2015/16.

2. Who will be affected

This Equality Impact Assessment considers the likely impacts of the proposal on all protected groups under the Equality Act 2010.

It also reviews the impact on people in rural communities. Norfolk is predominantly a rural county with just over half of the population (52.5%) living smaller towns and their fringes, villages and hamlets. Older people aged 65+ are more likely to be living in rural as opposed to urban areas - almost a quarter of people living in a rural areas over the age of 65. There

are around 21,950 households in rural areas in Norfolk that have no access to a car or van. People living in these rural areas may face challenges accessing key services and amenities.

The following protected groups are likely to be disproportionately affected:

Age (people of different age groups; older & younger etc)	YES
Disability (people who are wheelchair or cane users; blind, deaf, visually or hearing impaired; can't stand for a long time; have a long-term illness i.e. HIV or a neurological condition such as dyslexia; learning difficulties; mental health etc)	YES
Gender reassignment (people who identify as transgender)	NO
Marriage/civil partnerships	NO
Pregnancy & Maternity	NO
Race (different ethnic groups, including Gypsies & Travellers)	NO
Religion/belief (different faiths, including people with no religion or belief)	NO
Sex (i.e. men/women)	NO
Sexual orientation (all, including lesbian, gay & bisexual people)	NO

3. Context to the proposal

In 2012/13 over 29 million bus journeys were made in Norfolk on commercial and subsidised services. Most urban and inter-urban bus services are operated on a commercial basis. Over 140 services are funded by Norfolk County Council at a cost of £2.85m each year. These bus services are mainly in rural areas, connecting people to key service areas for health, jobs, shopping and medical trips.

The Coasthopper is a rural service that connects villages along the north Norfolk coast between King's Lynn, Hunstanton, Wells, Sheringham and Cromer. There were 524,582 passenger journeys on the Coasthopper in 2012/13. Of these 53% were made by concessionary pass holders who do not pay for their journey. No specific data is held on the demographics of concessionary users of this particular service.

We currently subsidise the Coasthopper by £225,000 per year. This is about 8% of the total local bus budget that supports over 140 other bus services across Norfolk. We are proposing to reduce funding for the Coasthopper by £75,000 in 2014/15 and a further £75,000 2015/16. Although a £150,000 cut is equal to over 66% of the current level of funding this level has been determined due to the high level of profit made from summer operation.

The service is largely seasonal and has a positive impact on the summer tourist trade. Passenger demand is reduced over the winter months. The number of journeys per month is at its highest during May-Sept with the percentage of concessionary journeys increasing to approximately 57%. In the winter months the Coasthopper runs more frequently than other bus services we support.

4. Potential impact

If the proposal goes ahead it is likely to affect the frequency of the Coasthopper bus service during winter (Oct-Mar). This means there could be one bus every two hours instead of

every hour. The summer period (Mar-Sept) has already been declared “commercial” by the current operator, Stagecoach (formerly Norfolk Green) and several other operators have shown interest in operating the route commercially.

These changes to service frequency may result in buses being more crowded at peak journey times, and people needing to make some changes to their patterns of travel. However, a 2 hour service frequency was operated prior to 2010/11 and this was deemed satisfactory.

Given the high number of concessionary passes used on this service, it is likely that the greatest impact of this proposal will be on older and disabled people. For those living in villages along the North Norfolk coast this could lead to poorer accessibility to services, and has the potential to increase rural isolation. As the bus service will continue to operate the impact has not been assessed as significant.

What people have told us

As part of determining the impacts of proposals for the 2014-17 budget a 12 week public consultation was undertaken between Thursday 19 September and Thursday 12 December. A large number of respondents felt that this proposal would impact on equality of opportunity, as the service caters for rurally isolated communities and is primarily used by older people.

“This is awful news. I rely on this service twice a week to care for my elderly grandmother. This is the only time my uncle gets a day off and this means I cannot come from London on a weekly basis then he would have to get the council / NHS to pay for nursing care to give him a break.”

“Please consider the impact on blind and partially sighted people who live along this bus route and rely on it to get around because they cannot see to drive.”

Concerns were raised particularly about changes to the winter service, as people felt that this would particularly impact on local residents – the elderly and those using the bus to commute for work or education. It was felt that the suggested winter service may be too minimal to facilitate the essential trips such as getting to the doctors and shopping.

5. Actions

The following actions will be delivered to help mitigate the impacts identified through this assessment process.

	Action/s	Lead	Date
1	Confirm levels of commercial operation with bus operators for summer operation.	Tracy Jessop	February 2014
2	Commission winter CoastHopper service and assess whether further consultation is required.	Martin Stringfellow	April 2014
3	Continue to encourage local businesses to support the service through partnering arrangements.	Martin Stringfellow	May 2014
4	Investigate a “Friends of Coasthopper” type arrangement to raise funds to support the non-commercial elements of the service.	Martin Stringfellow	May 2014

	Action/s	Lead	Date
5	Write to the Minister of State for Transport reminding them of impacts the concessionary fares scheme has in distorting the market for local bus services with a high tourist demand.	Tracy Jessop	Feb 2014

6. Further information

For further information about this Equality Impact Assessment please contact the Planning, Performance and Partnerships service on

Tel: 01603 228891

Email: PPPService@norfolk.gov.uk

¹ Census 2011, www.norfolkinsight.org.uk

Appendix Fi: Consultation responses summary for P54 Reduce highway maintenance for one year

Feedback from consultation events

Whilst no specific events were organised to discuss this proposal, it was raised at four of the general consultation events.

Organisation, group or petition responses

A total of 14 organisations formally responded to this proposal, including: Taverham Brass Band; Taverham Parish Council; Leziate Parish Council; Wiggshall St Germans Parish Council; Hemblington Parish Council; Blofield Parish Council; Norfolk area of Ramblers Association; CPRE Norfolk; YMCA & Rethink mental health & Riversdale; Norfolk Neurology Network & MS Society; Snettisham Parish Council; Retired members section of the Norfolk County branch of Unison; Carers Council for Norwich; Beeston with Bittering Parish Council; Diss Town Council; Norfolk Rural Community Council.

No petitions were received.

All of the organisations stated their opposition to the proposal.

Consistent, repeated or notable views from people who agreed with the proposal

Proposal 54 was accepted by 45 people, with a range of views and a number of provisos made, including:

- 20 respondents replied “ok”, or “agree” with no further information
- 3 respondents agreed to the proposal but stated this should be for one year only
- 4 respondents also commented on increasing work on PROW (2 agreeing and 2 against)
- 2 suggested that the subsequent cost of maintenance may be higher
- 1 respondent said they agreed to the proposal if the saving meant that we do not cut the adult social services budget
- 2 respondents said that although they agreed with the proposal they were concerned about not filling grit bins in rural areas.

Consistent, repeated or notable views from people who did not agree with the proposal

Proposal 54 was not accepted by 169 people, with a range of views and a number of provisos made, including:

- 54 respondents referred to the proposal as “short-sighted” with the potential to lead to greater expense in the future. For example, a “reduction in Highway Maintenance is a short term fix. Storing up bigger and more expensive fixes in the future”
- 51 respondents stated safety as one of the reasons why they did not back the proposal
- 9 respondents said that the proposal had the potential to increase the number of claims against NCC for vehicles damaged by potholes
- 19 respondents specifically mention gritting as an area they would not want to see reduced
- 3 respondents said this went against our council priority for good infrastructure.

Other comments

A total of 48 responses were more general in nature, as follows:

- 16 respondents made general statements about the current (poor) condition of the road network and the maintenance programme
- 2 respondents asked questions about the current level of insurance claims against the authority and how this may increase with the reduction in road maintenance in future years
- One respondent commented on the current street lighting policy of turning off lights during set hours

- One respondent felt that the cost for grass cutting quoted was excessive
- 9 respondents said that they were in favour of the increase in PROW but did not mention the proposed reduction in the highway maintenance budget.

Alternative suggestions

Alternative ideas included:

- Revisiting the criteria and level of repairs undertaken
- Ensure that subcontractors are given penalties for inferior work
- In connection to responders to PROW – using volunteers / Duke of Edinburgh students / unemployed / local rambling groups to carry out maintenance
- In connection with PROW one respondent said to charge the landowner for maintenance
- 2 respondents suggested an increase in council tax and 1 said to get more funding via road tax from central Govt.

Responses relevant to the Equality Impact Assessment

No adverse disproportionate impacts on protected groups have been identified for proposal P54 Reduce highway maintenance for one year.

None of the respondents to this proposal made any comments relevant to the EQIA.

Appendix Fii: P54 Reduce highway maintenance for one year – Full Equality Impact Assessment

Key findings:

Norfolk County Council is facing a budget gap of £189 million over the next three years, due to a reduction in Government funding, increasing council costs, inflation and demand for services. To address this, the Council has proposed and is consulting on a number of service changes and cuts, which includes this specific savings proposal.

This impact assessment looks in more detail at a proposal to reduce the overall highways maintenance budget by £1 million for one year in 2014/15. This means that during 2014/15 we would reduce the amount of work to maintain the highway across Norfolk.

If implemented, overall this proposal will have minimal impact on the travelling public. It will result in some lower level maintenance tasks being undertaken less frequently, including less frequent replacement of road markings. This would be for one year, after which the frequency of these tasks will be reinstated at current levels. No adverse disproportionate impacts on protected groups are anticipated.

Directorate:	Environment, Transport and Development
Lead officer:	Nick Tupper
Other officers:	Matt Worden, Neil Howard, Kevin Allen, Louise Cornell
Date completed	31 December 2013

1. Overview of Proposal

The Council has a legal duty to maintain the highway, making it safe for road users and dealing with small repairs to prevent larger defects occurring. The Council meets this duty through a wide range of activities including pothole repairs, road patching, drain cleaning, grass cutting, sign cleaning, winter maintenance, bridge and culvert repairs and emergency response to incidents on the highway.

We also have a duty to maintain and encourage others to maintain Public Rights of Way (PROW) to a reasonable standard of safety. Work to maintain the highway and PROW is funded from the Council's Highways Maintenance Budget.

We are proposing to reduce the overall Highways Maintenance Budget by £1million for one year in 2014/15. This reduction would mean that during 2014/15 the Council would have to reduce the amount of highway maintenance work it does across Norfolk, including things like:

- A reduction in winter maintenance services by refilling grit bins less frequently (other winter maintenance services, including road gritting would be unaffected)
- Reduced safety barrier replacement work (though damaged barriers would still be replaced or repaired)
- Less frequent replacement of road markings
- Reduced bridge maintenance and traffic signal replacement.

At the same time we are proposing that we increase the amount that we spend on maintaining Public Rights of Way. We only carry out reactive maintenance on the majority of Public Rights of Way. We propose carrying out some proactive maintenance, which would

cost us an extra £75,000 a year on an ongoing basis.

2. Who will be affected

This Equality Impact Assessment considers the likely impacts of the proposal on all protected groups under the Equality Act 2010.

It also reviews the impact on people in rural communities. Norfolk is predominantly a rural county with just over half of the population (52.5%) living smaller towns and their fringes, villages and hamlets. Older people aged 65+ are more likely to be living in rural as opposed to urban areas - almost a quarter of people living in a rural areas over the age of 65. There are around 21,950 households in rural areas in Norfolk that have no access to a car or van. People living in these rural areas may face challenges accessing key services and amenities.

Reductions in funding for highway maintenance could affect anyone who uses the public highway. It is not anticipated that any protected groups will be disproportionately affected.

Age (people of different age groups; older & younger etc)	NO
Disability (people who are wheelchair or cane users; blind, deaf, visually or hearing impaired; can't stand for a long time; have a long-term illness i.e. HIV or a neurological condition such as dyslexia; learning difficulties; mental health etc)	NO
Gender reassignment (people who identify as transgender)	NO
Marriage/civil partnerships	NO
Pregnancy & Maternity	NO
Race (different ethnic groups, including Gypsies & Travellers)	NO
Religion/belief (different faiths, including people with no religion or belief)	NO
Sex (i.e. men/women)	NO
Sexual orientation (all, including lesbian, gay & bisexual people)	NO

3. Context to the proposal

Norfolk County Council is responsible for maintaining 9,765 km of road (6,103 miles) much of it rural, 1,13km of cycleway and 4,469km of footways. In addition, there are 1,300 bridges; 6,800 signposts; 1,650 stiles; 1,750 gates; and thousands of way marker posts to be maintained.

The highways maintenance budget, which totals £32.2 million each year, funds a wide range of activities including: pothole repairs, drainage, grass cutting, sign cleaning, bridge and culvert repairs, and other routine work, and since May 2012 the service also includes PROW (Public Right of Way) maintenance. It also funds winter maintenance and emergency response to incidents on the highway. It improves the serviceability of the highway, making it safe for road users and enabling them to access services and employment opportunities.

The Council has a legal duty as the local Highway Authority for Norfolk and has a statutory duty under the Highways Act 1980 to maintain the highway, making it safe for road users and dealing with small repairs to prevent larger defects occurring. It also ensures, as is

reasonably practicable, that safe passage along a highway is not endangered by snow and ice.

In Norfolk, 82% of killed and seriously injured casualties (KSIs) and 93% of fatalities occur on rural roads. Of these, 58% of KSIs and 83% of fatalities occur on high speed (50mph+) roads. It is on these high speed roads that maintenance activities such as road resurfacing and cutting back vegetation at junctions and bends can have a real impact on reducing the risk of road traffic collisions.

Other maintenance activities that can have an impact on road safety include ensuring drainage gulleys are clear and free draining, refreshing of road markings and cleaning of traffic signs.

If this proposal goes ahead it will mean that we reduce the amount spent on maintaining our highway network by £1 million next financial year by:

- A reduction in winter maintenance services by refilling grit bins less frequently (other winter maintenance services, including road gritting would be unaffected)
- Reduced safety barrier replacement work (though damaged barriers would still be replaced or repaired)
- Less frequent replacement of road markings
- Reduced bridge maintenance and traffic signal replacement.

The Highway Ranger Service would not be affected by this proposal. The service has proved to be an effective way of responding to local concerns and delivering focussed highway maintenance. It provides an opportunity for residents to influence (through their town/parish council) the minor highway maintenance work carried out in their community and enables district councils to deliver minor highway maintenance.

Additionally, we are proposing that we increase the amount that we spend on maintaining public rights of way by £75,000 to carry out some proactive maintenance. There are a number of different types of public rights of way, with public paths classified by the nature of the public rights over them. They are signed accordingly:

- Footpaths can be used by people on foot; there is no public right to push a bicycle or lead a horse, but a push chair may be used where conditions permit
- Bridleways can be used for walking, riding or leading a horse or pedal cycling. Cyclists must give way to pedestrians and riders. There is no public right to use a horse-drawn vehicle
- Restricted Byways can be used for walking, cycling, horseriding and carriage driving (i.e. with a horse and cart). The public cannot use a restricted byway in a mechanically propelled vehicle such as motorbike and car
- Byways open to all traffic can be used by vehicular and other kinds of traffic, where suitable but are used by the public mainly for walking or riding horses or cycles. Vehicles should give way to other users, and comply with all driving regulations as for ordinary road traffic. They must be taxed, insured, roadworthy and properly silenced
- Permissive paths exist where the landowner gives express permission. These are not maintained by Norfolk County Council.

Public rights of way should generally be maintained to a standard appropriate to their location and use. We are responsible for:

- Maintaining the surfaces of rights of way including the control of natural vegetation, to allow rights to be exercised
- Assisting farmers and landowners with the maintenance of approved stiles and gates
- Signposting footpaths, bridleways and byways where they leave a metalled road

- Maintaining most bridges crossed by rights of way
- Receiving complaints and take appropriate action
- Asserting and protecting the rights of the public to use and enjoy rights of way

4. Potential impact

If delivered, the proposal will result in a one off reduction of 3.1% in funding to deliver highways maintenance tasks during 2014/15. This means the budget would return to £32.2 million in 2015/16. During 2014/15 we will continue to prioritise our maintenance regime according to risk – so that anything that is considered to be a high risk to highway safety is prioritised for action.

The proposal will result in some lower level maintenance tasks being undertaken less frequently during 2014/15. On the whole, this proposal is unlikely to have a significant impact on the travelling public Norfolk. There could however be localised impacts, with some people for example noticing road markings have not been replaced.

Increasing the amount of money spend on public rights of way could have a positive impact, making local routes more accessible and ensuring that where possible there are connections between routes and with local services. Due to the nature of public rights of way, this increase in funding could go a long way.

As part of determining the impacts of proposals for the 2014-17 budget a 12 week public consultation was undertaken between Thursday 19 September and Thursday 12 December. A number of people who responded felt that the £1 million reduction in highways maintenance would be most felt in rural communities:

“We are very concerned that some of the proposed cuts will be of more consequence to the rural communities such as ours. To reduce highway maintenance for a year (Ref 54) will impact us greatly. Rural roads are proved to be very dangerous and most rural roads are not covered by NCCs gritting regime so are dependent on grit bins.”

Some people were concerned particularly about a reduction in gritting on rural routes and grit bins in local communities being filled less often. Concerns about safety were raised. It should be noted that some people mis-interpreted the proposal in terms of the maintenance activities that would be affected.

5. Mitigating actions

The following actions will be delivered to help mitigate the impacts identified above

Action/s	Lead	Date
1. Monitor the decisions made about where to reduce maintenance and the impact this has on the travelling public, including feedback from local residents, and consider opportunities for reducing impacts	Nick Tupper	April 2014
2. Continue to encourage local communities to undertake minor highway maintenance work in their local area, to help reduce the potential impact of these service changes.	Nick Tupper	April 2014

6. Further information

For further information about this Equality Impact Assessment please contact the Planning, Performance and Partnerships service on

Tel: 01603 228891

Email: PPPService@norfolk.gov.uk

¹ Census 2011, www.norfolkinsight.org.uk

² County Transport Asset Plan

Appendix Gi: Consultation responses summary for P59 Cut the cost of providing school transport

Feedback from consultation events

The limited feedback on this proposal from the general Norfolk Putting People First consultation events suggested a general opposition to the proposal. Concerns were also raised about the practicality of the proposal and some cited safety concerns.

Organisation, group or petition responses

A total of 9 organisations formally responded to this proposal, including: Kickstart Norfolk; Taverham Parish Council; The Waveney Choir of Diss; Acle Parish Council; Norfolk Neurology Network & MS Society; County Community Safety Partnership; Retired members section of the Norfolk County branch of Unison; Great Yarmouth College; Stop Norwich Urbanisation.

- No petitions were received.
- Most expressed their opposition to the proposal.

Consistent, repeated or notable views from people who agreed with the proposal

Proposal 59 was accepted by 115 people, with a range of views and a number of provisos made, including:

- 10 respondents made reference to parental responsibility and questioned why 'reasonable parental costs' should be subsidised
- 15 respondents agreed with the proposal on the grounds of potential for improvement to health by encouraging children to walk or cycle
- 5 respondents agreed on the grounds that improvements to footpaths and cycle ways would benefit the community as a whole
- 3 respondents agreed on the basis that parents should consider their child's journey to school when choosing where to live, especially when living in a rural county like Norfolk
- 1 respondent said it should be cut completely
- 12 respondents agreed with the proposal but expressed some concern generally due to safety issues for children cycling or moving younger children on to public transport
- 1 respondent said that £200 seemed high for the cycle allowance.

Consistent, repeated or notable views from people who did not agree with the proposal

Proposal 59 was not accepted by 49 people, with a range of views and a number of provisos made, including:

- 18 respondents rejected the proposal on the grounds of safety and 5 on the basis that it could disadvantage some children / families based upon them living in rural areas
- 12 respondents said that they felt the idea would not work or was not practical, some citing the amount of 'equipment' children need to take to school
- 11 respondents said that they could not support the proposal due to safety grounds for children in general walking and cycling and 6 respondents particularly noted winter months as an issue as it gets darker earlier
- 1 respondent mentioned the move towards pupils using public transport to which they said 'as parents we could not afford to pay for their transport'. 3 respondents said that there was not a viable alternative local bus service
- 1 respondent said that the proposal might work in urban areas but not coastal villages and felt this would 'increase poverty to the family and make residency here unviable'
- 2 respondents said this would increase traffic outside schools
- 3 respondents said that it could affect children's education.

Other comments

A total of 58 responses were more general in nature, as follows:

- Respondents were unsure as to whether the proposal would be practical or thought there were instances which should be excluded
- 4 respondents questioned whether parents could afford to back the proposal and said 'Yes but only for those families that can afford to pay'
- 7 respondents said that this could be a good idea but did not believe it would work either because of lack of backing from parents / children or because the current lack of infrastructure and rural nature of the county
- 5 respondents asked questions about the figures quoted including reference to the £200 for a bike
- 6 respondents questioned the ability of the public bus system to cope with additional passengers
- 2 respondents specifically mentioned Faith schools and asked what impact the proposal would have on them
- 4 respondents questioned whether this would affect children's ability to get to school on time and therefore their access to education
- 2 respondents asked what would be done about teaching children to ride bikes safely and 1 respondent asked what additional security would be put in to schools to ensure bikes were not vandalised
- 2 respondents cross referenced to proposal P27 Reduce the transport subsidy provided to students aged 16-19 and 1 to proposal P29 Reduce funding for school crossing patrols to ask what the combined impact would be.

Alternative suggestions

Alternative ideas included:

- Do not use taxis unless you have 3 or more children travelling to the same school or encourage parents to set up car / taxi sharing
- Look at the location of schools, particularly in relation to large developments and provide bigger classrooms
- Ask for parental contributions to all transport not just post 16's
- Schools to take on more responsibility for things like cycle safety education, setting up their own minibus collection schemes and details of liftshare on their websites
- Means test transport provision rather than on distance travelled
- Don't give a cycle allowance
- Combine bus routes so they pick up more children irrespective of age and reduce fares on public buses for school rides
- Implement the proposal on a trial basis.

Responses relevant to the Equality Impact Assessment

P59 Cut the cost of providing school transport - this proposal will impact on children, particularly those in rural communities and those with a disability, some of whom may lose their entitlement for free school transport because there is an appropriate walking or cycling route they can use instead. Transport applications will be reassessed in cases where pupils have a physical disability or other severe medical condition which means they are unable to walk or cycle to school. The proposal will not disadvantage children in rural areas over others in Norfolk, as the travel policy will remain the same for all school children regardless of where they live. As such, the impact has not been assessed as significant.

A number of respondents made specific comments on the EQIA, as follows:

- concerns about safety and an increased number of children having to walk or cycle to school on unsafe rural roads, in particular during the winter months. Some people responded as parents of children who could be affected
- concerns that children attending rural schools would be most affected. Some people commented on lack of rural transport provision, and the length of time / number of changes required for children to get to school on the public bus from rural areas.

Appendix Gii: P59 Cut the cost of providing school transport – Full Equality Impact Assessment

Key findings:

Norfolk County Council is facing a budget gap of £189 million over the next three years, due to a reduction in Government funding, increasing council costs, inflation and demand for services. To address this, the Council has proposed and is consulting on a number of service changes and cuts, which includes this specific savings proposal.

This impact assessment looks in more detail at a proposal to cut the cost of providing school transport. This involves encouraging school children to use alternative methods of getting to and from school – specifically by walking, by cycling or by using public buses – thereby reducing the money we spend on school buses.

If implemented, a number of children may lose their entitlement to non-statutory free school transport. It could affect any children – though may particularly impact on the quality of life those who have a disability or have a parent who has a disability. A mitigating action has been identified to reflect this.

Further work is required to identify where changes could be made, but the proposal is most likely to impact on children attending rural schools – though they would not be disadvantaged over others in a sense that the same travel policy is applied to all school children and this is not changing. Safety concerns about children having to walk or cycle to school, particularly in winter, have been raised by some parents. Encouraging walking and cycling would, however, increase children's activity levels and have a positive impact on their health and well-being.

Directorate: Environment, Transport & Development
Lead officer: Tracy Jessop
Other officers: Niki Park, Mary Richards, Louise Cornell
Date completed 31 December 2013

1. Overview of Proposal

We are proposing to save money on school transport by encouraging school children to use alternative methods of getting to and from school, specifically: by walking; cycling; and by public buses.

We propose to do this by:

1. Investing more money in improvements to public rights of way, footways and cycle ways along routes to schools which are currently not available for children to use. This will mean we will not need to provide school transport for them.
2. Reducing the number of dedicated school buses by encouraging more children on to bus services that are open to the public,
3. Encouraging more children of high school age (11-16) who are entitled to free transport to voluntarily give up their seat on the school bus in exchange for a £200 cycle allowance.

2. Who will be affected

This Equality Impact Assessment considers the likely impacts of the proposal on all protected groups under the Equality Act 2010.

It also reviews the impact on people in rural communities. Norfolk is predominantly a rural county with just over half of the population (52.5%) living smaller towns and their fringes, villages and hamlets. Older people aged 65+ are more likely to be living in rural as opposed to urban areas - almost a quarter of people living in a rural areas over the age of 65. There are around 21,950 households in rural areas in Norfolk that have no access to a car or van. People living in these rural areas may face challenges accessing key services and amenities.

This proposal could impact upon school children in both rural and urban areas. More work is required to identify a list of schools and communities that the changes would affect.

The following protected groups are likely to be disproportionately affected:

Age (people of different age groups; older & younger etc)	YES
Disability (people who are wheelchair or cane users; blind, deaf, visually or hearing impaired; can't stand for a long time; have a long-term illness i.e. HIV or a neurological condition such as dyslexia; learning difficulties; mental health etc)	YES
Gender reassignment (people who identify as transgender)	NO
Marriage/civil partnerships	NO
Pregnancy & Maternity	NO
Race (different ethnic groups, including Gypsies & Travellers)	NO
Religion/belief (different faiths, including people with no religion or belief)	NO
Sex (i.e. men/women)	NO
Sexual orientation (all, including lesbian, gay & bisexual people)	NO

3. Context to the proposal

We have a legal duty to provide free transport for school age children who live more than a nationally agreed distance away from their nearest appropriate school. The distance is two miles for children under eight years old and three miles for those aged eight and above.

In addition, free school transport is available to pupils of primary school age living more than two miles from their nearest appropriate school who are entitled to free school meals, or whose parents are in receipt of the maximum level of Working Tax Credit. Secondary pupils whose parents receive the same benefits are also entitled to free transport to:

- One of three appropriate schools closest to their home, where this is more than two and less than six miles away, or
- The nearest school preferred on grounds of religion or belief where this is more than two and less than 15 miles from their home

We also provide free transport to school age children who live closer to their school than the distances above, if the route they would take between home and school is assessed as not being available. This is also a statutory requirement.

There are 431 mainstream schools in Norfolk plus 11 dedicated special schools. About 20,000 children currently receive free school transport, which includes:

- Around 2,500 children who live close to their school but there is no safe route to walk or cycle.
- Around 400 children who qualify as they are entitled to free school meals or their parents are in receipt of the maximum level of working family tax credit

We currently spend £24 million overall transporting children to school.

This proposal will not change these statutory duties. However, we do think we could do more to encourage children to walk and cycle to school, and to switch from 'school buses' to regular public transport services.

This would be achieved through a number of activities that would be targeted at certain school routes. These activities would be:

Improvements to public rights of way, footways and cycle ways

We have an on-going programme to make improvements to public rights of way, footways and cycle ways. We propose to target more investment to create or upgrade footpaths and cycle ways so that they provide safe routes for children to and from school. This will generate savings because more children can travel independently to school and will no longer receive free school transport. At this point in time further work is required to identify where such improvements could be made but we will look at where we are currently providing free transport to children who live close to their school but where a route is not available. Most children who would be affected by this live in rural areas.

Moving more students onto public transport

A mix of transport options are used to enable eligible pupils to get to school. Some children go on a bus that only goes to the school, whilst some are offered places on existing local bus services, where they travel with other members of the public. Around 800 children aged 5-19 across Norfolk currently travel to school on a bus that is available to the general public. Generally, providing children with places on public bus and train services offers better value for money as dedicated school buses are more expensive.

Providing a cycling allowance instead of a bus pass

We already support cycling to school as a healthy and green alternative to travelling by car or other vehicle. Pupils eligible for school transport can opt for a £200 cycle allowance instead of any other transport provision, for example a bus pass. 47 school children in 2013 opted for a cycle allowance. It is hoped that if more children opt out of transport provision we can reduce the number or size of the vehicles we are hiring or combine some transport routes. We would need the majority of students on a bus to want to take the cycle option, before we could make changes to the number or size of vehicles.

Therefore, if we went ahead we would ask students to opt in to the cycle allowance, and when there was sufficient demand, we could introduce it.

In any cases where pupils have a physical disability or other severe medical condition which means they are unable to walk to school we will reassess all transport decisions according to each individual's needs.

4. Potential impact

A number of children may lose their entitlement to free school transport because there's an appropriate walking or cycling route they can use instead. This will apply to all children including those with a disability. However, transport applications will be reassessed in cases where pupils have a physical disability or other severe medical condition which means they are unable to walk to school. Further work is required to identify which where such improvements could be made, but it is likely that this will mostly impact upon children attending rural schools. This being said, the proposal will not disadvantage these children over others in Norfolk, as the travel policy will remain the same for all school children regardless of where they live.

The proposal may give added responsibility for parents/carers/guardians to get their children to school, which may negatively impact on them. They may have other children who attend different schools or other commitments making it difficult to walk to school with the child. In particular, disabled parents/carers with younger children may not be able to accompany their child to school and may not be able to find an appropriate adult to help out. In such circumstances each application will be reassessed on a case by case basis.

There could be positive impacts on the local community, who may benefit from improved footpath or cycle links and encouraging more walking and cycling could increase children's activity levels, having a positive health and wellbeing impact. The proposal could also enhance the viability of some existing local bus services, where we are able to shift students to these rather than providing dedicated school services.

Encouraging walking and cycling to school may also alleviate car parking pressures outside the school although of course the proposal could cause the opposite effect because parents choose to drive to the school rather than make use of the footpath/cycleway.

If this proposal goes ahead we will want to develop it alongside proposal 29 which is about community crossing patrols.

What people have told us

As part of determining the impacts of proposals for the 2014-17 budget a 12 week public consultation was undertaken between Thursday 19 September and Thursday 12 December. A number of people who responded raised safety concerns about an increased number of children having to walk or cycle to school on unsafe rural roads, in particular during the winter months. Some people responded as parents of children who could be affected:

“currently my 2 sons catch a bus to school and we live over 3 miles away and so therefore are entitled to free transport, I would not allow them to either bike or walk as it would involve them going onto a main road, which is very busy and this would be very dangerous, particularly now that the nights are drawing in, as parents we could not afford to pay for their transport”

There was a feeling that children attending rural schools would be most affected. Some people commented on lack of rural transport provision, and the length of time / number of changes required for children to get to school on the public bus from rural areas. One person talked about bus drivers attitude towards children on the public bus:

“when son broke foot, had to take public bus - although there are good drivers, from my experience a lot more are mean and rude to schoolchildren including children from minority groups.”

A number of people suggested that this proposal would place added pressure on parents, and could impact on school attendance for some children.

5. Mitigating Actions

The following actions will be delivered should this proposal go ahead, to help mitigate the adverse disproportionate impacts identified above.

	Action/s	Lead	Date
1	Transport applications will be reassessed if pupils have a severe walking disability or other severe medical condition.	Entitlement Team	On receipt of applications
2	Applications made due to other exceptional circumstances will be assessed on a case by case basis.	Entitlement Team	On receipt of applications
3	To reassess applications where parents have a severe walking disability or other severe medical condition which prevents them from accompanying their child to school.	Entitlement Team	On receipt of applications

6. Further information

For further information about this Equality Impact Assessment please contact the Planning, Performance and Partnerships service on

Tel: 01603 228891

Email: PPPService@norfolk.gov.uk

¹ Census 2011, www.norfolkinsight.org.uk

Appendix Hi: Consultation responses summary for P60 Charge for the disposal of tyres at recycling centres

Feedback from consultation events

Whilst no specific events were organised to discuss this proposal, it was raised at four of the general consultation events.

The feedback from the general Norfolk Putting People First consultation events suggested a mix of views, with people both stating their support for and opposition to the proposal. Concerns were raised about the risk of fly-tipping.

Organisation, group or petition responses

A total of 13 organisations formally responded to this proposal, including: Taverham Brass Band; Syderstone Parish Council; YMCA & Rethink mental health & riversdale; Norfolk Neurology Network & MS Society; Retired members section of the Norfolk County branch of Unison; Beeston with Bittering Parish Council; Broadland District Council; Unison; Litcham Parish Council; Stop Norwich Urbanisation; Shropham Village Hall Committee; Norwich City Council; The Norfolk Waste Partnership Board.

No petitions were received.

Most of these organisations stated their opposition to these proposals.

Consistent, repeated or notable views from people who agreed with the proposal

Proposal 60 was accepted by 120 people, with a range of views and a number of provisos made, including:

- 67 respondents said that they “agreed” or the proposal was “good” with no further information
- 12 respondents said that they would expect to pay for tyre disposal (if they took their car to a garage) and that it was part of the normal cost of owning a car
- 2 respondents queried the amount of tyres quoted in the proposal (5 tyres) and questioned whether the average household is likely to dispose of that many
- 15 respondents although in favour of the proposal expressed concern that it could lead to increased fly-tipping
- A number of respondents suggested that farmers should have an exemption if they have to dispose of tyres that have been fly-tipped on their land
- Suggestion that tyres should be accepted at all centres for a charge
- 3 respondents in favour of the proposal said that the cost should remain “low” and “reasonable”.

Consistent, repeated or notable views from people who did not agree with the proposal

Proposal 60 was not accepted by 76 people, with a range of views and a number of provisos made, including:

- 68 respondents rejected the proposal on the grounds of increased fly-tipping and that it could encourage dangerous disposal methods like burning
- 8 respondents said that the proposal would “cost shift” on to other authorities or land owners
- 9 respondents suggested that the proposal was “short-sighted” and would lead to environmental damage.

Other comments

A total of 43 responses were more general in nature, as follows:

- 11 respondents asked questions such as “Not sure – what do dealers do?”

- One respondent asked whether the proposal was aimed at garages or individuals
- The majority of responses took the form of a statement about fly-tipping
- 6 respondents commented that this would not affect them and they would not use the service anyway.

Alternative suggestions

Alternative ideas included:

- Ask tyre retailers to take them or recycle them with a view to selling the material
- Direct individuals to tyre fitters instead of accepting them at recycling centres
- Make the first tyre free and then charge after that
- Increase council tax.

Responses relevant to the Equality Impact Assessment

No adverse disproportionate impacts on protected groups have been identified for proposal P60 Charge for the disposal of tyres at recycling centres.

None of the respondents to this proposal made any comments relevant to the EQIA.

Appendix Hii: P60 Charge for the disposal of tyres at recycling centres - Full Equality Impact Assessment

Key findings:

Norfolk County Council is facing a budget gap of £189 million over the next three years, due to a reduction in Government funding, increasing council costs, inflation and demand for services. To address this, the Council has proposed and is consulting on a number of service changes and cuts, which includes this specific savings proposal.

This impact assessment looks in more detail at a proposal to accept vehicle tyres at eight out of the 20 Main Recycling Centres in Norfolk, charge a disposal fee and continue the set limit disposal rate of five tyres, per household, per month as from April 2014.

If implemented this proposal could impact on rural residents who may have to travel further to their nearest Main Recycling Centre that accepts vehicle tyres. Those on low incomes would not be exempt from the charge, which could impact of their ability to pay. Local businesses experience an increase in the number of customers disposing of tyres through them, though it is also possible that the proposal could lead to an increase in the number of tyres that are left in unauthorised places, which would need to be disposed of by district councils or landowners.

Directorate: Environment, Transport & Development
Lead officer: Paul Borrett
Other officers: Kate Murrell, Nicola Young, Louise Cornell
Date completed 31 December 2013

1. Overview of Proposal

There are 20 Main Recycling Centres (MRC) across Norfolk in rural and urban locations. Currently, each of these sites accepts tyres free of charge with a limit of up to five tyres per household per month.

Under the proposal, from 1 April 2014:

- Vehicle tyres would only be accepted at the eight Main Recycling Centre Plus sites – these sites are at: Caister, Dereham, Hempton, Ketteringham, King's Lynn, Mayton Wood, Mile Cross and Thetford.
- There would be a charge of £2.50 per tyre
- There will continue to be a limit of up to five tyres being disposed per household per month

2. Who will be affected

This Equality Impact Assessment considers the likely impacts of the proposal on all protected groups under the Equality Act 2010.

It also reviews the impact on people in rural communities. Norfolk is predominantly a rural county with just over half of the population (52.5%) living smaller towns and their fringes, villages and hamlets. Older people aged 65+ are more likely to be living in rural as opposed to urban areas - almost a quarter of people living in a rural area are over the age of 65. There are around 21,950 households in rural areas in Norfolk that have no access to a car or van. People living in these rural areas may face challenges accessing key services and amenities.

No protected groups are likely to be disproportionately affected by this proposal.

Age (people of different age groups; older & younger etc)	NO
Disability (people who are wheelchair or cane users; blind, deaf, visually or hearing impaired; can't stand for a long time; have a long-term illness i.e. HIV or a neurological condition such as dyslexia; learning difficulties; mental health etc)	NO
Gender reassignment (people who identify as transgender)	NO
Marriage/civil partnerships	NO
Pregnancy & Maternity	NO
Race (different ethnic groups, including Gypsies & Travellers)	NO
Religion/belief (different faiths, including people with no religion or belief)	NO
Sex (i.e. men/women)	NO
Sexual orientation (all, including lesbian, gay & bisexual people)	NO

3. Context to the proposal

The council has a duty under the Environmental Protection Act 1990 to provide places for residents to deposit household waste free of charge and for the disposal of waste deposited there. Schedule 1 of the List of Waste Regulations 2005 categorises waste by their source and nature and does not classify tyres as domestic waste. This means that we can apply a charge for tyres to be accepted at a household waste recycling centre.

There are 20 Main Recycling Centres across Norfolk in rural and urban locations. Currently, each of these sites accepts tyres free of charge with a limit of up to five tyres per household per month.

Under the proposal, from 1 April 2014:

- Vehicle tyres would only be accepted at the eight Main Recycling Centre Plus sites (Caister, Dereham, Hempton, Ketteringham, King's Lynn, Mayton Wood, Mile Cross and Thetford). There is at least one MRC Plus site per district
- There would be a charge of £2.50 per vehicle tyre
- There will continue to be a limit of up to five vehicle tyres per household per month

The eight Main Recycling Centre Plus sites are all fully accessible and have people on hand to assist people that need it.

The proposal relates to vehicle tyres only (for example cars, vans, trailers) and excludes bicycle tyres and tyres from children's toys. Agricultural or industrial tyres are not accepted on site.

Research has shown that across the country, acceptance of tyres at household waste recycling centres vary with some counties accepting tyres free of charge, some charging per tyre and other councils providing no facility for the disposal of tyres.

Nineteen of the sites in Norfolk are currently operated by Kier MG (formerly May Gurney) through a contract which will expire in March 2014. Norfolk Environmental Waste Services (NEWS) will take over the operation of the sites from the 1st April 2014. The remaining site,

Mile Cross in Norwich, is run by FCC Environment (UK) Ltd (FCC) (formerly Waste Recycling Group).

All Main Recycling sites currently handle cash and card payments for charges for DIY waste and reuse shops (excluding Mile Cross Recycling Centre in Norwich which has no reuse facility) and therefore these sites are already well equipped to deal with the introduction of charging for tyres.

Alternatives do exist for those who find access difficult, including kerbside collection of residual and recyclable waste and disposal of tyres by garages, though a charge may be associated with these services.

4. Potential impact

The proposal will limit the number of sites that people are able to dispose of vehicle tyres, and will introduce a small charge - £2.50, to dispose of tyres. This could mean that people have to travel further to dispose of tyres, with the greatest impact likely on those living in rural areas, causing them additional expense. The impact could be felt most among people on low incomes.

Local businesses that take tyres for disposal (e.g. garages and tyre shops) may see an increase in the number of customers paying for them to dispose of tyres, rather than taking them away for disposal elsewhere. This should be a positive impact for local businesses.

It is possible that district councils could experience an increase in the number of tyres collected as a result of fly-tipping from individuals not willing to pay the disposal fee. This may also impact upon local residents, including local landowners who may have tyres left on their land which they will have to dispose of at their own expense.

If the proposal goes ahead it will take effect from April 2014. An awareness campaign will be considered carefully to ensure it is inclusive and accessible to all users of the site (e.g. those who do not have access to the internet).

As part of determining the impacts of proposals for the 2014-17 budget a 12 week public consultation was undertaken between Thursday 19 September and Thursday 12 December. No responses were received that identified impacts on protected groups or rural communities.

5. Mitigating Actions

No adverse disproportionate impacts have been identified for this proposal, so no mitigating actions are required.

In addition, although there will be a disproportionate impact on rural residents, the impact is not likely to be significant given that alternative opportunities will remain for people to dispose of tyres, including those through local garages.

6. Further information

For further information about this Equality Impact Assessment please contact the Planning, Performance and Partnerships service on

Tel: 01603 228891

Email: PPPService@norfolk.gov.uk

¹ Census 2011, www.norfolkinsight.org.uk

Appendix li: Consultation responses summary for P61 Stop routine disposal of paint at recycling centres

Feedback from consultation events

Whilst no events were organised to discuss this proposal, it and specifically the issue of fly-tipping was raised at a consultation event for NCC staff.

Organisation, group or petition responses

A total of 15 organisations formally responded to this proposal, including: Taverham Brass Band; Aylsham Aprish Church Choir; Syderstone Parish Council; YMCA & Rethink mental health & riversdale; Norfolk Neurology Network & MS Society; County Community Safety Partnership; Retired members section of the Norfolk County branch of Unison; Beeston with Bittering Parish Council; Broadland District Council; Unison; Litcham Parish Council; Stop Norwich Urbanisation; Shropham Village Hall Committee; Norwich City Council; The Norfolk Waste Partnership.

No petitions were received.

Most of these organisations stated their opposition to these proposals.

Consistent, repeated or notable views from people who agreed with the proposal

Proposal 61 was accepted by 58 people, with a range of views and a number of provisos made, including:

- 34 respondents said that they “agreed” or the proposal was “sensible” or “ok” without any further information
- 4 respondents agreed on the grounds of the suggested annual amnesty being sufficient.

Consistent, repeated or notable views from people who did not agree with the proposal

Proposal 61 was not accepted by 127 people, with a range of views and a number of provisos made, including:

- 78 respondents felt that the proposal would lead to illegal disposal of paint such as fly-tipping or disposal in or leakage into water courses leading to environmental damage
- 8 respondents said the proposal would lead to cost shifting to other authorities or landowners
- 14 respondents said that this would lead to people putting paint into domestic waste bins thereby increasing landfill
- 2 responses were from people who identified themselves as “waste disposal professionals”, one of whom also identified themselves as a current service provider. These stated that the proposal is advising members of the public incorrectly in relation to drying paint out. Specifically, that the advice to let paint dry before going into domestic waste was wrong, in that it would take a long time and lead to the release of Volatile Organic Compounds.

Other comments

A total of 53 responses were more general in nature, as follows:

- The majority of responses are general statements about fly-tipping
- One respondent suggested that it would have little impact as very few people dispose of old paint appropriately.

Alternative suggestions

Alternative ideas included:

- Making paint available to charities and/or people on benefits

- Contacting paint suppliers and vendors to get them to dispose of paint
- Charging for the service.

Responses relevant to the Equality Impact Assessment

No adverse disproportionate impacts on protected groups have been identified for proposal
None of the respondents to this proposal made any comments relevant to the EQIA.

Appendix Iii: P61 Stop routine disposal of paint at recycling centres - Full Equality Impact Assessment

Key findings:

Norfolk County Council is facing a budget gap of £189 million over the next three years, due to a reduction in Government funding, increasing council costs, inflation and demand for services. To address this, the Council has proposed and is consulting on a number of service changes and cuts, which includes this specific savings proposal.

This impact assessment looks in more detail at a proposal to remove facilities for the disposal of liquid paint at from the Main Recycling Centres (MRC) in Norfolk. If the proposal goes ahead the paint reuse facility will also cease to exist. However, residents would still be able to recycle paint at the annual hazardous waste amnesty and dried out paint cans would be accepted in the 'waste to landfill' container at all 20 sites and in kerbside bins.

This proposal will not disproportionately impact on any protected groups. There is a risk that residents will try and dispose of paint through their household waste collection, or tip it down their drains. It is likely that District councils will see an increase in enquiries regarding hazardous waste collection and possibly roadside fly tipping.

Directorate:	Environment, Transport and Development
Lead officer:	Paul Borrett
Other officers:	Kate Murrell, Nicola Young and Louise Cornell
Date completed	31 December 2013

1. Overview of Proposal

Currently liquid paint is accepted for disposal at the County's eight Main Recycling Centre Plus sites free of charge and three also operate a paint reuse service.

The proposed change will mean that we will cease to accept liquid paint, with the exception of an annual amnesty, at any of the Main Recycling Centres (MRCs) in Norfolk from 1 April 2014. This means there will be no facilities for the disposal of liquid paint at any MRC in Norfolk, including via the paint reuse facility.

Norfolk residents will still be able to dispose of liquid paint at annual hazardous waste amnesties free of charge and dried out paint cans will still be accepted in the 'waste to landfill' container at all 20 sites and in kerbside bins.

The paint reuse scheme will also cease to operate at three MRCs should the sites cease to accept paint.

2. Who will be affected

This Equality Impact Assessment considers the likely impacts of the proposal on all protected groups under the Equality Act 2010.

It also reviews the impact on people in rural communities. Norfolk is predominantly a rural county with just over half of the population (52.5%) living smaller towns and their fringes, villages and hamlets. Older people aged 65+ are more likely to be living in rural as opposed

to urban areas - almost a quarter of people living in a rural areas over the age of 65. There are around 21,950 households in rural areas in Norfolk that have no access to a car or van. People living in these rural areas may face challenges accessing key services and amenities.

This proposal will not have a disproportionate impact upon any protected groups.

Age (people of different age groups; older & younger etc)	NO
Disability (people who are wheelchair or cane users; blind, deaf, visually or hearing impaired; can't stand for a long time; have a long-term illness i.e. HIV or a neurological condition such as dyslexia; learning difficulties; mental health etc)	NO
Gender reassignment (people who identify as transgender)	NO
Marriage/civil partnerships	NO
Pregnancy & Maternity	NO
Race (different ethnic groups, including Gypsies & Travellers)	NO
Religion/belief (different faiths, including people with no religion or belief)	NO
Sex (i.e. men/women)	NO
Sexual orientation (all, including lesbian, gay & bisexual people)	NO

3. Context to the proposal

As a Waste Disposal Authority, the County Council has a statutory duty under the Environmental Protection Act 1990 (EPA) to provide places for residents to deposit household waste and for the disposal of waste deposited there. The cessation of collection of liquid paint sees a return in the policy on paint that was in place before 2007. Prior to 2007, liquid waste was not accepted on any site except through the hazardous waste amnesty but allowed residents to dispose of dried paint cans at any MRC.

The collection of liquid paint was introduced in April 2007 at selected sites. Currently this means 8 MRC Plus sites (Caister, Dereham, Hempton, Ketteringham, King's Lynn, Mayton Wood, Mile Cross and Thetford) where it can be stored in an appropriate container for disposal. Not all liquids are accepted through this scheme, for example creosote is not accepted. In 2012/13, 444 tonnes of liquid paint were disposed of across these eight sites.

Dried paint tins can be disposed of either in the 'waste to landfill' container at any of the 20 MRCs or through the kerbside residual waste collection carried out by the district councils.

Three of the MRC Plus sites (Dereham, Ketteringham and King's Lynn) also currently operate a paint reuse scheme whereby paint in a usable condition is sold on site. Community groups are able to join the scheme to access up to 1000 litres of paint per year. Members of the public are also able to purchase and donate good quality paint for reuse at these sites

The proposal has three elements to it – liquid paint disposal, dried paint tin disposal and the paint reuse scheme.

If this proposal is agreed, from 1 April 2014:

- Liquid paint would no longer be accepted at any of the Recycling Centres in Norfolk
- The paint reuse schemes would cease as a result
- No change will be seen to the disposal of dry paint tins

The following options would remain available for the disposal of liquid paint:

- Hazardous waste amnesties - these are held once a year at selected Main Recycling Centres in Norfolk, (liquid paint would be accepted free of charge during the amnesty)
- Hazardous waste collection – residents could contact their district council who may offer a hazardous waste collection service (this may incur a charge).
- Specialist waste collection - residents could contact a specialist contractor to dispose of the paint safely which is likely to be chargeable.
- Alternatively, residents could allow paint tins to dry out so they could then be disposed of in the kerbside waste collection or through the ‘waste to landfill’ container at any Main Recycling Centre

Paint reuse scheme: The paint reuse scheme is not widely used and interest in the three existing schemes has been very low. King’s Lynn and Ketteringham have a membership of two community groups and currently there are no community groups signed up to the scheme running at Dereham. Interest from members of the public is also low with less than £500 being taken in paint sales across all three sites in the first five months of 2013.

Dried paint tin disposal: Dried paint tins will still be eligible for disposal either in the ‘waste to landfill’ container at any of the 20 Main Recycling Centres or through the kerbside waste collection carried out by the district councils.

4. Potential impact

The proposed changes will affect all residents in Norfolk wishing to dispose of paint at a Main Recycling Centre (MRC) year-round. Residents will still be able to dispose of paint, however, this will either be through a hazardous waste collection (either via the district council or a private contractor), or alternatively by holding on to paint until it can be taken to a hazardous waste amnesty at a MRC. Alternatively, residents can be advised to allow paint cans to dry out and they can then be disposed of via the residual waste collection at the kerbside or through the ‘waste to landfill’ container at any MRC.

If we stop accepting liquid paint at Recycling Centres there is a risk that residents will try and dispose of paint through their household waste collection, by flytipping or put it down the drain.

District councils do offer a collection service for hazardous waste. It is expected that enquiries regarding hazardous waste collection by the district council may increase. Community groups currently accessing the paint reuse scheme may be affected by the change. Currently, community groups are able to register with the scheme for a small fee and access paint from the paint reuse collection points at three MRCs. The cessation of the scheme will mean that any community groups using this scheme will need to find an alternative paint supplier.

If the proposal goes ahead it will take effect from April 2014. An awareness campaign will be considered carefully to ensure it is inclusive and accessible to all users of the site (e.g. those who do not have access to the internet). In addition, site staff will be available to assist the public and provide information about the changes. The community groups signed up the paint reuse scheme will be contacted directly.

As part of determining the impacts of proposals for the 2014-17 budget a 12 week public consultation was undertaken between Thursday 19 September and Thursday 12 December. No responses were received that identified impacts on protected groups or rural communities.

5. Mitigating Actions

No adverse disproportionate impacts on protected groups have been identified for this proposal, so no mitigating actions are required.

6. Further information

For further information about this Equality Impact Assessment please contact the Planning, Performance and Partnerships service on

Tel: 01603 228891

Email: PPPService@norfolk.gov.uk

¹ Census 2011, www.norfolkinsight.org.uk

Appendix Ji: Consultation responses summary for P62 Charge at some recycling centres

Feedback from consultation events

Whilst no events were organised specifically to discuss this proposal, it was raised at 7 general consultation events.

The feedback on this proposal from the general Norfolk Putting People First consultation events suggested overall opposition with concerns were raised about the risk of fly-tipping and the impact that this would have the City, Borough and District Councils.

Organisation, group or petition responses

A total of 26 organisations formally responded to this proposal, including: Taverham Brass Band; Taverham Parish Council; North Walsham Town Council; Horsford Parish Council; Leziate Parish Council; Motor Neurone Disease Association; Wiggshall St Germans Parish Council; Syderstone Parish Council; Hemblington Parish Council; Blofield Parish Council; Norfolk Older People's Strategic Partnership; CPRE Norfolk County Council YMCA & Rethink mental health & riversdale; Norfolk Neurology Network & MS Society; South Norfolk Council; Snettisham Parish Council; Retired members of the Norfolk County branch of Unison; Woodton Parish Council; Beeston with Bittering Parish Council; Unison; Litcham Parish Council; Member of Parliament for Great Yarmouth; Stop Norwich Urbanisation; NFU National Farmers Union; Shropham Village Hall Committee; Norwich City Council; Norfolk Waste Partnership Board.

No petitions were received.

The majority were against the proposal on the basis that it would lead to increased fly-tipping and subsequent shifting of costs on to District and Parish Councils and landowners.

Consistent, repeated or notable views from people who agreed with the proposal

Proposal 62 was accepted by 69 people, with a range of views and a number of provisos made, including:

- Privatised tips and make them self-funding
- Nominal charge only
- Charge for trailers and vans, as they do in London Boroughs and elsewhere
- 4 out of the 31 agreed to charging but said that they would like to see sites accepting more things and two said that it would change the way they used their local tip i.e. they would store up waste to make on large trip
- 23 out of the 31 respondents said they used the service
- One respondent said to charge £1 for all sites
- Two respondents said to charge £2 for all sites but review the rules about what can be taken
- One respondent said to close smaller centres.

Consistent, repeated or notable views from people who did not agree with the proposal

Proposal 62 was not accepted by 269 people, with a range of views and a number of provisos made, including:

- 141 respondents said the proposal would lead to fly-tipping or expressed concern that potentially it could do so
- 31 mentioned the increased cost to them personally and 44 made reference to that fact that they already pay Council Tax which should cover disposal of waste
- 15 respondents talked about equality issues created by charging at some sites and not others
- 10 respondents mentioned District authorities specifically and said that the proposal would

“costshift” expense on to them

- 7 respondents talked about landowners and 6 respondents talked about farmers and the potential impact of fly-tipping upon them
- Some respondents saw this as the beginning of a programme of charging and closures for sites
- A number of respondents suggested that this would increase costs to the council in the longer term and that the savings generated would be outweighed by these costs.

Other comments

A total of 58 responses were more general in nature, as follows:

- 26 respondents made a general statement about fly-tipping
- 17 respondents felt that in principle the proposal was sound but questioned the practicality of it actually saving money due to the costs of administering the charges and collection of cash
- 5 respondents said that it would change their own personal behaviour i.e. they would stockpile or use alternative centres.

Alternative suggestions

Alternative ideas included:

- Charge for all sites
- Charge per day not per visit
- Allow centres to sell good items and therefore generate an income
- Close smaller sites.

Responses relevant to the Equality Impact Assessment

No adverse disproportionate impacts on protected groups have been identified for proposal
None of the respondents to this proposal made any comments relevant to the EQIA.

Analyst notes

Respondents link this proposal with proposal P63 Reduce opening hours at some recycling centres on the basis that users may decide to use centres where we don't charge instead of their normal centre. This 'customer shifting' could be impacted further if some of the remaining centres are then made part time.

Appendix Jii: P62 Charge at some recycling centres - Full Equality Impact Assessment

Key findings:

Norfolk County Council is facing a budget gap of £189 million over the next three years, due to a reduction in Government funding, increasing council costs, inflation and demand for services. To address this, the Council has proposed and is consulting on a number of service changes and cuts, which includes this specific savings proposal.

This impact assessment looks in more detail at a proposal to introduce a small charge of £2 per visit at nine out of the 20 Main Recycling Centres from 1 April 2016 (Ashill, Bergh Apton, Docking, Heacham, Snetterton, Strumpshaw, Wells, Worstead and Wymondham). The nine recycling centres are based in rural locations. All 20 local recycling centres will remain open and residents will have opportunity to dispose of their waste at alternative sites that will not have a charge.

This proposal will not have a disproportionate impact on any protected groups however it could particularly affect rural residents. People will need to decide whether they are happy to pay the fee to access their local recycling centre, or travel further to reach a free site. It may impact most on low income households, and lead to people storing up their recycling, or reducing the amount they recycling overall.

Directorate:	Environment, Transport & Development
Lead officer:	Paul Borrett
Other officers:	Kate Murrell, Nicola Young, Louise Cornell
Date completed	30 December 2013

1. Overview of Proposal

There are currently 20 Main Recycling Centres across Norfolk, which are free of charge for residents who wish to dispose of household waste (apart from some specific chargeable items such as DIY waste above the allocated free amount and potentially tyres).

We propose to introduce a charge of £2 per visit at nine of the Main Recycling Centres from 1 April 2016 (Ashill, Bergh Apton, Docking, Heacham, Snetterton, Strumpshaw, Wells, Worstead and Wymondham). All of the remaining Recycling Centre sites would remain free of charge for the disposal of household waste.

This is estimated to provide a saving of £280,000 in 2016/17.

2. Who will be affected

This Equality Impact Assessment considers the likely impacts of the proposal on all protected groups under the Equality Act 2010.

It also reviews the impact on people in rural communities. Norfolk is predominantly a rural county with just over half of the population (52.5%) living smaller towns and their fringes, villages and hamlets. Older people aged 65+ are more likely to be living in rural as opposed

to urban areas - almost a quarter of people living in a rural areas over the age of 65. There are around 21,950 households in rural areas in Norfolk that have no access to a car or van. People living in these rural areas may face challenges accessing key services and amenitiesiii.

All residents that use recycling centres could be affected by this proposal. It is likely that rural residents will be most affected. Each of the recycling centres that will see a charge introduced are located in rural communities.

It is not anticipated that there will be a disproportionate impact on any protected group.

Age (people of different age groups; older & younger etc)	NO
Disability (people who are wheelchair or cane users; blind, deaf, visually or hearing impaired; can't stand for a long time; have a long-term illness i.e. HIV or a neurological condition such as dyslexia; learning difficulties; mental health etc)	NO
Gender reassignment (people who identify as transgender)	NO
Marriage/civil partnerships	NO
Pregnancy & Maternity	NO
Race (different ethnic groups, including Gypsies & Travellers)	NO
Religion/belief (different faiths, including people with no religion or belief)	NO
Sex (i.e. men/women)	NO
Sexual orientation (all, including lesbian, gay & bisexual people)	NO

3. Context to the proposal

There are currently 20 Main Recycling Centres (MRC) across Norfolk in rural and urban locations which are free of charge for residents who wish to dispose of household waste (apart from some items such as DIY waste above the allocated free amount).

If the proposal goes ahead it would mean that from 1 April 2016:

- Charging should be introduced at some of the MRCs to provide income that will help meet the running costs of the service.
- Norfolk's eight MRC Plus sites would remain free of charge (Caister, Dereham, Hempton, Ketteringham, King's Lynn, Mayton Wood, Mile Cross and Thetford)
- Another three sites would also remain free to ensure fair access to a free site across the County (Wereham, Morningthorpe and Sheringham).
- Residents using the remaining nine MRCs would be asked to pay a charge of £2 per visit (Ashill, Bergh Apton, Docking, Heacham, Snetterton, Strumpshaw, Wells, Worstead and Wymondham).

It is hoped that the proposal would provide an income of £280,000 each year to help meet the running costs of the service.

When we first set up the recycling centres in 1985 we put them in places that would be convenient for people to get to. Currently, 96% of the population live within 10 miles of a main recycling centre. If the proposal goes ahead, 87% of the population would still live within 10 miles of a free site.

A survey in 2012 of 1,279 people who use recycling centres found that there is a good spread of both male and female visitors and across all age ranges from 18-24 to 75+. Most respondents to the survey identified themselves as British, but 6.6% were from other ethnic backgrounds. This is slightly higher than the Norfolk average from the Census 2011. Of the total number of users 13% had a physical disability, a long term illness, a sensory disability (affecting sight or hearing) and/or a learning difficulty.

Figure 1: Number of service users and non-users by groups with protected characteristics

Description of group	Users (1,279)	
Respondents with a disability	170	(13.3%)
Respondents for whom English was not their first language	13	(1.0%)
Respondents who were not British	85	(6.6%)
Respondents aged 65 years or over	275	(21.5%)

We have a legal duty to provide places for residents to deposit household waste free of charge and then to dispose of the waste. If the proposal goes ahead, we would continue to meet this duty by providing 11 free sites. We would be running the remaining nine sites under the Local Government Act 2000, Section 2 and Local Government Act 2003, Section 93, which give us powers to charge for any service that we do not have a legal duty to provide.

The Equality Act 2010 has been taken into account when considering access at Main Recycling Centres. The proposal will not result in a change to site infrastructure or customer service standards.

All Main Recycling Centres are already set up to accept cash payments but if the proposal is introduced we would work with contractors to investigate different options for payment, potentially including entry barriers, which are not in place at the recycling centre sites currently.

4. Potential impact

If this proposal goes ahead it could affect anyone using the Norfolk's recycling centres. Residents that use sites that remain free of charge may find that they become busier and at peak times there may be longer queues.

Those who usually visit a site that will see an introduction of a discretionary charge will have to consider whether to pay the charge or travel to an alternative free site. This may result in an increased need to travel.

Though the charge is small, it could impact upon low income households. Increasingly, residents may opt to bulk up their materials to reduce the number of visits they make to a recycling centre. There is also a possibility the proposal could lead to an increase in recycling being dumped just outside of recycling centres in the short term, which is consistent with evidence from other authorities who have introduced a charge.

Each of the recycling centres that would see a charge introduced are based in rural areas, so this proposal could particularly impact rural residents. Four of the sites including Ashill, Heacham, Strumpshaw and Worstead, will also be affected by proposal 63 that looks to reduce opening hours at five recycling centres.

As part of determining the impacts of proposals for the 2014-17 budget a 12 week public consultation was undertaken between and Thursday 19 September and Thursday 12

December. A number of respondents questioned the equity of the proposal – suggesting that it would disproportionately impact on rural communities, which was unfair.

5. Mitigating Actions

No adverse disproportionate impacts on protected groups have been identified for this proposal, so no mitigating actions are required.

In addition, although there could be a greater impact on rural residents, this is not likely to be significant given that local recycling centres will remain open and residents will have opportunity to dispose of their waste at alternative free sites. Given our obligations around recycling we will however monitor the impact this proposal has on recycling rates.

6. Further information

For further information about this Equality Impact Assessment please contact the Planning, Performance and Partnerships service on

Tel: 01603 228891

Email: PPPService@norfolk.gov.uk

¹ Census 2011, www.norfolkinsight.org.uk

Appendix Ki: Consultation responses summary for P63 Reduce opening hours at some recycling centres

Feedback from consultation events

Whilst no events were organised specifically to discuss this proposal, it was raised at 3 general consultation events.

The limited feedback from the general Norfolk Putting People First consultation events raised concerns about an increased risk of fly-tipping.

Organisation, group or petition responses

A total of 19 organisations formally responded to this proposal, including: Flagship housing group; Aylsham Aprish Church Choir; Taverham Parish Council; Motor Neurone Disease Association; Syderstone Parish Council; Hemblington Parish Council; Blofield Parish Council; YMCA & Rethink mental health & riversdale; Norfolk Neurology Network & MS Society; Snettisham Parish Council; Retired members section of the Norfolk County branch of Unison; Beeston with Bittering Parish Council; Unison; Litcham Parish Council; Stop Norwich Urbanisation; National Farmers Union; Shropham Village Hall Committee; Norwich City Council; The Norfolk Waste Partnership Board.

No petitions were received.

Most of these organisations stated their opposition to these proposals.

Consistent, repeated or notable views from people who agreed with the proposal

Proposal 63 was accepted by 120 people, with a range of views and a number of provisos made, including:

- 52 respondents supported the proposal by saying “agreed” or “ok” with no further information
- 2 respondents said they would prefer this to charging
- 22 respondents made comment that opening hours would need to be well publicised, the majority saying that this should mainly impact during the week, not at weekends
- 2 respondents agreed but said it was subject to monitoring of issues like fly-tipping
- 4 respondents highlight potential impacts to staff at the sites being of concern.

Consistent, repeated or notable views from people who did not agree with the proposal

Proposal 63 was not accepted by 106 people, with a range of views and a number of provisos made, including:

- 72 respondents rejected the proposal on the basis of increased fly-tipping resulting
- 7 respondents referred to cost shifting to either a lower tier authority or land owner
- 4 respondents made reference to the inequality of the proposal i.e. only reducing hours at certain sites
- Concern that remaining recycling centres not subject to reduced hours (and charging) will become busier
- 2 respondents mention potential impact on jobs at the sites.

Other comments

A total of 58 responses were more general in nature, as follows:

- A range of general statements and comments about fly-tipping
- Respondents feeling unable to comment as there are no details of the exact opening hours proposed
- Respondents linking this with proposal 62 and saying that we can do one but not the other

- Questions raised as to whether the cost savings are worth the longer term impacts
- Reduction in hours should be done universally across the county not at selected sites.

Alternative suggestions

Alternative ideas included:

- Charge at all centres
- Sell recyclables to make the centres self funding
- Close smaller sites
- Use another form of staffing i.e. less staff, volunteers or no staff or have unmanned centres that have more “self-service”. Also look at the level of staffing i.e. reduce it during off peak hours
- Make better use of sites by looking to see if other services can be run from them, increase what they can accept and look at charging for good quality recyclables
- Open longer at weekends and less time during the week
- Greater flexibility on what can be put in recycling bins at home
- Close one whole day a week rather than changing opening hours to part time.

Responses relevant to the Equality Impact Assessment

No adverse disproportionate impacts on protected groups have been identified for proposal
None of the respondents to this proposal made any comments relevant to the EQIA.

Analyst notes

Respondents commented that it was difficult to give an opinion without knowing exactly what part-time meant and which centres this will effect.
Respondents link this proposal to proposal P62 Charge at some recycling centres saying that charging at some centres will have a ‘double’ effect if some centres are part time as well.

Appendix Kii: P63 Reduce opening hours at some recycling centres - Full Equality Impact Assessment

Key findings:

Norfolk County Council is facing a budget gap of £189 million over the next three years, due to a reduction in Government funding, increasing council costs, inflation and demand for services. To address this, the Council has proposed and is consulting on a number of service changes and cuts, which includes this specific savings proposal.

This impact assessment looks in more detail at a proposal to reduce opening hours at five Main Recycling Centres, so they are operated on a part-time basis from 1st April 2015. The five sites under consideration are Ashill, Heacham, Morningthorpe, Strumpshaw and Worstead.

The proposal may require residents who currently use these recycling centres to alter their pattern of usage, or travel further to access another site that is open for longer. All the recycling centres affected are located in rural communities, therefore rural residents could be most affected, although the impact is not likely to be significant given that sites will remain open and alternatives will continue to exist. The proposal will not disproportionately impact any protected group.

Directorate: Environment, Transport and Development
Lead officer: Paul Borrett
Other officers: Kate Murrell, Nicola Young, Louise Cornell
Date completed 30 December 2013

1. Overview of Proposal

Currently, 14 Main Recycling Centres (MRCs) in Norfolk operate seven days per week, with the remaining six sites opening for four days per week.

It is proposed to reduce the opening hours at a further five MRCs by operating them on a part time basis from 1st April 2015. The five sites under consideration are Ashill, Heacham, Morningthorpe, Strumpshaw and Worstead.

2. Who will be affected

This Equality Impact Assessment considers the likely impacts of the proposal on all protected groups under the Equality Act 2010.

It also reviews the impact on people in rural communities. Norfolk is predominantly a rural county with just over half of the population (52.5%) living smaller towns and their fringes, villages and hamlets. Older people aged 65+ are more likely to be living in rural as opposed to urban areas - almost a quarter of people living in rural areas are over the age of 65. There are around 21,950 households in rural areas in Norfolk that have no access to a car or van. People living in these rural areas may face challenges accessing key services and amenities.

No protected groups are likely to be disproportionately affected by this proposal.

Age (people of different age groups; older & younger etc)	NO
Disability (people who are wheelchair or cane users; blind, deaf, visually or hearing impaired; can't stand for a long time; have a long-term illness i.e. HIV or a neurological condition such as dyslexia; learning difficulties; mental health etc)	NO
Gender reassignment (people who identify as transgender)	NO
Marriage/civil partnerships	NO
Pregnancy & Maternity	NO
Race (different ethnic groups, including Gypsies & Travellers)	NO
Religion/belief (different faiths, including people with no religion or belief)	NO
Sex (i.e. men/women)	NO
Sexual orientation (all, including lesbian, gay & bisexual people)	NO

3. Context to the proposal

There are 20 Main Recycling Centres (MRCs) spread across Norfolk. As a Waste Disposal Authority, the County Council has an obligation under the Environmental Protection Act 1990 to provide places for residents to deposit household waste. At present 14 of the sites operate on a full time basis and six operate on a part time basis.

If this proposal goes ahead, we would reduce the opening hours at a further five MRCs, operating them on a part time basis from 1 April 2015 (Ashill, Heacham, Morningthorpe, Strumpshaw and Worstead). It would mean that in the future nine sites would operate on a full time basis and 11 on a part time basis.

The current County Council recycling centre policy is that each centre should serve an 8.5 mile catchment. Based on this 96% of the population is within 8.5 miles of a site Friday to Mondays and 93% is within 8.5 miles Tuesday-Thursday when some sites are closed.

Further work is required to determine the impact of reduced opening hours for the five sites should the proposal be agreed, this is because in depth analysis – for example of traffic monitoring, is required. However, should the proposal be taken forward and the hours reflect those of other part time sites, around 82% of the population would remain within 8.5 miles of a MRC during the week and 96% of the population would be within 8.5 miles Friday-Monday.

In April 2010, six sites were changed to operate on a part time basis. Following this change there was a drop in customer satisfaction (source: Norfolk County Council Annual Tracker Survey) in the following year, however, more recently customer satisfaction levels have recovered and now exceed the level prior to the change.

Following the move to part time opening hours, monitoring of tonnages showed that less recycling was done at these sites. However, the overall tonnage across all MRCs has also dropped reflecting a general trend of reduced recycling levels.

4. Potential impact

If the proposal goes ahead it will not result in the closure of any recycling centres, though it will mean that the facilities in Ashill, Heacham, Morningthorpe, Strumpshaw and Worstead are open on a part time basis rather than full time as they are now. Consequently, some residents may have to change the times they use their local recycling centre, or they will have to travel further to another site that is open for longer.

All of the recycling centres affected are those based in rural communities, therefore there will be a disproportionate impact upon rural residents.

Four of the five sites including Ashill, Heacham, Strumpshaw and Worstead, will also be affected by proposal 62 that looks to introduce a small charge for using nine of Norfolk's recycling centres.

As part of determining the impacts of proposals for the 2014-17 budget a 12 week public consultation was undertaken between Thursday 19 September and Thursday 12 December. No responses were received that identified impacts on protected groups or rural communities.

5. Mitigating Actions

No adverse disproportionate impacts on protected groups have been identified for this proposal, so no mitigating actions are required.

In addition, although there will be a disproportionate impact on rural residents, the impact is not likely to be significant given that local recycling centres will remain open at other times. This means that people will continue to have opportunities to dispose of their waste. Given our obligations around recycling we will however monitor the impact this proposal has on recycling rates.

6. Further information

For further information about this Equality Impact Assessment please contact the Planning, Performance and Partnerships service on

Tel: 01603 228891

Email: PPPService@norfolk.gov.uk



Norfolk - Putting People First

Findings from the public consultation and the outcome of the Equality Impact Assessments for proposals affecting Public Protection – Trading Standards

The proposals for Public Protection – Trading Standards (savings in brackets) – 2 proposals

- P47 Scale back Trading Standards advice to focus on the things we have to do by law (£0.373 million)
- P48 Charge for advice to business from out Trading Standards Service (£0.020 million)

1. Introduction

- 1.1. On 19 September the County Council launched Putting People First, a consultation about the future role of the County Council, and about specific budget proposals for 2014/17.
- 1.2. The proposals set out the Council's initial plans for bridging a £189 million budget gap in the next three years. This gap is made up of things like increasing costs, rising demand for services, inflation and reduced government funding. More details about the financial context for the proposals can be found in the financial planning report to Cabinet on 2 September, and in the Financial & Service Planning reports on the agenda at each Overview & Scrutiny Panel meeting in January.
- 1.3. This paper outlines the approach taken to the consultation and impact assessment of proposals. It summarises the main impacts as well as points and contentions raised about the overall approach proposed in the Public Protection, Trading Standards - portfolio. It then summarises for each proposal two main things:
 - The findings from the consultation; and
 - The outcome of the Equality Impact Assessments (EQIAs)
- 1.4. Finally, Appendices A to B present for each proposal more detailed summaries of the consultation findings and Equality Impact Assessments.
- 1.5. This paper should also be read in conjunction with the report 'Findings from the public consultation and the outcome of the Equality Impact Assessments for proposals affecting 'Environment, Transport, Development and Waste' elsewhere on this agenda. Together, these two papers set the context to, and should be read in conjunction with, the finance and service planning report being presented to Overview & Scrutiny Panel.

What is the difference between the consultation findings and the Equality Impact Assessments?

- 1.6. It is important that we present the findings from both the consultation and from the Equality Impact Assessment process.

- 1.7. In analysing and reporting the consultation findings we have sought to present what people think of the proposals. In most cases this will mean their personal opinions and views.
- 1.8. Equality Impact Assessments are evidence based, incorporating analyses of user and service data as well as the views of people who could be affected, to determine the likely impact of proposals. They are the way we pay due regard, as required by the Equality Act 2010, to the impact that services changes might have on different groups of people. In addition, where the equality impact assessment process shows that changes may have a disproportionate negative impact on specific groups, it then also identifies mitigating actions that might be taken to reduce the impact. These mitigating actions are not formal recommendations at this stage, though Members may want to take them into account.
- 1.9. Responses to the consultation and the outcomes of the EQIAs are two of several factors that Members will consider as they set the budget. As outlined in the Putting People First proposals document, the other factors are:
 - The evidence of need and what is proven to work effectively and well
 - The financial position and constraints at the time
 - Any potential alternative models or ideas for making the savings

2. How was the consultation conducted?

- 2.1. Full details of the Council's future role, and of its proposals for savings money, were published at the start of the consultation period here: http://www.norfolk.gov.uk/Council_and_democracy/Interact_with_us/Norfolk_putting_people_first/index.htm.
- 2.2. The web site includes copies of all of the proposals and links to videos of each Cabinet Member explaining the approach in their area.
- 2.3. People were encouraged to respond in any of a number of ways including via the Council's web site, letter, email, telephone (via the Customer Service Centre) and through social media such as Twitter and Facebook.
- 2.4. A range of measures were put in place to publicise the proposals, and significant coverage in the local press has helped generate responses. Response forms were made available in libraries for service users who preferred to reply in writing instead of completing the on-line survey.
- 2.5. In addition we organised or took part in a series of

Equality Impact Assessments

An equality assessment of each proposal has been undertaken to determine any disproportionate impacts on people with protected characteristics.

When making decisions the Council must give due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity and eliminate unlawful discrimination of people with the protected characteristics of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.

Equality assessments are evidence based, taking into account analysis of user data and the views of residents and service users.

Where disproportionate impacts are identified consideration has been given to how these can be avoided or mitigated. It is recognised that it is not always possible to adopt the course of action that will best promote equality; however the equality impact assessment process enables informed and transparent decisions to be made.

Rural 'proofing'

An assessment of the rural issues arising from proposals has also been undertaken to determine the impact on rural communities. The rural proofing exercise has been integrated with equality impact assessments.

consultation events that people could attend to have their say. In many instances these events were organised to engage with specific groups of people – for example older people, people with disabilities and carers. This has enabled us to understand, through our equality impact assessments, whether our proposals are likely to have a disproportionate impact on particular groups.

3. How the Council has analysed people's views

3.1. Every response the Council has received has been read in detail and analysed. This analysis identified:

- The range of people's views on the proposal/s
- Any repeated or consistently expressed views, and whether or not the responses represented a consensus of views
- The reasons people support or object to the proposal/s
- The anticipated impact of proposals on people
- Any alternative suggestions

4. Who responded?

- 4.1. Overall, there were 354 responses to the proposals relating to the Public Protection - Trading Standards - portfolio. These were made by 212 individuals and organisations.
- 4.2. In submitting their responses we asked people to tell us the basis upon which they were responding – for example whether they were responding as a member of the public, a service user or a carer. We also asked them about their age, gender and other background information.
- 4.3. Of those that were happy to tell us this information, respondents were typically: members of the public, as opposed to members of businesses, constituted bodies or organisations; white British; male; and 45 to 64 years of age.
- 4.4. About 10% (21) of respondents to the proposals stated that they either had a disability or a caring responsibility.
- 4.5. Also, about 10% (21) of respondents to the proposals stated that they were NCC employees.

Groups and organisations

- 4.6. A total of 26 organisations made formal submissions on the proposals, as below:
 - A R Wright Garden and Building Maintenance
 - Aldridge Roofing
 - Borough of Council of King's Lynn and West Norfolk
 - Broadland Windows Ltd
 - Carers Council for Norwich
 - County Community Safety Partnership (CCSP)
 - Evenflow Plumbing
 - Great Ellingham Parish Council
 - Great Yarmouth Borough Council
 - Great Yarmouth College
 - National Farmers Union
 - Norfolk Adult Safeguarding Board
 - Norfolk Community Law Service and Norfolk Community Advice Network
 - Norfolk Neurology Network & MS Society

- Norfolk Older People’s Strategic Partnership
- Norwich City Council
- Potter Heigham Good Neighbourhood Scheme
- Rainbow Wholefoods
- Retired members section of the Norfolk County branch of Unison
- Sheringham Town Council
- Stalham Town Council
- Taverham Parish Council
- The Norfolk Brewhouse
- Unison
- VM IT Ltd
- YMCA and Rethink Mental Health and Riversdale.

4.7. As part of the online consultation form, we asked people to indicate if they were responding on behalf of an organisation. There are a small number of such responses where it is not clear how widely the respondent’s views reflect the collective view of their organisations, particularly as some of the respondents referred to their individual views and drew upon personal examples.

Consultations Events

4.8. Views on all of the proposals in the Putting People First consultation, were gathered through a series of public consultation events over October, November and December 2013. Whilst none of these were specific to the proposals in the Public Protection – Trading Standards portfolio, they were the source of a significant number of responses to the proposals. Responses to the proposals were noted from the following:

- Staff Consultation events at King’s Lynn
- Norfolk Older People’s Forum meeting in South Norfolk
- Norwich and Great Yarmouth Black and Minority Ethnic (BAME) community events
- Putting People First event (Learning Disabilities) Great Yarmouth.

5. What did people think about the council’s priorities and overall approach?

5.1. As part of the consultation people were asked to comment on the Council’s priorities, approach overall package of proposals, and the specific proposal to freeze Council Tax. They were also asked to consider what else the Council might do deliver savings. To summarise the findings from these questions:

5.2. **The Council’s three priorities (Excellence in Education, Real Jobs, and Good Infrastructure)** A significant number of respondents – around 30% of people who commented on the priorities – said that they agreed with them. A smaller proportion – around 5% – clearly stated that they didn’t support them (with the remainder not stating support or otherwise). Respondents, including some educational organisations, felt particularly strongly about “Excellence in Education” with many highlighting its importance as a building block for improving Norfolk’s long term prospects. There were more mixed views about the importance of “Good Infrastructure” and “Real Jobs”. Many people supported the idea of improving infrastructure particularly given Norfolk’s rural nature, but others suggested that it wasn’t as important as some other areas of council business. Those agreeing with “Real jobs” felt strongly about supporting the economy, whereas others question whether this was the role of County Council. In addition to the three priorities outlined, a high proportion of respondents felt that the Council should also be prioritising vulnerable people, particularly given the county’s high and growing number of older people.

A smaller number of people felt that public safety or the environment should be priorities. Several respondents also felt, irrespective of their support for the priorities, that they are “aspirational”, “fine in principle” or “easy to say”. Others said they found it difficult to comment due to a lack of detail on how the priorities will be achieved.

- 5.3. **The council’s approach and strategy for bridging the funding gap.** Again, a higher proportion of respondents that answered this question clearly stated that they accepted the approach and strategy (around 25%) than rejected it (around 4%). Those in support felt it was a “sound”, “pragmatic” or “common sense” approach, with some reflecting that the Council has limited options. Of those who didn’t agree with the approach, several suggested that it was not radical enough. Others said that the council was “salami slicing” services bit-by-bit when a bolder approach was required. Some people also said that they were worried that changes in one part of the organisation might create demand in another part, or in other public sector organisations. A number of ‘hot topics’ emerged in the responses. For some of these there were differing views – for example several people argued for and against the increased use of technology, the sale of assets and the outsourcing of services. Other ‘hot topics’ generated a more consistent response. There was a broad consensus that the Council should collaborate more with other organisations, improve its processes, get better at procurement and do more to lobby central government. Finally a large number of responses suggested that the council should address what many regarded as problems with public sector organisational culture. Suggestions included reducing officer and member pay, reducing bureaucracy and ‘red tape’, having fewer meetings and stopping ‘silo working’.
- 5.4. **The overall package of proposals.** Some proposals clearly generated more responses than others. The most responded-to proposal was ‘P27 Reduce the transport subsidy provided to students aged 16-19’. All of the proposals relating to libraries received a high number of respondents (partly because library users were able to respond as part of their visit to the library during the consultation period). Other proposals or issues prompting a high number of responses include those to stop subsidising the School Music Service, to reduce funding for wellbeing services for people receiving social care through a personal budget, and to introduce charging at household recycling centres. People were asked to consider the balance and overall impact of all of the proposals together. Responses generally reflected those about the council’s priorities and approach, and in particular people felt that overall the proposals would disproportionately affect vulnerable people. Several organisations described their anxiety about the impact of proposals on vulnerable people – for example a response from Clinical Commissioning Groups and NHS providers in Norfolk outlined their concerns about the impact of cuts in Children’s and Community services on their own services (for example GP surgeries and hospitals). People were also worried about the cumulative impact of proposals – where individuals are simultaneously affected by cuts to different services they receive. Some organisations were concerned about cost-shifting and requested that the County Council engage with them more in the future design of service delivery.
- 5.5. **The council’s proposal to freeze its share of Council Tax.** Around 515 people responded to the question about freezing Council Tax, with about 26% of people stating that they agree with the proposal. A small proportion felt that Council Tax should be cut. Those agreeing with the freeze either felt that an increase in Council Tax would be unaffordable and unfair, or disagreed with an increase because they principally or ideologically felt that tax should be kept to a minimum. Around 55% of people stated that they disagree with the freeze (with the remainder neither agreeing nor disagreeing). Those rejecting the Council Tax freeze had quite consistent views, with most suggesting that a small increase of 1 or 2%, or in line with inflation, would be better. They felt that the increase would be justified on logical or commercial grounds. Many people qualified their support for an increase stating that it should be directly spent on vulnerable people or on specific service areas. Some also

suggested that the council would need to be very clear about what an increase would be spent on. Of those people who neither agree nor disagree with the proposal, several acknowledged the practical and political difficulties of 'unfreezing' Council Tax given central government pressure and incentives. Others felt that a Council Tax freeze is appropriate now, but that an increase should be applied in future years. A number of people felt that increasing Council Tax should have been an option in the consultation.

5.6. **Any other things they think we should consider.** A huge range of alternative suggestions for saving money were received. Many of these relate to very specific areas of service and are covered in the detail of this and other Cabinet Portfolio reports. In terms of more general ideas several people suggested:

- Transferring services to the voluntary or community sector
- 'Decentralising' services by moving away from single buildings (County Hall) and into communities
- Moving to a strictly 'statutory minimum' level of service – so not providing non-statutory services
- Making all non-statutory services self-funding
- Being more energy efficient
- Stopping printed council publications and translation services
- Changes to staffing arrangements – so pay freezes, redundancies, moving to a 35 hour week and staff parking charges
- Reducing opening times for council buildings and services.

5.7. **What did people think of the council's approach to the consultation?** Alongside comments about the proposals, around 240 respondents commented on how the council went about the consultation.

5.8. Some people felt that consultation documents were inaccessible, finding both the web sites and the document difficult or too large to navigate. Some feedback was received about the format and delay in making easy read consultation documents available, which could have disadvantaged some disabled residents. Others challenged the language used in the proposals, suggesting that they should use more plain English. A relatively large number of respondents, whilst expressing their concerns about proposals, suggested that the Council would not listen to the views expressed in the consultation, and that decisions had already been made.

5.9. A number of positive comments were also received. Some respondents were pleased to be able to respond via social media sites, and others suggested that the consultation document was comprehensive and considered. In addition, positive feedback was received from many of those involved in consultation events, with participants stating that they welcomed the opportunity to explore the proposals with council elected Members.

6. What did people think about the council's proposals for Public Protection – Trading Standards

6.1. Overall, there were 354 responses to the proposals relating to the Public Protection - Trading Standards - portfolio. These were made by 212 individuals and organisations.

7. The proposals

7.1. A brief summary of responses by proposal is given below. The full analysis of responses by proposal is contained in the appended 'Consultation responses summary' and the 'Full Equality Impact Assessment'.

- 7.2. **P47 - Scale back Trading Standards advice to focus on the things we have to do by law (£0.373 million)**
- 7.3. The total number of responses to this proposal was 185. Opinion about this proposal was split, with 76 responses expressing some support and 79 responses expressing some opposition.
- 7.4. Of those who supported the proposal, there was a general acceptance that reducing the service down to the statutory minimum was preferable to cutting it completely. A number of responses suggested that there was a range of advice and guidance readily available from other organisations and that the focus of Trading Standards services should be on the more “extreme” rather than general or low risk cases.
- 7.5. Of the 79 people who expressed their opposition to the proposal, a large proportion raised concerns that a reduction in enforcement activity by Trading Standards would result in an increase in rogue traders and illegal or exploitative business practices. A small number of responses suggested that this would impact upon older and more vulnerable people.
- 7.6. A number of respondents felt that they were not qualified to comment. Some also made general comments about minimum legal requirements for service delivery and the work of Trading Standards. A small number commented on the possible transfer of the Trusted Trader scheme outside of County Council control and the negative consequences of this.
- 7.7. A total of 25 organisations formally responded to this proposal, including: four Parish and Town Councils; three District Councils; two branches of a Trade Union; four community groups; seven businesses; three multi-agency partnerships; one college of further education; and one national body. The majority of organisations who responded to the proposal were not in favour of it. This was particularly true for businesses, who felt that their engagement with the Trusted Trader scheme played an important role both in the appeal and success of their business.
- 7.8. There was limited feedback on this proposal from the general Norfolk Putting People First consultation events.
- 7.9. The proposal covers seven different aspects, including changes to: consumer advice and support; ceasing to produce materials in-house; Trusted Trader; Consumer Champions; No Cold Calling Zones; prevention of unfair trading; enforcement action; and checks on goods and services. The majority of responses focussed on the general principal of reducing service provision down to the statutory minimum and not upon the detail of the proposal.
- 7.10. **P48 - Charge for advice to business from out Trading Standards Service (£0.020 million)**
- 7.11. The total number of responses to this proposal was 169. The majority were supportive, 121, with only 25 stating their opposition to the proposal.
- 7.12. Of the 120 responses that were supportive, over half simply agreed without making any further comment. Of those who gave some explanation, the key themes were that businesses should expect to pay for technical advice, that it was up to them to understand the legal framework within which they operate and any charges should be scaled according to the size of the business.
- 7.13. Of the 25 people who expressed their opposition to the proposal, about half suggested that the relatively small amount of proposed savings did not merit the potential risks or consequences. The remainder expressed concerns that such a proposal could lead to a breakdown in working relations between Trading Standards and local businesses.
- 7.14. A number of respondents felt that they were not qualified to comment and others felt that, not knowing the level of charges, it was difficult to comment. Doubts were also expressed about the practicality of charging small fees for services and whether the costs of running such a system of charges could be recouped.

- 7.15. A total of 12 organisations formally responded to this proposal, including two Parish Councils; two District Councils; four community groups; one Trade Union; one business; one national body and one college of further education. Opinion was divided as to whether the proposal should be implemented. Particular concerns were expressed about the ability of businesses to access information and advice that was vital to them if the proposal was implemented.
- 7.16. There was limited feedback on this proposal from the general Norfolk Putting People First consultation events.

8. Alternatives

8.1. Alternatives to the proposals that were suggested:

- Maintain the existing levels of service but charge for anything above and beyond the statutory minimum
- Sponsorship and advertising, linked to the Trusted Trader website, to generate a revenue to cover the costs for the non-statutory services
- Increase opportunities for people to self-serve, particularly with reference to existing community resources like libraries
- Amalgamation of (food and farming) services with Suffolk and Cambridgeshire Trading Standards
- Scale charges according to the size of the business and type of advice sought
- Introduce fines for any breaches, which would then generate income
- Set up a subscription based website for advice and guidance.

9. The outcome of the Equality Impact Assessments

- 9.1. Detailed Equality Impact Assessments (EqIAs) have been carried out on each of the proposals relevant to the Public Protection, Trading Standards portfolio; these are presented in the appendices.
- 9.2. Proposal 47 - Scale back Trading Standards advice to focus on the things we have to do by law (£0.373 million) has been assessed as having adverse disproportionate impacts on protected groups. The proposal will lead to reduction in the number of community based initiatives, for example: a reduction in the number of new no cold calling zones established; fewer consumer champions; and fewer businesses signing up to the Trusted Trader and Trusted Business schemes. This may have an impact on older and vulnerable people, particularly those living in more isolated, rural areas. It may lead to an increase in the level of doorstep crime or fear of crime as people are targeted by rogue traders.
- 9.3. No adverse disproportionate impacts on protected groups have been identified for proposal 48 - charge for advice to business from our Trading Standards Service.
- 9.4. In addition to assessing each proposal independently we have considered the cumulative impact of all budget proposals. It is possible that the people affected by P47 will also experience impacts from other proposals, including P30-37 that will change the adult social care services some people receive, and P42 which will reduce how often the mobile library calls.
- 9.5. Mitigating actions should be considered to address the adverse disproportionate impacts that have been identified. A range of actions are suggested in the full EqIA for P47 in the appendices, including:

- Work with Citizens Advice and others to ensure that self-help resources are continually improved and that tailored advice is targeted at disadvantaged groups, including older and disabled residents.
- Contact the community and third party groups that we currently work with for example on no cold calling zones, to discuss the service changes and scope for providing support differently

10. Supporting papers

10.1. The appendices accompanying this report present more detailed summary information for both the consultation responses and the Equality Impact Assessments. There is a separate Appendix for each report, as follows:

Appendix Ai: Consultation responses summary for P47 Scale back trading standards advice to focus on the things we have to do by law.....	10
Appendix Aii: P47 Scale back trading standards advice to focus on the things we have to do by law – Full Equality Impact Assessment	12
Appendix Bi: Consultation responses summary for P48 Charge for advice to business from our Trading Standards Service.....	22
Appendix Bii: P48 Charge for advice to business from our Trading Standards Service – Full Equality Impact Assessment	24

Appendix Ai: Consultation responses summary for P47 Scale back trading standards advice to focus on the things we have to do by law

Analysis of responses

Feedback from consultation events

Whilst no specific events were organised to discuss this proposal, it was raised at three general consultation events.

A broad range of views was expressed in these meetings, and these reflected those submitted through group responses and by individuals as outlined below.

Organisation, group or petition responses

Twenty five organisations formally responded to this proposal, including: Taverham Parish Council; VM IT Ltd; Evenflow Plumbing; Broadland Windows Ltd; The Norfolk Brewhouse; Rainbow Wholefoods; A R Wright Garden and Building Maintenance; Sheringham Town Council; Potter Heigham Good Neighbourhood Scheme; Great Yarmouth Borough Council; Norfolk Older People's Strategic Partnership; YMCA and Rethink Mental Health and Riversdale; Borough of Council of King's Lynn and West Norfolk; Norfolk Neurology Network & MS Society; County Community Safety Partnership (CCSP); Retired members section of the Norfolk County branch of Unison; Stalham Town Council; Norfolk Adult Safeguarding Board; Norfolk Community Law Service and Norfolk Community Advice Network; Unison; Great Ellingham Parish Council; Great Yarmouth College; National Farmers Union; Aldridge Roofing; Norwich City Council.

No petitions were received.

The majority of organisations who responded to the proposal were not in favour of it. This was particularly true for businesses, who felt that the Trusted Trader scheme played an important role both in the appeal and success of their business.

Consistent, repeated or notable views from people who agreed with the proposal

Proposal 47 was accepted by 76 people, with a range of views and a number of provisos made, as follows:

- It is the right approach to focus on statutory duties
- Individuals can obtain information from other sources such as Yellow Pages or Google
- The service tends to be more useful in extreme cases which may require a higher level of knowledge about the law
- Reducing services is a better option than cutting completely
- Signposting people to other providers is a good option if alternative information is available
- The service should be reduced to the legal minimum given the financial constraints faced by the authority
- Four respondents that were supportive of the proposal specifically supported withdrawal of electric blanket testing
- One respondent said that the proposal did not go far enough
- Two respondents said that they accepted the proposal but did not want to lose Trusted Trader.

Consistent, repeated or notable views from people who did not agree with the proposal

Proposal 47 was not accepted by 79, with a range of views and a number of provisos made, as follows:

- This may encourage even more rogue traders and increase crime in general as there will be nothing to stop them

- Vulnerable people who are unable to access information electronically may fall victim to crime
- Six respondents referred to the proposal as “short-sighted”. One suggested that this could also impact on how business perceives other regulators, such as Environmental Health
- Thirteen respondents said that the proposal would adversely affect the most vulnerable in society.

Other comments

A total of 30 responses were more general in nature, as follows:

- Three respondents did not comment on the proposal itself but commented that we should do what was required by the law
- Six respondents said that they were unsure or felt unqualified to comment on the proposal
- Five respondents commented on the proposal in terms of potentially transferring the Trusted Trader scheme outside of County Council control
- The remainder of responses were statements about the scope and effectiveness of the current service.

Alternative suggestions

Alternative ideas included:

- Charge for the additional parts of the service not required by law and charge more for the Trusted Trader service or increase fines, ensuring that the service is operated at full cost recovery
- Use advertising on the Trusted Trader website as a means of generating additional income
- Continue to signpost to other sources of information and improve self-service, including using local Libraries to provide information
- Amalgamate services with Suffolk and Cambridgeshire, particularly those associated with food and farming
- One respondent suggested raising Council Tax to support the service.

Responses relevant to the Equality Impact Assessment

This proposal has been assessed as having adverse disproportionate impacts on protected groups. The proposal will lead to reduction in the number of community based initiatives, for example: a reduction in the number of new no cold calling zones established; fewer consumer champions; and fewer businesses signing up to the Trusted Trader and Trusted Business schemes. This may have an impact on older and vulnerable people, particularly those living in more isolated, rural areas. It may lead to an increase in the level of doorstep crime or fear of crime as people are targeted by rogue traders.

Respondents and the EqIA identify the potential impact on consumers that are “less able” to find support and advice by other means. Respondents have identified two main areas where they feel this would apply – Electric Blanket checks and obtaining general consumer advice through Trusted Trader or Scam alerts.

Appendix Aii: P47 Scale back trading standards advice to focus on the things we have to do by law – Full Equality Impact Assessment

Key findings:

Norfolk County Council is facing a budget gap of £189 million over the next three years, due to a reduction in Government funding, increasing council costs, inflation and demand for services. To address this, the Council has proposed and is consulting on a number of service changes and cuts, which includes this specific savings proposal.

This impact assessment looks in more detail at a proposal to reduce the discretionary services and enforcement undertaken by trading services. If implemented it will mean that we continue to deliver what we are required to by law, but scale back or stop discretionary elements of the service.

The proposal will impact on consumers who are less able to find the support and advice they need by other means and will impact on those people who require a high level of reassurance and advice, who are potentially vulnerable, for example older people or those with a disability.

Additionally, there will be limited or no partnership working with third party organisations who work with marginalised groups, a reduction in the amount of consumer goods and services tested, including investigations and enforcement actions carried out and a reduction in the number of new no cold calling zones established, which will affect the level of doorstep crime or fear of crime for some people, especially older and disabled residents who tend to be most susceptible to being targeted by rogue traders.

Directorate: Environment, Transport and Development
Lead officer: David Collinson
Other officers: Shaun Norris, Sophie Leney, Sarah Rhoden, Neil Howard, Louise Cornell
Date completed: 30 December 2013

1. Overview of Proposal

The Trading Standards service currently provides a range of statutory and discretionary services to protect consumers and businesses from unfair trading practices. The proposal is to reduce discretionary services provided and enforcement undertaken including:

- Scaling back the advice and support we provide to consumers
- Reducing the amount of consumer goods and services tested and the number of investigations and enforcement actions carried out
- Reducing the amount of preventative work

This will result in a reduction in the number of trading standards officers, but a new Intelligence Analyst post will be added to improve targeting of delivery.

We estimate that this proposal overall would save £123,000 in 2014/15 and £250,000 in 2015/16.

2. Who will be affected

This Equality Impact Assessment considers the likely impacts of the proposal on all protected groups under the Equality Act 2010.

It also reviews the impact on people in rural communities. Norfolk is predominantly a rural county with just over half of the population (52.5%) living smaller towns and their fringes, villages and hamlets. Older people aged 65+ are more likely to be living in rural as opposed to urban areas - almost a quarter of people living in a rural areas over the age of 65. There are around 21,950 households in rural areas in Norfolk that have no access to a car or van. People living in these rural areas may face challenges accessing key services and amenities.

The following protected groups will be disproportionately affected:

Age (people of different age groups; older & younger etc)	YES
Disability (people who are wheelchair or cane users; blind, deaf, visually or hearing impaired; can't stand for a long time; have a long-term illness i.e. HIV or a neurological condition such as dyslexia; learning difficulties; mental health etc)	YES
Gender reassignment (people who identify as transgender)	NO
Marriage/civil partnerships	NO
Pregnancy & Maternity	NO
Race (different ethnic groups, including Gypsies & Travellers)	NO
Religion/belief (different faiths, including people with no religion or belief)	NO
Sex (i.e. men/women)	NO
Sexual orientation (all, including lesbian, gay & bisexual people)	NO

3. Context to the proposal

Our trading standards service carries out work to protect consumers and legitimate businesses from rogue traders and unfair trading practices. The service is currently provided free of charge to consumers and business.

By law the service is required to:

- Make sure laws relating to animal health and welfare are obeyed;
- Make sure businesses do what the law expects to make food safe to eat;
- Make sure businesses do what the law expects to make products safe and trading fair;
- Protect consumers and businesses from fraud by taking legal action against those who break the rules.

There are also a number of discretionary elements of service currently delivered, and it is these elements that will be ceased or reduced, as follows:

Scaling back the advice and support we provide to consumers

The first point of contact for any consumers who have issues is the Citizens Advice Consumer Helpline operated by Citizens Advice (CitA). The County Council has an agreed protocol with CitA about the type of issues that can then be referred to us, focused primarily on complex cases or disputes and those that are likely to have a wider impact. At present, referrals are made relating to both criminal activities and some individual civil cases or issues, where the victims are considered vulnerable.

The proposal is to revise this protocol so that only criminal cases (those which the service has a statutory duty to deal with) are referred to us. Individual civil cases would no longer be referred, the only exception being where there is a civil element to a criminal case. Generally, the focus will be on those criminal cases that are the most serious.

The service currently receives around 6,000 consumer and trader disputes or cases each year. The majority of these cases (approximately 4,100 cases) are dealt with through assistive information and advice¹, either directly by Trading Standards, or via the Customer Service Centre. If the proposal goes ahead, this support will no longer be provided by Norfolk County Council.

1,000 cases are currently dealt with through targeted intervention and investigation by the service - these are cases where there are potential criminal offences and/or significant detriment to Norfolk consumers and businesses. This support would continue to be provided, although at a reduced level.

In addition, we provide extra one to one support and mediation in about 150 cases. This is restricted to the most vulnerable consumers who are unable to access their rights for themselves. This support will only continue to be provided as part of any formal investigations we are able to pursue.

The remainder of cases recorded (around 700 per year) include general requests for information, or relate to incidents reported for information only – these are generally retained as an important intelligence source, supporting future enforcement activity.

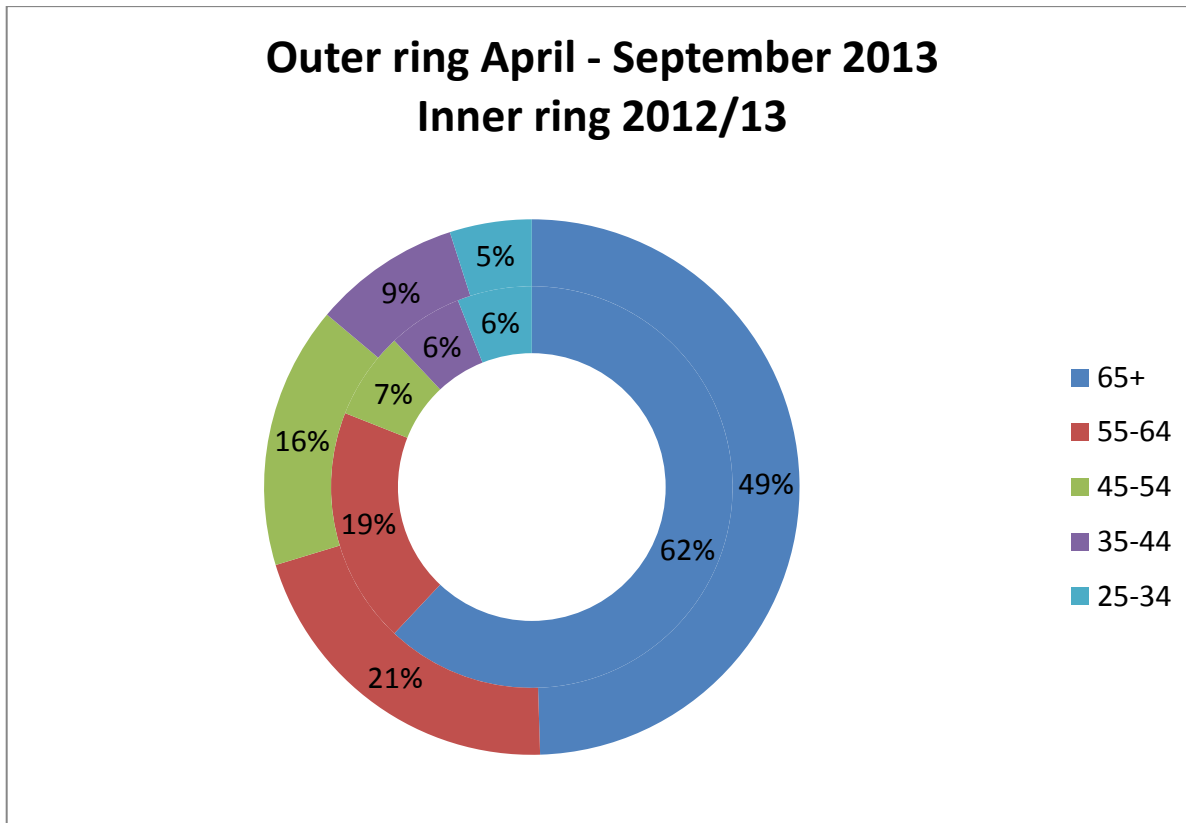
Based on the number and type of cases dealt with by the service over the last two years, it is anticipated that the total number of individual cases will reduce to approximately 800 per year, reflecting an overall reduction of around 20% of those cases where we currently carry out formal intervention and/or investigation.

There is supporting information on the County Council's website relating to civil issues – consumer advice information. This type of information has been reducing for some time, reflecting the changing role of CitA as the first point of contact. It is proposed to continue to remove the remaining information of this type from the County Council's website, and instead signpost contacts directly to CitA.

The Service conducts monthly user surveys. As part of this we ask a sample of consumers questions regarding their gender, age, ethnicity, accessibility and whether they have access to the internet. Figure 1 shows that of the 261 people who completed our survey, the majority are aged 65 or above, and increasingly so this financial year April - September. Over half of customers are male (65% in 2012/13 and 55% so far this financial year), and consistently 95% identify as White British.

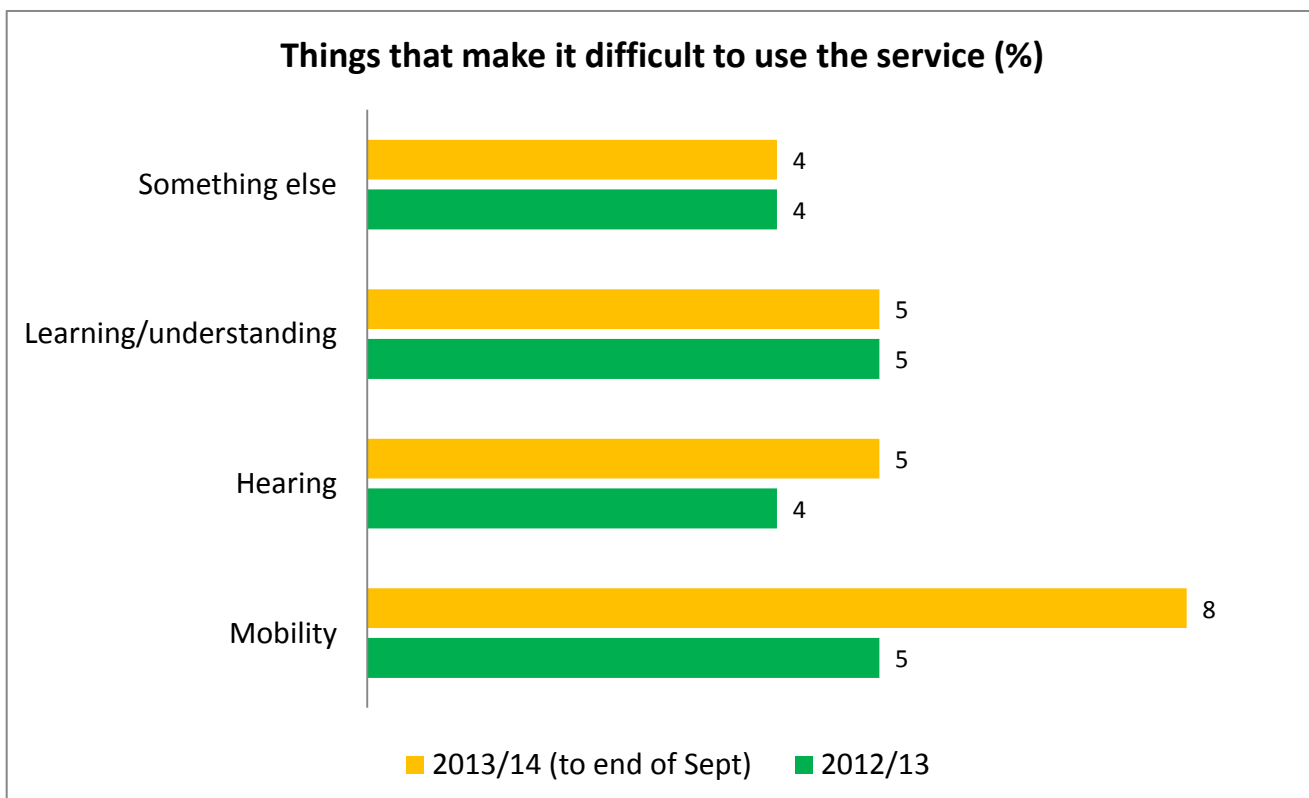
¹ Assistive information and advice is provided to those who need signposting to relevant sources of advice and information to help them access their rights.

Figure 1: Age profile of consumers we advise



We also ask people about how accessible our service is and whether there is anything that makes it difficult for them to use it. During April – September 2013 22% of our customers identified that they have difficulties, 8% because of a mobility difficulty. Around 70% of customers are telling us that they are able to access information via the Internet.

Figure 2: Customers who identified that they had difficulty in using the service



Reducing the amount of consumer goods and services tested and the number of investigations and enforcement actions carried out

The service currently carries out checks on a range of consumer goods and services through inspections, sampling and test purchasing. Testing and checks are carried out across a range of goods and services, including food, electrical items, fuel and animal feed, including making purchases of items which are then analysed or tested by third parties.

The proposal is to reduce the number of checks and tests that are carried out. Around 3,000 inspections are carried out at businesses and 1,000 products or services are sampled and checked each year. The proposed reduction would mean around 600 fewer inspections and 200 fewer products and services are sampled/checked, a 20% reduction.

We would also reduce the number of investigations and enforcement action taken against businesses that are operating unfairly or committing fraud, focusing only on the most serious cases. We expect to see a reduction in interventions and investigations of around 20% under this proposal – for example this will see 200 fewer complaints investigated per year. We will continue to formally investigate the most complex cases that cause the most serious detriment in line with our enforcement policy.

Alongside these changes the proposal looks to introduce a new intelligence analyst post which will be responsible for ensuring resources are targeted to those areas or activities that have the biggest impact on communities. The post would make use of intelligence gathered by the council, as well as that made available through other agencies such as the Police, Food Standards Agency and other local authorities.

Reducing the amount of preventative work

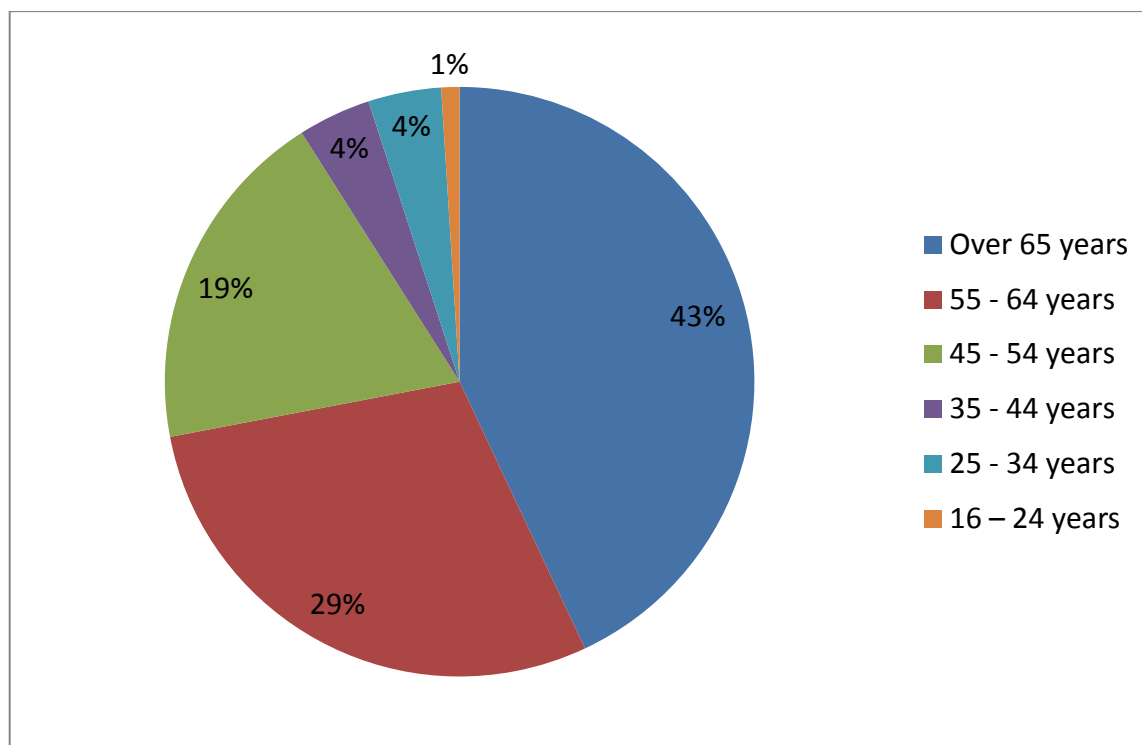
The service currently carries out, or facilitates, a number of preventative activities targeted at particular issues or consumers. The proposal is to reduce some activities and cease some others, as follows:

No cold calling zones (NCCZs) – these zones offer a visible deterrent to possible rogue traders for communities and have a proven record for reducing doorstep crime and the fear of crime. There are currently over 100 zones across Norfolk, covering 900 households. The service will continue to provide self-help information such as No Cold Calling stickers for individuals to use on their own front door and other prevention or enforcement activities will continue where there is an identified risk, but we will no longer set up NCCZs for residents.

Scams awareness – Scams cost Norfolk residents around £50 million per year – with national evidence showing that one in 15 people fall victim to scams each year. Scams are often targeted to vulnerable consumers, such as those already in debt or older people. Eighteen scam workshops with the community, attended by 263 people have taken place so far during 2013. It is anticipated that attendees cascade the information they receive at these workshops within their community – meaning that the reach of workshops is much higher. The majority of people who attend these workshops (55%) are over the age of 65.

In addition, we provide an alert system, which informs people of new scams. We currently have 3,267 people signed up to this, with 87% of people indicating during a recent survey that they share the alerts they receive with others. Figure 3 shows that most people signed up to receive these are 55 are over.

Figure 3: Age profile of subscribers (February 2013)



This proposal will result in a reduction in scam awareness work, with fewer community workshops and less information provided to the public.

Free electric blanket testing – once a year we provide free electric blanket testing in local hubs across the county, which includes replacing blankets that fail testing. Figure 4 shows that around 250 blankets are tested each year, with 42% over the last two years failing. The majority of people taking part in the testing are over the age of 65, with a high percentage having a disability.

Figure 4: Demographics of those who have used the electric blanket testing service over the last two years

		2012	2013
Blankets Tested		257	245
Failure Rate		45%	40%
Gender			
	Female	74%	61%
	Male	26%	39%
Age			
	Over 65 years	78.7%	88.4%
	55 - 64 years	14.9%	5.8%
	45 - 54 years	4.3%	4.7%
	35 - 44 years	-	-
	25 - 34 years	2.1%	-
	16 - 24 years	-	1.2%
Ethnicity			
	White British	93.5%	96.5%
	Mixed	-	-
	White Other	4.4%	3.5%
	Asian	2.2%	-
	Black/Black British	-	-

Accessibility – “Does any of the following make it difficult for you to use our service?” Yes			
	Mobility	14.9%	7.3%
	Hearing	2.1%	3.7%
	Vision	2.1%	1.2%
	Learning/Understanding	-	1.2%
	Something else	2.1%	3.7%
Access to internet	Yes	53.3%	50%
	No	46.7%	50%

If this proposal goes ahead we will no longer provide this service.

Consumer champions – this is a network of individuals across the county who receive training and information relating to trading standards issues so that they can support others in their community. The majority work in rural areas, helping vulnerable or harder to reach groups. It is a joint initiative with the voluntary sector and others to extend consumer support across the county through local volunteers. There are currently 74 consumer champions across Norfolk. We will no longer support this initiative if the proposal goes ahead.

Trusted Trader and Trusted Business schemes – these are established trader assurance schemes that enable consumers to find a tradesman from a list of businesses recommended by customers and verified by Trading Standards. At present, the service carries out checks on all those businesses who wish to join the scheme in terms of police vetting, insurance checks and a check of their complaints history. Printed directories are produced but both schemes are accessible via the internet.

Some conditions are imposed on the traders who join the schemes, including how they deal with complaints. They are asked to give feedback forms to their customers, which are then sent to a third party to assess and publish the results in the publically. There is currently a charge for businesses to join the schemes which covers the contract with the third party to assess and publish feedback, but does not cover any of the other costs associated with the scheme, including trading standards staff time.

Approximately 270 businesses are members of the Trusted Trader and Trusted Business schemes. One hundred and sixty of these members (60%) are non-VAT registered, meaning they are small/sole traders; including a large number of independent in home carers, meals on wheels providers and odd jobs people.

It is proposed that the County Council will no longer provide these schemes. Instead we will seek to find an external provider to take the scheme forward on a commercial basis, which already happens in other local authority areas. It is intended to cease the County Council’s involvement in 2015/16, giving a year to fully review the scope for an external third party taking this forward.

The Home Shield initiative, which recently transferred to the Trading Standards service, will be unaffected and it is not proposed to reduce or stop this area of work.

4. Potential impact

If this proposal goes ahead we will continue to deliver what we are required to by law, but scale back or stop discretionary elements of the trading standards service. This will impact on those consumers who are less able to find the support and advice they need by other means, including through paid for services. In addition, there will be an impact on those people who require a high level of reassurance and advice to resolve issues. Primarily, these will be people who are potentially vulnerable, for example older people or those with a disability.

The trading standards service currently works in partnership with third party organisations who work with marginalised groups as this is the best way to cascade information and gain a better understanding of any particular issues facing that group of people. We also support consumer champions to do this. A reduction of this type of work may have an adverse impact on groups who rely on specific networks to get information, in particular the deaf community, people with learning difficulties and people with mental health conditions.

Much of our current preventative campaigns target specific demographic groups such as older people, people with disabilities or others who are deemed vulnerable, or where there is an identified risk. A reduction or cessation of this work will therefore have the biggest impact on these groups.

Further information about the anticipated impacts relating to each of the detailed changes is set out below:

Scaling back the advice and support we provide to consumers

The proposal will result in fewer people being referred from Citizens Advice to us for support, either through assistive information and advice, one to one support or targeted intervention. This will impact most on older people who make up a large proportion of those who currently use this service. It could lead to an increase in the number of people who feel vulnerable or lack capacity to deal with issues that arise, and therefore an increase in the number of cases that remain unresolved.

Citizens Advice (CitA) will continue to be the first point of contact for all consumers and the other consumer and business support agencies already in the market will continue to be available. Other means for consumers to take forward their complaints or disputes will also continue to exist, though many of these are paid for services (such as solicitors).

Reducing the amount of consumer goods and services tested and the number of investigations and enforcement actions carried out

A reduction in testing and enforcement work means that there will be an increased risk of some illegal or inappropriate activities going undetected. This would potentially impact on the most vulnerable people in Norfolk as they are likely to be the most susceptible. For example, older people, people with disabilities and people on low incomes (because the loss of a sum of money, however small, even on a temporary basis whilst an investigation or court action is pursued, could have a disproportionate impact).

Reducing the amount of preventative work

There will be a reduction in the number of community based initiatives we support, potentially having the following impacts:

- A reduction in the number of new no cold calling zones established, which will affect the level of doorstep crime or fear of crime for some people, especially older and disabled residents who tend to be most susceptible to being targeted by rogue traders
- An increase in the number of people who are scammed, with the impact being most felt among vulnerable older residents or those with less money
- An increased risk of electrical fires with older and untested electric blankets, impacting particularly on older people who are the main customers of this testing service
- Fewer people continuing to act as consumer champions, with a particular impact on rural communities and vulnerable groups within them
- Fewer businesses will sign up to the Trusted Trader and Trusted Business schemes due to increased charges, which could particularly impact on small and medium sized enterprises. The impact on the public could be restricted choice.

Introducing a new intelligence analyst post

The introduction of this post should provide a positive impact. In particular, the increased and more detailed use of intelligence will help resources to be targeted to those areas/activities that have the

biggest impact on communities etc, taking into account factors like the scale of the issue, how prolific the offender is and the potential detriment to consumers.

What people have told us

As part of determining the impacts of proposals for the 2014-17 budget a 12 week public consultation was undertaken between Thursday 19 September and Thursday 12 December. A number of people who responded felt that this proposal would impact on vulnerable consumers who are 'less able' to find support and advice by other means. Two aspects of the proposal were referenced most in respect to this – stopping electric blanket testing and scam alerts.

“I value trading standards. These days rogue traders and scams seem to be on the increase and increasingly clever in their methods. I'm signed up to the email alerts news and often pass on what I read to other people especially more elderly neighbours. I know several people to refer to Trusted Traders when they are getting work done too.”

Many responses were also received about the Trusted Trader service, with some respondents saying that this was a vital service that older or vulnerable people in particular relied upon.

Respondents identified potential for the proposal to lead to an increase in illegal behaviour from traders who believe they can get away with it due to a lack of enforcement from the authority.

5. Mitigating actions

The following actions will be delivered if this proposal goes ahead to mitigate the adverse impacts identified above.

Action/s	Lead	Date
1. Ensure that all NCC communications (literature, website etc) signpost effectively to the Citizens Advice consumer hotline and to associated self-help information provided via Citizens Advice and other agencies	Shaun Norris	Ongoing
2. Work with Citizens Advice and others to ensure that self-help resources are continually improved and that tailored advice is targeted at disadvantaged groups, including older and disabled residents.	Shaun Norris	Ongoing
3. Monitor the impact of proposed service changes by increased analysis of intelligence through the new intelligence analyst post, so that further mitigating actions can be considered and resources can be targeted where there is most need	Intelligence analyst	Once in post
4. Contact the community and third party groups that we currently work with for example on no cold calling zones, to discuss the service changes and scope for providing support differently	Sophie Leney	April 2014
5. Ensure that the impact of outsourcing the Trusted Trader and Trusted Business schemes on small or sole traders is fully considered during any negotiations with the third party who may take it on	Sophie Leney	April 2014

Action/s

Lead

Date

. Further information

For further information about this Equality Impact Assessment please contact the Planning, Performance and Partnerships Service:

Tel: 01603 228891

Email: PPPService@norfolk.gov.uk

¹ Census 2011, www.norfolkinsight.org.uk

Appendix Bi: Consultation responses summary for P48 Charge for advice to business from our Trading Standards Service

Feedback from consultation events

Whilst no specific events were organised to discuss this proposal, it was raised at two general consultation events.

A broad range of views was expressed in these meetings, and these reflected those submitted through group responses and by individuals as outlined below.

Organisation, group or petition responses

A total of 12 organisations formally responded to this proposal, including: Taverham Parish Council; The Norfolk Brewhouse; Great Yarmouth Borough Council; YMCA & Rethink mental health & riversdale; Norfolk Neurology Network and MS Society; Retired members section of the Norfolk County branch of Unison; Carers Council for Norwich; Norfolk Community Law Service and Norfolk Community Advice Network; Great Ellingham Parish Council; Great Yarmouth College; National Farmers Union; Norwich City Council.

No petitions were received.

Opinion was divided as to whether the proposal should be implemented. Particular concerns were expressed about the ability of businesses to access information and advice that was vital to them if the proposal was implemented.

Consistent, repeated or notable views from people who agreed with the proposal

Proposal 48 was accepted by 121 people, with a range of views and a number of provisos made, as follows:

- 74 respondents simply agreed without any further comment
- 13 respondents said that businesses should expect to pay for this kind of information as specialist information is not normally free
- 13 respondents agreed to the proposal, subject to certain conditions such as the size of the business or the form of advice
- A number expressed the view that it is business owners' responsibility to ensure they are aware of the law.

Consistent, repeated or notable views from people who did not agree with the proposal

Respondents who disagreed with Proposal 48, 25 people, expressed a range of views, as follows:

- 12 respondents said the identified saving was not worth the potential cost to society and that it was a short-sighted saving
- 2 respondents made reference to the fact that this service should be paid from existing Council Tax revenues
- 9 respondents said that it could deter businesses from seeking advice from Trading Standards on cost grounds and that charging could damage the relationship between businesses and Trading Standards and might impact heavily particularly on small business.

Other comments

A total of 24 responses were more general in nature, as follows:

- 4 respondents stated that they 'agreed to a point' but that they felt that without knowing the level or amount being charged that it was difficult to comment
- 5 respondents said that they unsure how much saving this would actually make
- 5 respondents asked questions as to how this would affect them as individuals
- 6 respondents said that they were unable to comment.

Alternative suggestions

Alternative ideas included:

- Stagger charges or have a sliding scale depending upon the size of the business involved
- Instead of charging for the service increase the level of fines
- Set up a subscription website to include useful information for businesses.

Responses relevant to the Equality Impact Assessment

No adverse disproportionate impacts on protected groups have been identified for proposal 48 - charge for advice to business from our Trading Standards Service.

None of the respondents to this proposal made any comments relevant to the EQIA.

Appendix Bii: P48 Charge for advice to business from our Trading Standards Service – Full Equality Impact Assessment

Key findings:

Norfolk County Council is facing a budget gap of £189 million over the next three years, due to a reduction in Government funding, increasing council costs, inflation and demand for services. To address this, the Council has proposed and is consulting on a number of service changes and cuts, which includes this specific savings proposal.

This impact assessment looks in more detail at a proposal to change the way we provide advice and support about legal compliance to businesses by:

- Reducing the amount of general information we provide online and through e-zines and signpost businesses to other sources of information.
- Charging businesses for any tailored advice and support we provide to them.

No disproportionate adverse impacts on protected groups have been identified through this impact assessment.

Directorate:	Environment, Transport and Development
Lead officer:	David Collinson
Other officers	Shaun Norris, Sophie Leney, Neil Howard, Louise Cornell
Date completed:	22 December 2013

1. Overview of Proposal

We currently provide a range of statutory and discretionary services to protect consumers and businesses from unfair trading practices. We propose to change the way we provide advice and support about legal compliance to businesses by:

- Reducing the amount of general information we provide online and through e-zines and signpost businesses to other sources of information.
- Charging businesses for any tailored advice and support we provide to them.

We estimate that this proposal would save £20,000 in 2016/17.

2. Who will be affected

This Equality Impact Assessment considers the likely impacts of the proposal on all protected groups under the Equality Act 2010.

It also reviews the impact on people in rural communities. Norfolk is predominantly a rural county with just over half of the population (52.5%) living smaller towns and their fringes, villages and hamlets. Older people aged 65+ are more likely to be living in rural as opposed to urban areas - almost a quarter of people living in a rural areas over the age of 65. There are around 21,950 households in rural areas in Norfolk that have no access to a car or van. People living in these rural areas may face challenges accessing key services and amenitiesⁱⁱ.

No adverse impacts on protected groups have been identified through this impact assessment:

Age (people of different age groups; older & younger etc)

NO

Disability (people who are wheelchair or cane users; blind, deaf, visually or hearing impaired; can't stand for a long time; have a long-term illness i.e. HIV or a neurological condition such as dyslexia; learning difficulties; mental health etc)	NO
Gender reassignment (people who identify as transgender)	NO
Marriage/civil partnerships	NO
Pregnancy & Maternity	NO
Race (different ethnic groups, including Gypsies & Travellers)	NO
Religion/belief (different faiths, including people with no religion or belief)	NO
Sex (i.e. men/women)	NO
Sexual orientation (all, including lesbian, gay & bisexual people)	NO

3. Context to the proposal

Our trading standards service carries out work to protect consumers and legitimate businesses from rogue traders and unfair trading practices. The service is currently provided free of charge to consumers and business.

By law the service is required to:

- Make sure laws relating to animal health and welfare are obeyed;
- Make sure businesses do what the law expects to make food safe to eat;
- Make sure businesses do what the law expects to make products safe and trading fair;
- Protect consumers and businesses from fraud by taking legal action against those who break the rules.

At present the service provides tailored advice and support for businesses, helping to support compliance and avoid legal problems in the future. We provide a range of free information and advice services to all businesses in Norfolk, responding to approximately 4,000 requests for technical advice each year. We do not have a breakdown of the businesses this relates to, but as 82.5% of Norfolk businesses employ less than ten people, with the economy heavily weighted to smaller businesses, we can assume that a significant proportion are small or medium sized enterprises. On occasion proactively engage with some businesses that historically have a disproportionate level of non-compliance, including Black Asian and Minority Ethnic businesses.

We also support to 150 Home Authority businesses; which are Norfolk based, but operate across council boundaries, with the service acting as the single local authority contact for the provision of advice and assistance with regulatory matters.

The service is delivered in partnership with other organisations for example:

- Tackling underage sales of alcohol via community partnerships; with the Police, districts councils, voluntary sector groups, businesses and local communities
- Tackling doorstep rogue trading in partnership with the Police
- Trusted Trader/Business is provided in partnership with a private enterprise
- Food and feed analysis and product testing is contracted to the Public/ Agriculture Analyst and other test houses
- Work on some food matters in conjunction with district council environmental health departments.

If this proposal goes ahead we will start to charge businesses for the tailored advice we provide them with, and reduce the amount of general information we provide.

4. Potential impact

If this proposal goes ahead we will no longer provide free support and advice to Norfolk businesses, which is preventative work that helps ensure businesses remain compliant with the law. We may also have less capacity to engage proactively with businesses. We will however signpost businesses to alternative providers, such as the Trading Standards Institute, wherever possible.

A reduction in this service will mean that businesses have to look at alternative methods of accessing advice – which could place extra financial burden on them. Whilst this could affect all businesses, it may be that small and medium sized enterprises are particularly affected as they may be less able to pay for advice.

Longer term a reduction in this preventative service could lead to an increase in the number of businesses that are operating outside of the law, which could impact on residents. There is no evidence to demonstrate that there will be a significant adverse disproportionate impact on protected groups.

As part of determining the impacts of proposals for the 2014-17 budget a 12 week public consultation was undertaken between Thursday 19 September and Thursday 12 December. No responses were received that are relevant to this impact assessment.

5. Mitigating Actions

No adverse disproportionate impacts have been identified for this proposal, so no mitigating actions are required.

6. Further information

For further information about this Equality Impact Assessment please contact the Planning, Performance and Partnerships service on

Tel: 01603 228891

Email: PPPService@norfolk.gov.uk

ⁱⁱ Census 2011, www.norfolkinsight.org.uk