



Cabinet Scrutiny Committee

Date: **Tuesday 29 April 2014**

Time: **10:00 am**

Venue: **Edwards Room, County Hall, Norwich**

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

Membership

Mr B Borrett (Chairman)

Mr R Bearman (Vice-Chairman

Mr T Coke

Mr D Collis

Ms E Corlett

Mrs S Gurney

Mr S Hebborn

Mr H Humphrey

Mr T Jermy

Mr C Jordan

Mrs J Leggett

Mrs E Morgan

Mr R Smith

Dr M Strong

Mrs A Thomas

Mr B Watkins

Mr M Wilby

Parent Governor Representatives

Mrs K Byrne

Mrs S Vertigan

Church Representatives

Ms H Bates

Mr A Mash

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

3. Minutes

(Page 5)

To confirm the minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet Scrutiny Committee held on 18 March 2014.

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

5. Call-in Item(s)

The deadline for calling-in any matters for consideration by the Cabinet Scrutiny Committee meeting on Tuesday 29 April from the Cabinet meeting on Monday 14 April is **4.00pm** on **Wednesday 23 April 2014**. If any call-ins are received by the deadline, then a report will follow.

6. Delivery of Duties under the Flood and Water Management Act

Suggested approach by the Scrutiny Support manager (Page 9)

Report by the Interim Director of Environment, Transport and Development. (Page 10)

7. Rural Isolation Working Group

Suggested approach by the Scrutiny Support Manager (Page 25)

Group Meetings

Conservative	9:00am	Colman Room
Liberal Democrats	9:00am	Room 530
UKIP	9:00am	Room 504
Labour Group	9:00am	Room 513

Chris Walton
Head of Democratic Services
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Martineau Lane
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NR1 2DH

Date Agenda Published: 17 April 2014



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Cabinet Scrutiny Committee

**Minutes of the Meeting Held on Tuesday 18 March 2014 at 10am
in the Edwards Room, County Hall, Norwich**

Committee Members Present:

Mr B Borrett (Chairman)

Mr R Bearman

Mr R Coke

Mr D Collis

Ms E Corlett

Mr T Garrod

Mr S Hebborn

Mr H Humphrey

Mr T Jermy

Mr C Jordan

Mrs J Leggett

Mrs E Morgan

Mr R Smith

Dr M Strong

Mrs A Thomas

Mr B Watkins

Mr M Wilby

Other Members Present:

Mr P Hacon

Officers Present:

Jane Hanrahan

Karen Haywood

Audrey Sharp

Chris Walton

OD and Workforce Planning Team Manager

Scrutiny Support Manager

Interim Head of HR and OD

Head of Democratic Services

1 Apologies and substitutions.

1.1 Apologies were received from Mrs S Gurney (Mr T Garrod substituted).

2 Declarations of Interests

2.1 There were no declarations of interest.

3 Minutes

3.1 The minutes of the meeting held on 11 February 2014 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

4 Items of Urgent Business

4.1 The Chairman advised that the Annual General Meeting of the Council was scheduled for 27 May 2014, which was also the date scheduled for a Cabinet Scrutiny Committee meeting. He said that he was keen to hold a Cabinet Scrutiny Committee meeting to consider items which may arise from the Cabinet meeting on 12 May, although there would be insufficient time to allow for the full call-in process before the new Committee Governance arrangements came into effect. The Head of Democratic Services advised that he was aware of the issue

and was considering the various options. A proposal would be brought to the April meeting of the Committee for consideration.

5 Call-in item

No call-ins were received.

6 Graduate Recruitment and Support

6.1 The Committee received a report by the Acting Head of HR and Organisational Development updating the Committee on graduate recruitment. The report outlined Norfolk County Council's overarching strategy to support graduates, which took the form of work placements, traineeships and recruiting to targeted grade roles.

6.2 The following comments were noted during the discussion:

- Members felt more work was needed within schools to ensure that young people thinking of attending higher education were made aware of the career opportunities available to them and were supported in ensuring that they were making the right higher education choices to meet their needs. In particular, reference was made to local industries, such as the energy and engineering sectors, within the county and whether we were supporting young people interested in pursuing careers in these areas.
- Members also considered the wider economic benefits of retaining graduates in Norfolk either from the University of East Anglia or young people returning to Norfolk following graduation. It was felt that the County Council should lead by example by recruiting and supporting the employability of graduates whenever possible.
- The Committee was pleased to note the recent launch of Norfolk County Council's Developing Norfolk's Future Workforce (DNFW) programme which had been developed to improve the knowledge and understanding of Norfolk's young people about the range of career opportunities available to them in the county.
- Members suggested that in order to give graduates the best opportunities in employment, they should be encouraged to keep up their foreign language skills so as not to limit themselves to English speaking opportunities.
- Norfolk County Council had to date placed 29 graduates on work experience placements under the Get Britain Working scheme. The scheme would continue until September 2014 and that the initial target of 30 placements would soon be reached. Applicants interested in the Get Britain Working Scheme needed to be referred from the Job Centre as these placements could only be offered to graduates who had been unemployed for six months or longer.
- The finance department employed apprenticeships rather than graduate placements as it suited the business needs of that department and provided excellent training and progression opportunities.
- The Committee commended the work carried out under the newly

qualified teacher recruitment and development initiative and the good work carried out by the Norfolk Integrated Education Advisory Service in promoting teaching. Members were pleased to note work would continue after 2014/15, although this could be in a reduced capacity due to budget constraints.

- The OD and Workforce Planning Team Manager advised that she was unaware of any internships available in schools, although there may be such schemes available.
- No comparisons had been made between Norfolk and neighbouring authorities and Members expressed an interest in ascertaining the work that was being done by other authorities on graduate recruitment and support.
- The OD and Workforce Planning Team Manager confirmed that the traineeship scheme for solicitors run by nplaw was a paid internship.
- Members felt that the Norfolk County Council graduate recruitment scheme was a good scheme offering varied opportunities and if funding was available, the scheme should continue.
- The Committee noted the recent launch of the 'Developing Norfolk's Future Workforce (DNFW) programme' which had been developed with the aim of improving the knowledge and understanding of Norfolk's young people about the range of career opportunities available to them in the county. In support of this, the Committee **agreed** to recommend to Cabinet that the County Council should develop a policy on learning both at school and undergraduate level which could inform strategies that linked into the work of the DNFW programme and establishing the County Council's commitment to supporting young people in considering the range of career opportunities available to them. Cabinet Scrutiny Committee recognised that this would be a piece of work for the new committees to undertake but wished to flag this up to Cabinet at this stage in view of the importance to the Norfolk economy and to ensure that it be included in the transition to the new system of governance.

6.3 **RESOLVED** to

- note the report.
- Recommend to Cabinet that the County Council should develop a policy on learning both at school and undergraduate level which could inform strategies that linked into the work of the DNFW programme and establishing the County Council's commitment to supporting young people in considering the range of career opportunities available to them. Cabinet Scrutiny Committee recognised that this would be a piece of work for the new committees to undertake but wished to flag this up to Cabinet at this stage in view of the importance to the Norfolk economy and to ensure that it be included in the transition to the new system of governance.

7 **Cabinet Scrutiny Committee: Forward Work Programme**

7.1 The Committee received and **noted** the Forward Work Programme.

- 7.2 The Interim Head of HR and OD updated the Committee on the latest position with the recruitment of the Managing Director. She advised the Committee that the selection process had been completed and the Appointments Panel had made their recommendation. The appointment would be announced on Wednesday 19 March and Members were reassured that they would be made aware of the appointment before it was released to the Press.

The appointment of the Managing Director would be ratified at the full Council meeting on Monday 24 March 2014.

- 7.3 The Chairman advised that he had requested the most up to date information on the Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) be brought to the April meeting, where Cabinet Scrutiny Committee could agree how to proceed under the new Committee Governance arrangements.
- 7.4 The final report of the Rural Isolation Member Working Group would be received at the Cabinet Scrutiny Committee meeting in 29 April 2014.

The meeting ended at 10.45am.

CHAIRMAN



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Delivery of Duties under the Flood and Water Management Act

Suggested Approach by the Scrutiny Support Manager

1. Background

- 1.1 Cabinet Scrutiny Committee has kept a watching brief on how the County Council delivers its duties under the Flood and Water Management Act since 2008. The Committee last considered a report regarding this issue in July 2012 when it was agreed that scrutiny should be transferred to the Environment, Transport and Development Overview and Scrutiny Panel. In addition it was agreed that this Committee should retain an element of the overall review of the strategic cross cutting aspects of the issue and receive a report annually addressing these.
- 1.2 In addition to this update the Committee requested that further information be provided on the proposed legislation relating to SuDs (Sustainable Drainage Systems). This had been expected to be implemented in October 2013 however the Committee were advised on 19th November 2013 that the new legislation was not now expected until the new year. In light of this the Committee agreed that consideration of this issue be delayed until April 2014 in order that members could be updated. Unfortunately the announcement on the legislation has been postponed again by the Government and is not expected in time for this meeting. The attached report does however highlight current information regarding SuDs for members to consider.

2. Suggested Approach

It is suggested that the Committee considers the attached report by the Interim Director of Environment, Transport and Development which provides further information to the Committee on flood and water management issues. Any outstanding issues from this meeting will need to be referred to the relevant Committee in the new committee system of governance for consideration.

Officer Contact: Karen Haywood
Scrutiny Support Manager
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Delivery of Duties under the Flood & Water Management Act 2010

Report by the Interim Director of Environment, Transport and Development

Summary

This report updates the Committee on current progress in the delivery of the Council's duties as Lead Local Flood Authority under the Flood and Water Management Act 2010 ("The Act"). Commencement order No.7 dated 30 July 2012 provided the County Council (in addition to District Councils, Internal Drainage Boards and the Environment Agency) with new powers to designate structures and features that affect flood risk.

A significant future commencement will be the introduction of Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) duties. This is an area of the Act which has been subject to significant delay having previously be considered for implementation four times since April 2012. In January 2014 the Government promised to lay relevant SuDS secondary legislation before Parliament and that this legislation would include an implementation date for future SuDS duties.

Risk Management Authorities across Norfolk have secured an allocation of £24 million from Defra's Flood and Coastal Risk Management (FCRM) Grant in Aid (GiA) programme for flood mitigation schemes in the 2014-15 financial year. The indicative allocation of GiA in Norfolk for the 2015-16 financial year is £16 million.

The Flood and Water Management Team have dealt with over 400 cases since April 2012 which includes carrying out the regulation of ordinary watercourses and the publication of flood investigations to protect homes and properties. In addition the team has completed the Great Yarmouth Borough Surface Water Management Plan (SWMP) Stage 2 Report and the North Norfolk District SWMP Stage 1 report. Work is also underway on a flood mitigation scheme in Eagle Park, Norwich which has been informed by NCC's Norwich Urban Area SWMP.

Action Required

- (i) Members note progress on the delivery of the County Council's duties under the Act
- (ii) Members endorse the approaches taken to deliver an effective and efficient flood risk management service.

1. Background

- 1.1. Members have previously reviewed the duties conferred on Norfolk County Council ("NCC") under the Act at Cabinet Scrutiny meetings on the 27 September 2011 and 24 July 2012. Members were informed at these meetings that the County Council was fulfilling its statutory responsibilities as Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA) and

that the role would continue to be developed as the remaining parts of the Act were commenced or regulations published.

- 1.2. At the 24 July 2012 meeting Members resolved to receive an annual report on the 'Delivery of Duties under the Flood & Water Management Act' which would cover the following issues:
- Resources;
 - The lack of sanctions available to NCC;
 - Managing the high public expectations of NCC;
 - The importance of Member involvement and using local knowledge;
 - Working with planning authorities at District Council level to avoid increased bureaucracy; and
 - The important role that Internal Drainage Boards continue to play.
- 1.3. This report sets out the progress made to date on delivery, updates Members on further and future commencements under the Act and addresses the points raised at the Cabinet Scrutiny meeting of the 24th July 2012.

2. **Progress to date**

- 2.1. Work has been progressing in many areas both within the County Council and working with other Risk Management Authorities (RMAs) within the Norfolk Water Management Partnership (NWMP). Risk Management Authorities (RMAs) operating across Norfolk are;
- the Environment Agency ("EA") (through 3 area offices, Northern, Central and Eastern)
 - NCC as the Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA)
 - 7 District Councils
 - 22 Internal Drainage Boards (IDBs)
 - 2 Water Companies (Anglian Water and Essex and Suffolk Water)
 - 2 Highway Authorities (Norfolk County Council Highways and the Highways Agency).

2.2. **Partnership**

- 2.2.1. The Norfolk Water Management Partnership (NWMP) was formed in 2009 to bring together officers from the 36 Risk Management Authorities to inform and respond to the then proposed implementation of the Act. It remains key in developing and sharing best practice and in ensuring that flood risk management is effectively and efficiently coordinated and activities prioritised within Norfolk.

- 2.2.2. Partners of the Norfolk Water Management Partnership agreed to form a Strategic Forum allowing for political representation of all RMAs. The key areas for consideration by this forum have been agreed and are as follows;
- The development and sign up to the strategy by all partners,
 - Delivery of the Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) Approving Body (SAB)
 - The coordination of the additional statutory responsibilities,
- 2.2.3. Norfolk Internal Drainage Boards (IDBs) also work very closely with the County Council's Flood and Water Management Team and have supported the work of the Lead Local Flood Authority through the provision of local information. Specifically this has supported the mapping of catchments within Norfolk. This work has also helped identify IDB highland catchments (areas upstream of Internal Drainage Districts). This is a process that has been undertaken to agree the highland catchment areas into which IDBs may, if required:
- be consulted on SuDS duties and activities;
 - undertake flood risk and drainage activities (via cooperation agreements) on behalf of other RMAs; and
 - accept the delegation of powers from other RMAs.
- 2.2.4. The Flood and Water Management Team have also been working alongside IDBs and the Environment Agency with regards to the de-maining of watercourses designated as Main Rivers. Main Rivers are those watercourses that are the responsibility of the Environment Agency. De-maining is a legal process and would mean the EA no longer had responsibility for these watercourses. Where the watercourse lies within an Internal Drainage Board District the relevant local IDB then has the opportunity to take on its management. If it is outside an IDB area the responsibility for regulation falls to the County Council. De-maining work in Norfolk was initiated by the EA Central area and the Water Management Alliance consortia of IDBs. Specifically it has concerned a number of watercourses (such as the Babingley River, The Ingol and the Heacham River) passing to the King's Lynn IDB. A further 66km of Main River in the EA Eastern Area have also been identified as being appropriate for de-maining to the Norfolk Rivers IDB, one of the IDBs within the Water Management Alliance consortia.

2.3. **Local Flood Risk Management Strategy**

- 2.3.1. Under the Act Norfolk County Council has a duty to produce a Local Flood Risk Management Strategy. An update is provided below on the progress of development of this document to date as well as its associated evidence base.
- 2.3.2. A technical workshop was held in April 2013 to enable representatives from Risk Management Authorities and other stakeholders to discuss the issues and options relating to the development of the Local Flood Risk Management Strategy. In addition, the Norfolk Water Management Partnership Officer Group were presented with a list of objectives for discussion and review. These objectives were endorsed by the Norfolk Water Management Partnership Strategic Forum on the 18 March

2014.

- 2.3.3. Environmental assessments are legally required to support the development of and to accompany the Local Flood Risk Management Strategy. In October 2013 a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Scoping Report was sent to the statutory consultees (Environment Agency, English Nature and English Heritage). The consultation on the SEA ended on the 25 October. This scoping report will inform the required Strategic Environmental Assessment, along with a Sustainability Appraisal. A Habitats Regulation Assessment will also be undertaken to confirm compatibility of the Local Flood Risk Management Strategy with the Habitats Directive. An Equality Impact Assessment will also have to be undertaken for the Local Flood Risk Management Strategy prior to this document being released for public consultation.
- 2.3.4. A list of 'measures' (future projects and programmes) is also being developed for the Local Flood Risk Management Strategy, alongside an indicative funding plan to secure investment and implementation of these measures. This work has required input from other Risk Management Authorities and other partners through both the officer group and member forum of the Norfolk Water Management Partnership to ensure it fully reflects the investment currently made as well as the funds required for the future mitigation of flood risk in Norfolk.
- 2.3.5. The current draft of the strategy will be circulated to the NWMP for initial comments in April 2014 ahead of a consultation draft being amended and published. The consultation draft for the strategy aims to be coordinated with the Environment Agency Flood Risk Management Plan consultation scheduled for June / Mid-summer 2014.

2.4. **Surface Water Management Plans (SWMPs)**

- 2.4.1. To support the development of the Local Flood Risk Management Strategy and to ensure that the risk to Norfolk's communities from local flood risk (ordinary watercourses, surface runoff and groundwater flooding) is accurately understood, a number of Surface Water Management Plans (SWMPs) have been developed. The Flood and Water Management Team in partnership with other Risk Management Authorities (RMAs) have delivered Surface Water Management Plans (SWMPs) for:
- Greater Norwich – This document was adopted by Cabinet in May 2012 and identified areas for detailed study to aid Flood Defence Grant-in Aid bids. This further work is scheduled to be completed by May 2014.
 - King's Lynn and West Norfolk - This SWMP identified a need for a separate study into the flood risk from ordinary watercourses. This study is to be carried out with King's Lynn IDB and the Borough Council. It is scheduled to be completed by May 2014.
 - Great Yarmouth – This document was adopted by Cabinet in January 2014. Local Levy funding has been allocated for progressing the actions from this report in 2014/15.
 - North Norfolk – A stage 1 report has been produced for this District. A stage 1

report is a high level assessment of the surface flood risk. It covers 9 settlements in the District and is currently looking at the highest priority settlements in more detail. Local Levy funding has been allocated for progressing the actions from this report in 2014/15.

- South Norfolk - Work is progressing on the Stage 1 report. This stage is to be completed May 2014.

2.4.2. Local Members have been involved in the development of these plans, along with other Risk Management Authorities who have also contributed match-funding to support activities. Further SWMPs will be developed for areas of significant flood risk subject to agreement and contributory funding from other Risk Management Authorities. It is worth noting that SWMPs have identified flood risk to communities as well as potential solutions that would mitigate this risk. This process creates an expectation within these communities that practical work needs to be delivered on the ground. As such, the evidence provided by these studies has supported multi-agency bids for capital funding to enable this work to be undertaken.

2.5. Resources

- 2.5.1. As part of Defra's Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA) assessment process, Norfolk was recognised as the 10th most at risk area out of 152 Authorities for the distribution of funding. The attainment of this status is an acknowledgement at a national level of both the extent and complexity of flood risk within the county. As part of NCC's status as LLFA, it receives a DEFRA specific grant of £311k to meet the County Council's new LLFA duties, in addition to £199k provided through the Business Rates Retention Scheme. Recent communications from Defra have indicated that the County Council may receive some additional grant awards to assist in implementing SuDS legislative requirements and that these funds would be received in the financial year 2014/15. Elements of this funding are likely to be conditional on secondary legislation being approved by the Minister.
- 2.5.2. Norfolk County Council also pays an annual levy to the EA supported Anglian Regional Flood and Coastal Committees. This levy is set at the January meeting of the Anglian Eastern and Anglian Central RFCCs. The levy for the financial year 2013/14 amounted to £696k for the three committees in Norfolk. This figure is an aggregation of the Anglian Eastern RFCC levy of £576k, the Anglian Central RFCC levy of £119k and the Anglian Northern RFCC levy of £1k. Three members of Norfolk County Council are appointed to the Regional Flood and Coastal Committees. These are Cllr Castle, Cllr Bird (Eastern RFCC) and Cllr Long (Central RFCC).
- 2.5.3. The local authority levy supports the Regional Flood and Coastal Committees programme of Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management (FCERM) works that it funds every year. In addition to the local levy each RFCC receives DEFRA funding in the form of Flood and Coastal Risk Management (FCRM) Grant in Aid (GiA) to support this programme. All Risk Management Authorities (RMAs) in each EA area can bid to receive a share of this funding in line with meeting the Governments

thresholds on outcomes in terms of the number of properties at risk that would benefit from mitigation that reduces their risk.

- 2.5.4. As part of the GiA process, Risk Management Authorities across Norfolk have secured an allocation of £24 million from the government programme for various flood mitigation schemes in the 2014-15 financial year. The indicative allocation of GiA in Norfolk for the 2015-16 financial year is £16 million. The difference in funding between the financial years is due to a number of significant capital investments (such as the EA emergency works within Great Yarmouth) falling within the financial year 2014-15. Please see the map included with the report as Appendix A which highlights the distribution of the 2015-16 indicative allocation.
- 2.5.5. Surface Water Management Plans that have been delivered in Norfolk have also identified a level of need within a number of Norfolk's communities. To respond to this requirement NCC have developed bids alongside Risk Management Authorities with the aim of securing GiA as part of the RFCC programmes. To date NCC has been successful in bringing in £240k from central government and local Risk Management Authorities to carry out detailed studies into local flood risk. These studies have generated bids to the Environment Agency and Anglian Water that, if successful, will fund LLFA projects worth over £5m. Work is ongoing to identify potential partnership funding (including the RFCC levy) to secure enough funding to allow many of these projects to progress.

2.6. **Operational matters**

- 2.6.1. The previous report to Cabinet Scrutiny (July 2012) recommended "the transition of regular scrutiny of the Council's and other Risk Management Authorities' duties under the Flood and Water Management Act to the Environment, Transport and Development Overview and Scrutiny Panel" (ETD OSP). This recommendation was endorsed.
- 2.6.2. At the previous Cabinet Scrutiny meeting Members expressed concerns about the lack of sanctions for Norfolk County Council to use as part of its flood investigation responsibilities. Since the publication of the first flood investigations in July 2013 public expectation has also been raised that the reports will resolve the causes of flooding. Feedback from those affected by the flooding has confirmed that whilst the reports have provided evidence to identify those responsible for, and the causes of, the flooding, there is some public concern at the lack of sanctions that exist to ensure that any recommendations are carried out. This situation is common across LLFAs.
- 2.6.3. Prior to, and following, the commencement of the duties under the Act some Members have been heavily involved in championing the concerns of their residents regarding flooding. This has usually involved co-ordinated responses from other organisations involved in dealing with flooding issues. Since the commencement of the County Council statutory duties, conferred through the Act, the Flood and Water

Management Team have sought to ensure that Members continue to be involved in, and consulted prior to, the publication of flood investigation reports. Officers also inform Members of NCC regulatory activities on ordinary watercourses, including enforcement activities.

2.6.4. A total of 427 cases have been dealt with by the Flood and Water Management Team since April 2012. This includes a range of enquiries that relate to flood reports and formal flood investigations, consenting and enforcement on ordinary watercourses, general enquiries and referrals to Risk Management Authorities. A summary of these cases are included below:

- 56 consents for the alteration of an ordinary watercourse in line with Section 23 of the Land Drainage Act 1991 have been processed, of which 54 have been issued by the Flood and Water Management Team since the commencement of these duties in April 2012.
- 13 enforcement cases have been initiated since April 2012. All of these have been resolved without the need for formal action.
- 143 flood reports have been investigated since April 2012. Of these 9 formal flood investigation reports have been published. An additional 3 reports are in draft stage and being consulted on with Risk Management Authorities.
- 114 enquiries and referrals to Risk Management Authorities including Internal Drainage Boards and NCC Highways have been made

2.6.5. A number of key learning outcomes and measures will be incorporated into future revisions of Norfolk County Council's Flood and Water Management Enforcement Protocol and Flood Investigation Protocol which will include:

- A review of the evidence criteria and threshold used to initiate a formal flood investigation and or enforcement, taking into account other Lead local Flood Authorities protocols
- Initiating an assessment of local watercourse networks to identify key flow paths that affect risk to properties. This process would involve seeking agreement from all partners as to the criteria used in this project. The outputs of this approach would support the decision making process associated with enforcement activities under the Land Drainage Act 1991.
- An ongoing review of partnership working with Risk Management Authorities to ensure effective coordination in resolving flood events experienced by residents and/or communities.

2.6.6. Norfolk County Council's Flood Investigation Protocol was presented to, and endorsed by, the Environment Transport and Development Overview and Scrutiny Panel in March 2013. It is published on Norfolk County Council's website. An Enforcement Protocol for Norfolk County Councils powers and duties as a Lead Local Flood Authority was approved by Cabinet in March 2013 and has also been published on the County Council website.

2.7. **Audit**

- 2.7.1. The service has been subject to two internal audits, the first concluded on 8 May 2012 and the second concluded on 24 April 2013. Both Audits found the service to meet the 'acceptable' standard set out by Norfolk Audit Services.

2.8. **Legal Commencements since 24 April 2012**

- 2.8.1. Commencement Order No.7 dated 30 July 2012 provided the County Council (in addition to District Councils, Internal Drainage Boards and the Environment Agency) with new powers to designate structures and features that affect flood risk. A significant future commencement scheduled for Autumn 2014 is the introduction of Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS). This is an area of the Act which has been subject to significant delay. For further information on this area of work see Section 2.9 below.

2.9. **SuDS**

- 2.9.1. Schedule 3 of the Flood and Water Management Act 2010 states that construction work which has drainage implications (including permitted development) may not be commenced unless a drainage system for the work has been approved by Norfolk County Council. Upon commencement of this duty, Norfolk County Council will be conferred new status as a Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) Approving Body or SAB. Schedule 3 also states that drainage systems, if constructed as approved and Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) consultation consistent with national standards, should be adopted by Norfolk County Council where they serve more than a single property. This adoption would charge Norfolk County Council with the maintenance of that drainage system.
- 2.9.2. The previous Cabinet Scrutiny report (24 July 2012) stated that SuDS duties were to be commenced in October 2013. However this planned implementation has been delayed on a number of occasions. As of January 2014 the Government has promised to lay before Parliament relevant SuDS secondary legislation by April 2014. It was stated that this secondary legislation would include an implementation date for future SuDS duties.
- 2.9.3. Three reports on SuDS have been submitted over the last 2 years. A report was submitted to ETD OSP in March 2012 updating the panel on then pending SuDS duties. A report on the options for delivering SuDS was submitted to ETD OSP in July 2012 and then to Cabinet in September 2012. At this meeting Cabinet resolved that;
1. the Sustainable Drainage System Approving Body approvals be dovetailed with the planning process both at district level with Local Planning Authorities and with the County Council for County Council applications, with an interim service drawing on the resources available as part of ETD's existing Partnership

contract with Mott MacDonald if required.

2. general pre-application advice be provided free of charge, and individual application specific pre-application advice be charged for, to deliver a cost neutral service.
3. a further report be brought to Cabinet once the Government had responded to the consultation and the detailed service design had been worked up

- 2.9.4. Following several meetings with senior officers from Norfolk LPAs a delivery model involving CNC Building Control was identified as a possible delivery vehicle for SuDS services at the LPA level. This model was dependent upon a number of factors namely;
- Government providing appropriate detail and guidance to enable forward planning to be sufficiently accurate so as to limit the risk to partner authorities.
 - CNC securing contracts to provide complete service delivery across Norfolk's LPA's, (currently they only provide services to 4 LPAs)
- 2.9.5. Four District Councils in Norfolk are partners in CNC Building Control. There are plans to expand the CNC Partnership and to develop a regional Building Control service, the latter supported by government funding. A key benefit to customers from a shared model is the integration with Planning services - offering a comprehensive service to customers.
- 2.9.6. Detailed discussions were held with three of the four CNC local authority partners (Borough Council of King's Lynn & West Norfolk, South Norfolk District Council and Breckland District Council). These discussions indicated that the SUDS work could well feature in a future service offering. The current CNC partner Authorities and those considering joining either CNC Building Control or the regional service are aware and, in principle, supportive of these models delivering SUDS work. CNC believe the governance models are already in place and partnership working is effective. However, a lack of clarity of the financial implications for all parties e.g. lack of Defra approved fee structures and a maintenance funding process has made an early decision difficult. CNC remain of the view that a shared district model can deliver the SUDS work most effectively, and they are content to work with Norfolk County Council to monitor the implications as they unfold, and when a clear business proposition can be made which benefits local authorities and our customers, this will be put forward.
- 2.9.7. DEFRA recently updated the draft National Standards that Government previously consulted on in March 2012. However there are some very crucial elements of the standards and the guidance yet to be formally published, these specifically include guidance and statutory instruments regarding SuDS maintenance and funding including fee structures. The Government had promised to lay before Parliament relevant SuDS secondary legislation by April 2014 and that this would include an implementation date for future SuDS duties. Looking at the draft standards in their current form they are insufficient without the guidance and serve more as a set of

guiding principles. Officers attended the DEFRA Capacity-Building workshop held in October 2013 where drafts of the national standards and guidance were made available. These however, failed to substantially build upon information previously provided as part of the consultation in early 2012.

- 2.9.8. It is clear that there is still much work needed to complete the standards, guidance and secondary legislation. It is likely that there is not going to be sufficient time built in to the process for the guidance to be scrutinised and agreed by all stakeholders before the new SuDS approval system begins. This is a cause for concern as this will affect the technical capacity that is available to deliver a robust service from the initial point of commencement.
 - 2.9.9. Due to the tight timescales and lack of clarity associated with Governments planned implementation of SuDS legislation for major developments only, Norfolk County Council plans to initially deliver an internal SuDS service dovetailed with its current planning and maintenance functions. Inline with Government requirements this service is reliant upon LPA's to forward information and applications received as part of a SuDS combined application. This work is a statutory requirement and not covered by the application fee which is intended to cover validation and determination.
3. **Resource Implications:** This report sets out how NCC is currently applying its resources to meet LLFA duties.
 - 3.1. **Finance:** No new implications, delivery of programmes and projects will involve the drawing of significant external funding working across the Norfolk Water Management Partnership. The intention is for SuDS delivery to be achieved on a cost neutral basis however the Council does not yet have sight of Governments intended funding mechanism for maintenance and confirmed interim fee structure for SuDS applications.
 - 3.2. **Staff:** No new implications.
 - 3.3. **Property:** No new implications.
 - 3.4. **IT:** No new implications
 4. **Other Implications**
 - 4.1. **Legal Implications:** The Flood and Water Management Act 2010 introduces new statutory duties on Norfolk County Council. These are outlined in the report. Further local legal /statutory guidance is ongoing
 - 4.2. **Human Rights:** No issues arising from this report.
 - 4.3. **Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA):** No issues arising from this report however an Equality Impact Assessment will have to be undertaken for the Local Flood Risk Management Strategy prior to public consultation.

- 4.4. **Communications:** The Environment Agency published publically available surface water flood mapping in December 2013. This has implications for the authority to assist interpretation of this mapping for members of the public. The Local Flood Risk Management Strategy (LFRMS) will have to undergo public consultation and consultation with all Risk Management Authorities (RMAs) identified under the Act prior to the Strategy's adoption by the Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA). Under the FWMA there is a duty for all RMA's to cooperate with the LLFA and to act consistently with the LFRMS.
- 4.5. **Health and Safety Implications:** No issues arising from this report.
- 4.6. **Environmental Implications:** This report addresses issues associated with adaptation to the impacts of climate change, supporting communities and RMAs to plan for and respond to increasing intensities and frequency of surface and ground water flood events. All projects and regulatory roles are required to take fully account of the Water Framework Directive.
- 4.7. **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.
5. **Section 17 – Crime and Disorder Act**
- 5.1. Not applicable
6. **Risk Implications/Assessment**
- 6.1. Norfolk has been recognised as the 10th most at-risk area in the UK. As such, failure to implement the provisions, duties and regulations within new and emerging legislation would put Norfolk properties at greater risk of flooding in the longer term and reduce the potential for drawing in funding to Norfolk to reduce or mitigate against flood risk.

Recommendation / Action Required

- (i) Members note progress on the delivery of the County Council's duties under the Flood and Water Management Act
- (ii) Members endorse the approaches taken to deliver an effective and efficient flood risk management service.

Background Papers

Appendix A: Norfolk catchment, flood risk and 2015-16 indicative allocation of GiA funding map

Appendix B: Glossary of terms

Officer Contact

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

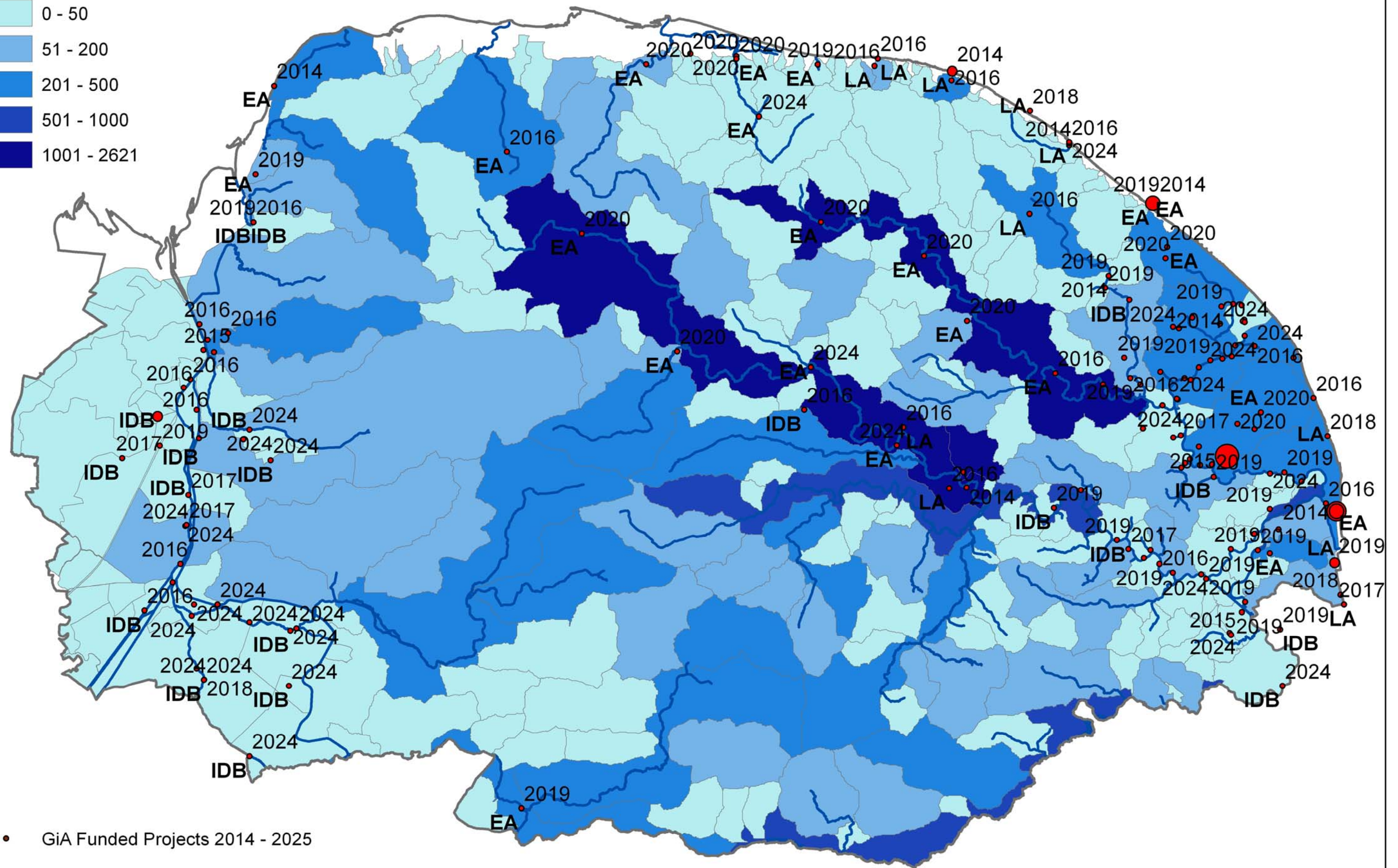
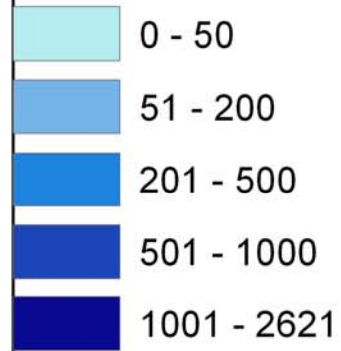
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Legend

No. Properties at Risk of Flooding 1:30 Event



• GiA Funded Projects 2014 - 2025

1:300,000

Norfolk catchment, flood risk and 2015-16 indicative allocation of GiA funding map

Appendix B: Glossary of terms

Below is a glossary of terms frequently used in flood and water management;

Catchment	The area contributing surface water runoff flow to a point on a drainage or river system. Can be divided into sub-catchments.
EA	Environment Agency
Flood	Section 1 of the Flood and Water Management Act 2010 states that <i>“Flood” includes any case where land not normally covered by water becomes covered by water.</i> For the purposes of the Flood and Water Management Act 2010 a flood does not include a flood from any part of a sewerage system, unless wholly or partly caused by an increase in the volume of rainwater (including snow and other precipitation) entering or otherwise affecting the system, or a flood cause by a burst water main (within the meaning given by section 219 of the Water Industry Act 1991).
Flood and Water Management Act 2010 (FWMA)	Part of the UK Government's response to Sir Michael Pitt's Report on the Summer 2007 floods, the aim of which is to clarify the legislative framework for managing surface water flood risk in England.
Flood Risk	A risk in respect of flood.
Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA)	Local Authority responsible for local flood risk management, (in Norfolk this is Norfolk County Council)
LFRMS	Local Flood Risk Management Strategy
Local Flood Risk	Local Flood Risk is defined by the Flood and Water Management Act 2010 as being flood risk from surface runoff, groundwater and ordinary watercourses.
Main river	Section 113 of the Water Resources Act 1991 states that <i>“main river” means a watercourse shown as such on a main river map and includes any structure or appliance for controlling or regulating the flow of water into, in or out of the channel which (a) is a structure or appliance situated in the channel or in any part of the banks of the channel; and (b) is not a structure or appliance vested in or controlled by an internal drainage board;</i>
NWMP	Norfolk Water Management Partnership
Ordinary watercourse	Both Section 6 (3) of the Flood and Water Management Act 2010 and Section 72 (1) of the Land Drainage Act 1991 state that; <i>“Ordinary Watercourse” means a watercourse that does not form part of a main river.</i> (see definition of a Watercourse below)
Risk	Section 2 of the Flood and Water Management Act 2010 states <i>“Risk” means a risk in respect of an occurrence assessed and expressed (as for insurance</i>

	<i>and scientific purposes) as a combination of the probability of the occurrence with its potential consequences.” Section 2 also states ““Flood risk” means a risk in respect of flood.”</i>
Risk Management	Means anything done for the purpose of; [a] analysing a risk, [b] assessing a risk, [c] reducing a risk, [d] reducing a component in the assessment of a risk, [e] altering the balance of factors combined in assessing a risk, [f] otherwise taking action in respect of a risk or a factor relevant to the assessment of a risk (including action for the purpose of flood defence).
Risk Management Authority (RMA)	Organisations that have a key role in flood and coastal erosion risk management as defined by the Flood and Water Management Act 2010. RMA’s are; [a] the Environment Agency [b] a lead local flood authority [c] a district council for an area for which there is not unitary authority [d] an internal drainage board [e] a water company [f] a highway authority (this is a term defined by the Flood and Water Management Act 2010)
Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS)	SuDS are a more natural approach to managing the rainfall and surface water drainage for a development. SuDS are designed to mimic or improve the natural drainage of a greenfield catchment.
SuDS Approval Body (SAB)	The body which approves and, where appropriate, adopts SuDS. It is the Unitary authority for the area in which a drainage system is located, or in which it is to be constructed or if there is no Unitary authority, the County or County Borough council for the area. (In Norfolk this is Norfolk County Council).
Surface Runoff	Section 6 of the Flood and Water Management Act 2010 (FWMA) defines “surface runoff” as; <i>“rainwater (including snow and other precipitation) which (a) is on the surface of the ground (whether or not it is moving), and (b) has not entered a watercourse, drainage system or public sewer.”</i>
Watercourse	Section 6 of the Flood and Water Management Act 2010 states that “Watercourse” has the meaning given by section 72 (1) of the Land Drainage Act 1991. Section 72 (1) of the Land Drainage Act 1991 states that; <i>““Watercourse” includes all rivers and streams and all ditches, drains, cuts, culverts, dikes, sluices, sewers (other than public sewers within the meaning of the Water Industry Act 1991) and passages, through which water flows.”</i>
WFD	Water Framework Directive
WLMP	Water Level Management Plan

Rural Isolation Working Group

Suggested approach by the Member Working Group

1. Background

- 1.1 Cabinet Scrutiny Committee set up a small working group in 2012 with a remit to look the issue of isolation in rural areas of Norfolk. Having acknowledged how wide ranging this issue was the working group agreed that the scrutiny would focus on how the County Council as an organisation could make a difference to feelings of isolation in rural areas and specifically to address what we are currently doing to alleviate rural isolation in the County and what further steps we could take.
- 1.2 We have been mindful that both District Councils and organisations such as the Rural Community Council play a significant role within our local communities however our work has focused solely on what we as a County Council can do. Likewise many of the original issues within the scope of this scrutiny have been subsequently addressed by the development of the 'Rural Development Strategy' which the Norfolk Rural Development Strategy Steering Group has produced with the County Council as lead partner.
- 1.3 We have been encouraged by the range of services and projects in place across the County Council supporting people living in rural communities. Our report therefore recognises the work that is being undertaken in the Council already and identifies areas of good practice. It is hoped that the recommendations outlined in the report will help the Council to build on this good work. One of the key outcomes that we hope will be achieved by the scrutiny is that the County Council can become more effective at signposting our services and asking communities how we can help them to access the services they need. We need to be more effective in utilising the services that we already provide within our communities, ensuring that they are targeted more effectively and to think about the impact that our policies and services have in rural communities.

2. Suggested Approach

It is suggested that Cabinet Scrutiny Committee:

- considers the attached report from the working group
- Supports the recommendations of the working group and forwards them to Cabinet for consideration

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**Scrutiny Support Manager
01603 228913**



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Cabinet Scrutiny Committee

Rural Isolation in Norfolk

Final Report of the Scrutiny Working Group

April 2014

1. Chairman's foreword

The County Council has a key role to play in enabling and supporting Norfolk's communities to become strong, sustainable and caring. In addition, as Councillors we also have a key role to play within our own communities in listening to the needs of local people and seeking ways to improve the communities in which people live. We are in the unique position to be able to assist people in accessing support and services to alleviate feelings of isolation. We can encourage and support community activity in rural areas where access to public transport is limited and encourage better use of community buildings and outdoor spaces.

In the duration of its work the Working group has had several changes of membership and chairmanship. I would therefore like to thank those members no longer on the working group for their early investigations. I would also like to thank all those Officers who have talked to us about what the County Council is doing to alleviate rural isolation in the County.

This report very much focuses on what we as a County Council can do to alleviate isolation in rural areas of the County. It identifies the excellent work that is ongoing across the Council in local communities, in particular through our library service, social care and travel schemes. Many of the areas originally identified for scrutiny by the working group are now being addressed within the 'Norfolk Rural Development Strategy' and therefore to avoid duplication we have not pursued these issues further. We welcome the Strategy, particularly its focus on creating economic growth and developing skills for young people in rural areas.

The working group has recognised the importance of working together across all our services to ensure that we can get the most out of any available resources to address rural isolation. We hope this report provides a useful reference point for members to highlight the work that the County Council is doing and also to support us as Councillors to assist within our local communities.

Brian Watkins
Chairman of the Working Group

2. Introduction

- 2.1 In March 2012 Cabinet Scrutiny Committee reviewed their forward work programme for the forthcoming year and agreed that they wished to undertake a piece of scrutiny work looking at rural isolation within Norfolk. The issue was a cross cutting one affecting a number of different County Council portfolios and therefore was considered an appropriate topic for Cabinet Scrutiny to scrutinise. A small cross party working group was set up to scrutinise this issue further comprising of the following members:

Hilary Cox (in the Chair)
Alexandra Kemp
Mark Kiddle Morris
Marie Strong
Colleen Walker
Tony White

- 2.2 Since the County Council elections in May 2013 the working group has had several changes of membership and chairmanship. The current membership is as follows:

Brian Watkins (in the Chair)
Mark Kiddle Morris
William Richmond
Tony White

- 2.3 The working group first met in September 2012 and acknowledged that the issue was a wide ranging one which could potentially link into the work of partner organisations. In light of the range of issues for consideration the working group agreed to focus scrutiny on how the County Council as an organisation could make a difference to feelings of isolation in rural areas and specifically to address what we are currently doing to alleviate rural isolation in the County and what further steps we could take.
- 2.4 We have been mindful of the work of partner organisations such as the Rural Community Council and District Councils, and the significant impact the services that they provide can have on supporting our rural communities. While the findings from the working group have focused on how the County Council can make a difference they will be circulated to partners and will hopefully support the work that they do.
- 2.5 This report is intended as a first step in identifying some of the areas where the County Council can make a difference in rural areas. It acknowledges that there are gaps in the areas that we have looked at as these issues have subsequently been addressed by the Rural Development Strategy; however it hopefully provides an initial overview from which the County Council can build.

3. Rural Communities in Norfolk

3.1 In 2011 the population of rural England was 9.3 million, or 17.6% of the total population¹. Norfolk is one of the most rural counties in England along with Cornwall and Yorkshire. It is a large, predominantly rural county of 549,751 hectares, and has a population of 865,300², around half of which live in rural areas that are characterised by small villages and market towns. DEFRA classifies what constitutes a rural area based on 'settlement form and dwelling density rather than the economic function or the character or use of the land'. Urban areas are classified as the connected built up areas identified by Ordnance Survey mapping that have resident populations above 10,000 people (2011 Census). Rural areas are those areas that are not urban, i.e. consisting of settlements below 10,000 people or are open countryside.³ Population statistics, published in 'Norfolk Story' (June 2012), are available on the Norfolk Insight website <http://www.norfolkinsight.org.uk/> and provide a fuller profile of Norfolk's rural population as follows:

- 452,270 people live in rural areas, 53.2% of the total across Norfolk
- 16.6% of the population in rural areas in Norfolk are aged under-16, a lower proportion than across rural areas in England as a whole (17.9%)
- 27.6% of the population in rural areas in Norfolk are of pensionable age, a higher proportion than across rural areas in England as a whole (23.5%)
- Rural Norfolk has a higher proportion of lone parent households (14.7% of households with dependant children) than across rural England as a whole (14.3%).

4. Rural Isolation

4.1 For the purposes of this scrutiny we have used the definition of rural isolation as agreed in the report 'Impact on Reducing Rural Isolation' prepared for the Big Lottery Fund. This defines rural isolation as 'the feelings of powerlessness and disconnection experienced by individuals or groups as a consequence of living in a rural area'.⁴ The working group has acknowledged that such feelings may just as easily be experienced by groups or individuals living in urban areas. However, for the purposes of scrutiny this report will focus solely on rural areas.

4.2 The Commission for Rural Communities, in their Annual Report for 2006, identified three main causes of rural isolation in England:

- Lack of income and employment
- Lack of access to transport and other services
- Lack of contact with, and help from, relatives, friends and neighbours.

¹ Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs' - Statistical Digest of Rural England 2014 p9.

² Norfolk's Story, July 2013 (www.norfolk.gov.uk)

³ Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (www.defra.gov.uk)

⁴ 'Impact on Reducing Rural Isolation – Final Research Report' prepared for the Big Lottery Fund by Leisure Futures Ltd April 2011 page11.

Those most at risk of experiencing rural isolation were identified as⁵:

- People living alone
- People living in very remote locations
- The mentally ill and those with a disability of physical frailty
- Family Carers
- Young Families new to rural areas
- Children and young people
- Overseas migrants
- Black and minority ethnic

4.3 The working group has noted the considerable benefits and strengths of living in rural areas in Norfolk. Many rural communities have a good infrastructure of community buildings, pubs, post offices and village shops. Many have tight knit social networks that can act as informal support for vulnerable groups within them. However the rural location of many communities in Norfolk can also bring many other issues. A report by the Oxford Consultants for Social Inclusion and Norfolk Rural Community Council (April 2010) 'The rural share of deprivation in Norfolk' provides some key facts on rural deprivation in Norfolk, as below:

- Deprivation and low income - 47,360 people in rural areas are income deprived – this is 42.7% of the total across Norfolk
- Worklessness – 19,125 people are receiving 'out-of-work' benefits (Job Seekers Allowance and Incapacity Benefit) in rural areas – this is 41.7% of the total across Norfolk
- Skills - 99,705 adults in rural areas have no qualifications, 53.5% of the total number of adults with no qualifications across Norfolk
- Health - 38,155 people in rural areas report themselves as having a limiting long-term illness – this is 50.8% of all people with limiting long-term illness in the county
- Housing - 11,290 rural households lack central heating, 47.0% of all such households across Norfolk
- Access to services - 26,065 rural households have no car or van, 36.6% of the total across Norfolk.

Deprivation is a key contributing factor to rural isolation. People on lower incomes are less likely to be able to access a broad range of services, facilities and social contacts. They are also more likely to experience poor health and wellbeing.

5 Norfolk Rural Development Strategy 2013-2020

5.1 In October 2013 the Norfolk Rural Development Strategy Steering Group produced a

⁵ 'Impact on Reducing Rural Isolation' p16

'Norfolk Rural Development Strategy 2013 - 2020'. The strategy has been produced through the Steering Group with the County Council as lead partner in conjunction with other partners including the Norfolk Rural Community Council, National Farmers Union and the New Anglia Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP), and is focused on how rural areas can be developed so that the rural economy can grow. A full copy of the Strategy can be found on the County Council's website <http://www.norfolk.gov.uk/view/NCC126249>.

5.2 The working group are mindful that many of the areas we originally identified for development are being addressed within this Rural Development Strategy. The Strategy focuses in particular on creating economic growth in rural areas however it touches upon a number of areas which were originally in the remit of the working group including:

- Business start ups
- Improved connectivity through broadband and mobile phones
- Quality of life and social inclusion
- Health and Social Care
- Schools and skills for young people in rural areas
- Housing

5.3 The working group has welcomed the development of the strategy and in order to avoid duplication with work being undertaken we have not pursued these issues further. In addition since this working group was established a member working group has reported to the Community Services Overview and Scrutiny Panel on fuel poverty in Norfolk and to avoid any overlaps the working group has not pursued this issue in any depth. The working group has therefore just focused attention on a few key areas not addressed by the Strategy where we believe the County Council can assist in reducing isolation in rural areas.

6 Areas where we can make a difference

6.1 In light of the development of the Rural Development Strategy and recognising the need to avoid duplicating work being done elsewhere within the Council the working group has focused attention on those key areas where we believe the County Council can assist in reducing isolation in rural areas. We have specifically focussed on how the County Council can:

- use existing technology infrastructure in rural areas to allow people in rural areas to access our services.
- support demand responsive transport in rural areas to reduce isolation in rural areas.
- support and enable our rural communities to become strong, sustainable and caring.

7. Technological Infrastructure

- 7.1 As we build upon our technological infrastructure in the County there have been increased benefits to those living in rural areas. For those that are rurally isolated the internet can provide a vital link in which to socially interact with friends and family, build businesses, reduce the need to travel and access on line services. Increased accessibility of technology in rural areas can go some way to reduce feelings of isolation in all age groups through the use of social media and access to services online.
- 7.2 However, Broadband is currently poor or non existent in many rural locations and we have identified that the lack of broadband infrastructure can disadvantage rural areas. The County Council through the 'Better Broadband for Norfolk' (BBFN) campaign has ensured that by 2015 more than 80% of Norfolk's premises are expected to be able to access superfast broadband (24 Megabits per second and above). A further member working group has been looking at the issue of broadband and mobile coverage in Norfolk, including overseeing engagement with the Government's Mobile Infrastructure Project (MIP). We have therefore not considered this issue in depth other than acknowledging how vital good mobile phone and broadband infrastructure can be in rural areas and welcoming the work of the member working group.
- 7.3 The working group are however mindful that increased use of technology can bring with it its own problems and increase feelings of rural isolation. While reducing the need to travel to market towns to access services helps those for whom transport is a problem, the benefits of being able to socially interact with others, for instance in day care centres and child care facilities, particularly for those more vulnerable members of rural communities, should not be underestimated. Likewise there are benefits for the local economy in enabling people to access local businesses and services in market towns.
- 7.4 While acknowledging the limitations of the availability and speed of new technology and its direct social contact limitations the working group has highlighted some areas for further investigation as to how we can use technology in rural areas to reduce feelings of isolation. Key to this is how the County Council provides information about services to Norfolk residents. Currently we signpost information through a number of different ways, however improvements could be made by tailoring information rather than adopting a 'one size fits all' approach across the County.
- 7.5 There are opportunities for the County Council to try and use our existing technology infrastructure to the benefit of rural communities through a number of different areas. The working group have identified the following as key areas for development:
- Improving the quality and access to the County Council's self service information. This may involve increased targeting of relevant information in rural communities if appropriate.
 - Developing how the County Council uses social media to advertise and allow the public to access our services, in particular when signposting services for young people such as education and transport services.

- Encouraging hard to reach groups to use technology to access our services, for example training older people in how to use IT within our libraries.

8. Transport

8.1 Good transport links are vital for connecting our rural communities and access to transport is key in making our rural communities less isolated. In many rural areas people have to travel greater distances to access services such as doctors' surgeries and job centres. Difficulties accessing vital services can increase feelings of isolation in rural areas particularly for those that may rely on public transport such as young people, older people and those with mobility problems. Likewise road fuel costs can have a significant impact on travelling from remote communities particularly for those on lower incomes.

8.2 The working group has recognised the economic and social benefits of having good transport links in rural areas. We are conscious of the funding pressures that the County Council faces in providing transport in rural areas and have looked at some of the initiatives being undertaken by the County Council to move towards more demand responsive transport in rural areas. We have identified a number of key areas where the County Council is providing affordable and demand responsive transport solutions for people to access services:

- Community transport schemes have been successful in providing the means for people, particularly in isolated rural communities, to access shopping facilities, children's centres, and libraries and to attend appointments. In addition to supporting the vibrancy of local market town economies they also provide a vital social network for isolated older people in rural communities.
- The Flexibus Scheme operates in areas which do not have regular bus services and focuses on linking villages to market towns and transport interchanges for onward travel linking in with commercial routes.
- Kickstart is the County's wheels to work scheme, which loans mopeds to people seeking work, education or training who are struggling with transport. It assists around 300 people a year, predominantly people on low incomes between the ages of 18 and 24.
- While rising fuel costs clearly is an issue for residents and businesses in Norfolk it also impacts upon the cost of transport services provided by NCC, including home to school transport, adult social care transport and subsidised local bus services. Uncertainty around the future cost of fuel can push up the price quoted by operators for contracts, but having an integrated transport service helps ensure the County Council gets best value on contracts.

8.3 The working group has identified a number of areas for development within the County Council:

- Encouraging 'trip attractors' (i.e. the reason that people need to travel such as

doctors appointments) to be more flexible in providing their services. One example we looked at was whether the clinics in doctors' surgeries could be scheduled at times to fit in with community transport to allow a number of patients from rural areas to attend more easily.

- Exploring ways in which the County Council can raise awareness of Community Transport schemes and encourage more community volunteer drivers
- Developing existing community facilities to provide services to people in rural communities e.g. health and job seeker advice in local libraries.
- Creating better opportunities to jointly commission services across departments for instance transport infrastructure in rural areas alongside provision for children and young people and better connections with local volunteer transport schemes
- The working group discussed the benefits of cycling for people in the County however the limitations for many to do so in rural areas were recognised. We have noted that a 'Cycle City Ambition Grant' has been secured for Norwich, which will enable £3.7m to be used for cycling infrastructure in Norwich. This is very much focused on the urban area around Norwich however it is suggested that any lessons learnt from securing this funding could be used in developing any future rural projects.

9 Working with Sustainable Communities

9.1 One of the core roles of the County Council is to enable and support Norfolk's communities to become strong, sustainable and caring. We also have a key role in promoting our rural communities. This has provided a focus for the working group to look at how the County Council can undertake this role specifically in rural areas. We can seek to reduce feelings of isolation through enabling our communities to support themselves and to work together to build resilience. The working group has recognised that it is often the slow gradual changes in rural communities that can make them vulnerable, such as loss of amenities or access to services.

9.2 Emerging from our scrutiny has been the need to think more creatively about how the County Council provides its services and information. The working group considered excellent examples of how the County Council is providing its services within rural communities. Some of the examples of the services that we have identified include:

- Norfolk Library and Information Services has a significant presence in communities through library buildings and mobile libraries. Out of the 366,371 households in Norfolk 93% live either within 2 miles of a branch library or 0.25 miles of a mobile library stop.
- The Highway Rangers work with Parish Councils to improve the 'street scene' by undertaking tasks such as: cleaning road signs; cutting back hedges; clearing out gullies, ditches and drains; and making minor repairs to footpaths

and kerbs

- The Youth Advisory Boards are led by young people and established in the seven district council areas to oversee how young people's needs are being met in their local area. YABs have been nationally recognised as an innovative response to meeting young people's needs and as an effective example of 'localism' in practice.

9.3 One of the ways in which we can help to build resilience in rural communities is through working effectively both across County Council services and with outside partner organisations.

- The County Council can have a role to play when services close within local communities. Whilst the County Council has no direct control over the closure of pubs, shops or post offices within rural communities such services can be vital to the communities they serve both from a social and economic perspective. When the Post Office implemented its last round of closures the County Council secured money from the Leader's Strategic Ambitions Fund to help Norfolk post offices to diversify.
- Providers of health and social care services continue to work with voluntary groups and communities themselves to support people to live independently and safely in their own homes.
- Exploring the opportunities that exist for services to 'piggy-back' off one another, providing simplified and accessible services in one place e.g. Police and Community Support Officers travelling into communities on mobile library buses.
- There is evidence of extensive volunteering in rural areas, to support a variety of different projects and services, such as: schools, both governors and friends; Parish Councils; Village Hall committees; social groups; and more. The County Council needs to find ways of building upon and supporting this volunteering base.

9.4 One of the key questions we have asked is whether the Council could be more creative in thinking about how it provides services such as those outlined above. Officers that we spoke to were positive about finding ways in which we could use the facilities and services that we provide more productively. Some of the opportunities that the working group have identified are:

- How we use our mobile libraries and whether we could use them to combine with other services. Examples that we have looked at include using the vehicles as a means to provide information about Council services within communities' e.g. public health. In addition other services could also use the mobile libraries as a means to access rural communities such as Police Community Support Officers, County Councillors, and Trading Standards Officers. Libraries can also provide a link with other organisations and services such as playgroups and book clubs which can help reduce feelings of isolation in rural areas.

- How the County Council can be more creative in finding solutions that respond to local needs rather than just providing a ‘one size fits all’ service and how we can ‘rural proof’ our policies.
- How we work with service providers in local communities to ‘piggy back’ other County Council services.
- Thinking creatively about how we use the facilities that we have already in local communities and how we can work more effectively with other agencies. This may be County Council owned buildings such as Children’s Centres, libraries or museums or other community facilities such as village halls, faith centres. The working group has also considered whether improvements could be made to use facilities in school buildings outside of school hours for local communities.
- Whether we could think more creatively about how we can encourage and offer incentives to volunteers to help with our services and make the most of the opportunities that people have to volunteer in rural communities

10. Role of County Councillors

- 10.1 One of the cross cutting themes that has emerged from our scrutiny is that of the role that County Councillors can play in developing strong rural communities. Councillors are in a key position to be able to listen to local people and work with the Council and partners such as schools and Parish Councils to improve the communities in which people live. As Councillors we are in a unique position as a key contact point for people in rural areas and our Parish Councils to assist communities in accessing services or find innovative ways to provide them. We ask that County Council departments are mindful of how they can utilise the unique position that members have within communities to provide them with information or support them in enabling their communities
- 10.2 As local members we each have been able to bring concerns affecting our own communities to the forefront in this working group. We have been mindful that many of the anecdotal issues that we have raised through our scrutiny may be issues that also affect other rural areas or may just be unique to our own local communities. We consider that one way forward would be to gather local intelligence from our County Councillors on the issues and problems affecting Norfolk’s communities. This intelligence could then be used to map gaps in service provision in rural areas and understand how best we can support local members. It is suggested that further training be provided for members on their community role and how they can support their local communities and it is hoped that this information will be used to focus any training where it is most needed.

11. Conclusions

- 11.1 The working group is encouraged by the range of services and projects in place across the County Council supporting people living in rural communities. This report provides a reference point for where we are at, highlights some of our observations and areas for recommendation. Many of the original issues within the scope of this

study are being taken forward by the Rural Development Strategy in conjunction with partners across the County and therefore we have been more limited in our work than was originally intended.

- 11.2 One of the key outcomes we hope will come out of the scrutiny is that the County Council can become more effective at signposting our services asking communities how we can help them to access the services they need. We need to be more effective in utilising the services that we already provide within communities, ensure that they are targeted effectively and think about the impact that our policies and services have in rural communities.

12. Recommendations

The working group have identified a number of areas for further investigation within the Council which are outlined within this report. These areas are wide ranging and therefore the working group have focused on the following overarching recommendations to take them forward:

- That County Council Departments and service areas be encouraged to work together to co-ordinate the County Council's response to dealing with isolation in Norfolk's rural communities, particularly in relation to transport, service outreach and information signposting. In order to raise the profile of rural issues it is suggested that this be linked into the departmental service planning process for 2014-15.
- That the County Council embraces how we work with our local communities exploring what opportunities there may be in the Council's developing 'enabling communities' approach to tackling rural isolation. In particular this should focus on the opportunities for encouraging participation in and ongoing support for volunteering in local communities
- That the relevant body in the new committee structure has a role in monitoring the implementation of the Rural Development Strategy 2013-2020.
- That further investigation is undertaken by the Member Support and Development Advisory group into how County Councillors can be supported in their local divisions to respond to issues affecting isolation and what training could be provided to assist them. It is suggested that member-led local intelligence on local needs in their areas is gathered and cross referenced to help identify how widespread isolation issues are across rural areas and where there are gaps in provision.
- That should the County Council agree to the creation of Area Committees in the new committee structure then these are instrumental in assisting in co-ordinating a local response to issues of rural isolation in their areas.

Norfolk County Council: Cabinet Scrutiny Committee
Terms of reference for scrutiny of Rural Isolation
Scrutiny to be undertaken by a small working group
<p>Membership</p> <p>Hilary Cox (in the Chair) Alexandra Kemp Mark Kiddle Morris Marie Strong Colleen Walker Tony White</p> <p>Officer Support:</p> <p>Sonya Blythe – Committee Officer Daniel Harry – Planning, Performance and Partnerships Manager Karen Haywood – Scrutiny Support Manager</p>
<p>Reasons for scrutiny</p> <p>Cabinet Scrutiny Committee held a work programming session in March 2012 to review the forward work programme for the year and suggest future topics for consideration.</p> <p>The Committee raised the issue of ‘Rural Isolation’ as a potential future topic for consideration as it cut across a number of different Council portfolios.</p>
<p>Purpose and objectives of study</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To establish what Norfolk County Council is currently doing to alleviate rural isolation in the County • To determine what steps Norfolk County Council can take to further alleviate rural isolation in the County
<p>Issues and Questions to be addressed</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are the causes of social isolation in rural areas and who are most at risk from it • What is the extent of the problem of rural isolation in Norfolk • What policies does Norfolk County Council have in place to alleviate rural isolation in communities in the county? Do any NCC policies have the potential to increase rural isolation • How does Norfolk County Council work with other partners, such as the NHS, to address issues of social isolation in rural areas • Examples of good practice from other local authorities to alleviate rural isolation • What impact do national/local government policies have on rural communities in particular when compared to urban areas and to what extent do they further rural

isolation. Possible issues for consideration include:

- Broadband
 - Rising fuel costs
 - Closure of facilities in rural areas – post offices, pubs
 - Transport policy – Public transport and transport infrastructure
 - Initiatives for older/younger people
 - Impact of adult social care policies
 - Impact of local planning and development decisions/policies
 - Changes to policies for younger people – removal of EMA, closure of Connexions service, community activities, distance to travel to job centres
 - Public Health
 - Jobs and Training
 - Housing (e.g. 2nd Homes driving prices beyond the reach of local working population)
 - Face to face support to enable people to start up businesses
- What impact have social and economic changes had on rural isolation
 - Demography of rural populations
 - Rural economy
 - Strength of community identity
 - Changes to ethnicity of rural populations
 - Family and social network dispersement

Possible people to speak to:

Assistant Director of Travel and Transport Services
Assistant Director of Economic Development and Strategy
Director of Community Services
Cabinet Member for Planning and Transportation
Cabinet Member for Economic Development
Cabinet member for Adult and Community Services
Norfolk Rural Community Council
Norfolk Association of Local Councils

Deadlines and timetable

To be agreed by Cabinet Scrutiny Committee

Terms of reference agreed by

Cabinet Scrutiny Committee on 29th May 2012

Programme of meetings

Meeting date	Topic area	People who assisted in scrutiny
25/09/12	Terms of Reference and background report	
11/12/12	Environment, Transport and Development: Economic Development and Trading Standards	Jo Middleton, Economic Strategy and Commissioning Manager Fiona McDiarmid, Assistant Director - Economic Development and Strategy David Collinson, Assistant Director - Public Protection
13/12/12	Environment, Transport and Development	Tracy Jessop, Assistant Director – Travel and Transport Services
25/02/13	Children's Services	Tim Eyres, Head of 11-19 Strategy and Commissioning. Sarah Spall, 0-11 Strategy and Commissioning Manager
28/02/13	Community Services	Jennifer Holland, Assistant Director of Community Services (Cultural Services and Head of Libraries and Information) Sera Hall, Change Implementation Team Manager
26/03/13	Consideration of draft interim update report	
1/10/13	Rural Transport	Tracy Jessop, Assistant Director – Travel and Transport Services
4/2/2014	Consideration of Rural Development Strategy	Eliska Cheeseman, Economic Development