

**Cabinet**  
**Minutes of the Meeting held on Monday 3 February 2020 at**  
**10am in the Edwards Room, County Hall, Norwich**

**Present:**

Cllr Andrew Proctor	Chairman. Leader & Cabinet Member for Strategy & Governance.
Cllr Bill Borrett	Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, Public Health & Prevention.
Cllr Margaret Dewsbury	Cabinet Member for Communities & Partnerships.
Cllr John Fisher	Cabinet Member for Children's Services.
Cllr Tom FitzPatrick	Cabinet Member for Innovation, Transformation & Performance.
Cllr Andy Grant	Cabinet Member for Environment & Waste.
Cllr Andrew Jamieson	Cabinet Member for Finance
Cllr Greg Peck	Cabinet Member for Commercial Services & Asset Management.
Cllr Graham Plant	Vice-Chairman and Cabinet Member for Growing the Economy.
Cllr Martin Wilby	Cabinet Member for Highways, Infrastructure & Transport.

**Other Members Present:**

Cllr Steve Morpew	Cllr Danny Douglas
Cllr Alexandra Kemp	
Cllr Bev Spratt	
Cllr Brenda Jones	
Cllr Haydn Thirtle	

**Executive Directors Present:**

Tom McCabe	Executive Director of Community & Environmental Services and Head of Paid Service.
Gary Heathcote	Director of Commissioning (for Executive Director of Adult Social Services)
Helen Edwards	Chief Legal Officer and Monitoring Officer
Simon George	Executive Director of Finance & Commercial Services
Fiona McDiarmid	Executive Director of Strategy & Governance
Sara Tough	Executive Director of Children's Services

**1 Apologies for Absence**

There were no apologies for absence.

**2 Minutes**

The minutes from the Cabinet meeting held on Monday 13 January 2020 were agreed as an accurate record and signed by the Chairman.

### **3 Declaration of Interests**

There were no declarations made.

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

4.1 There were no items of urgent business.

### **5 Public Question Time**

5.1 The list of public questions and responses is attached at Appendix A.

5.2 As a supplementary question, Ms Jenn Parkhouse, on behalf of the Wensum Valley Alliance, asked if Norfolk County Council would now consider, in view of the fact the issue of mitigation for wildlife in general and bats in particular, regarding the Norwich Western Link had been brought into question by the broadcast of the "Inside Out" programme on BBC1 on Monday 27 January, if the Outline Business Case should be withdrawn from the DfT for reconsideration and revision.

The Chairman deferred the question to the Cabinet Member for Highways, Infrastructure & Transport who responded that the preferred route had been chosen and that Norfolk County Council would continue to work with Natural England, the Environment Agency and all statutory bodies on any mitigation measures required to ensure the project was successfully delivered.

5.3 As a supplementary question, Mr Robin Ward stated he managed a service which was working on Pathway 3 and asked if Norfolk County Council could put formal and quantifiable numbers on the Pathway 3 project which would allow his service to say they were providing jobs and getting people into work or volunteering or was the Pathway project more informal.

The Chairman deferred the question to the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Services, Public Health & Prevention who replied that one of the headline indicators would be the number of people in employment which, in Norfolk was about half of the achievement of comparator councils. He added that in order to get the best and most helpful outcomes, a suite of criteria would be something providers would be urged to deliver.

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

6.1 The list of Local Member questions and the responses is attached at Appendix B.

6.2 As a supplementary question, Cllr Ed Maxfield said that, whilst appreciating the matter was an internal matter for the Norfolk & Suffolk Foundation Trust (NSFT), he was slightly disappointed that the Chairman had not taken the opportunity to give a more forceful response. Cllr Maxfield added that, as Norfolk County Council worked closely with the Trust in a number areas, if the Chairman would take account of joint working situations and the impressions

cast on the County Council and the NSFT by this attitude to patients, clients, service users and if he would use the joint working arrangement to impress on the leadership of NSFT that the sort of behaviour exposed wasn't acceptable in a public sector organisation and express a desire to change the way they approached their concept of service to local people.

The Chairman responded that anything a public body could do to ensure the views of all public bodies were in accordance with our view was something we would want, as regarding perception and actual conduct, we would want to ensure everyone followed our lead.

- 6.3 Cllr Danny Douglas asked, as a supplementary question, and referring to the A47 towns, if the Leader would commit to examining Councillor Harry Clarke of Dereham (Breckland Council) to review the new rail improvement fund (announced on 30 January) regarding the restoration of rail services principally to Dereham, either via the existing railway or a new alignment via the A47 and further into Fakenham and elsewhere in Norfolk. He added that such a development could alleviate the massive gap in scheduled transport investment between road and sustainable transport.

The Chairman deferred the question to the Cabinet Member for Highways, Infrastructure & Transport who agreed to provide a written response to the question.

- 6.4 As a supplementary question Cllr Kemp said she was not reassured about the improvements in life chances for the children in the deprived area of South Lynn at the local secondary school, where the recent Ofsted report had judged the quality of education, behaviour and attitudes and the leadership and management inadequate. Cllr Kemp referred to the statement from Cabinet that there had been a dramatic reduction in the high number of exclusions and suspensions, although this was because the school roll was falling and she asked what Children's Services was doing to encourage a more child-centred ethos in KES, building confidence and self-esteem so children from disadvantaged homes and children in care could thrive and also end the current practice of children being warehoused for hours in detention doing no work and missing out on learning.

The Chairman deferred the question to the Cabinet Member for Children's Services who reassured Cllr Kemp that Children's Services was working well in King's Lynn. The exclusion numbers had fallen for permanent exclusions from 11 to zero through working with the school, the local community and parents. He added that fixed-term exclusions had reduced from a peak of 172 to 90-101 in a couple of months and was now down to 1 fixed-term exclusion. The Cabinet Member continued that this indicated exactly what work was being carried out with the local community, schools and parents and children to ensure children in King's Lynn were not disadvantaged.

- 6.5 Cllr Brenda Jones said that her question had asked for the numbers in each of the specific groups and she had hoped the response would reflect numbers for each group rather than a general total. As a supplementary question, Cllr Jones asked if she could have the specific numbers for each group.

The Leader deferred the question to Cllr Bill Borrett, Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, Public Health & Prevention who agreed to provide a written response if the information was available.

## **7 King's Lynn Transport Strategy and Implementation Plan**

- 7.1 Cabinet received the report by the Executive Director of Community & Environmental Services setting out the King's Lynn Transport Strategy and Implementation Plan.
- 7.2 The Executive Director of Community and Environmental Services highlighted that an evidence-based transport strategy for King's Lynn had been sought to close the lack of strategy. The plan was seen as the first step in that process by working with King's Lynn and West Norfolk Borough Council to identify the right schemes and highlight opportunities over the next five-plus years.
- 7.3 The Cabinet Member for Highways, Infrastructure & Transport said this was a very good starting point for King's Lynn by introducing the report and moving the recommendations.
- 7.4 The Cabinet Member for Finance welcomed the setting up of a steering group for this Policy, adding that the report was a useful starting point which provided a good foundation to build upon. The Cabinet Member added that he saw this as a menu of options rather than as a prescribed plan as there were a number of areas where the report was sub-optimal and which the steering group would help, particularly in the prioritisation of car parking in the town centre, improving bus times and increased bus usage. The Cabinet Member also asked if the steering group could widen its remit to include west Norfolk rather than purely King's Lynn on its own to gain a wider coordination of other initiatives and transport methods, particularly improvements to enable the dualling of the railway from Ely to King's Lynn in order to double train into King's Lynn which, in his opinion, should be included.

In response the Cabinet Member for Highways, Infrastructure & Transport agreed that this was a good starting point for the Steering Group to take on board some of the points raised and to decide its priorities for King's Lynn and whether it wanted to include west Norfolk in its remit.

- 7.5 The Vice-Chairman and Cabinet Member for Growing the Economy welcomed the report adding that this was something that had been in place in Great Yarmouth for approximately 20 years, with a steering group working with the County Council, on the back of which £200m of inward investment had been coming to Great Yarmouth. The Cabinet Member added that he was pleased to see King's Lynn and West Norfolk Borough Council were picking this up. He also agreed with the Cabinet Member for Finance comments about prioritising what was needed to ensure efforts were concentrated on the right priorities.
- 7.6 The Cabinet Member for Innovation, Transformation and Performance backed up the comments made by the Cabinet Member for Finance that the scope should be widened to include west Norfolk and not focus just on King's Lynn, as well as the comments about trains as King's Lynn was a popular choice for people in that area to catch trains to London as well as going North.

7.7 The Chairman summed up that the points made by the Cabinet Member for Highways, Infrastructure & Transport had highlighted in his introduction to the report as to what the project was, as well as highlighting that this was a starting point. He asked if the Executive Director of Community & Environmental Services wished to comment on the wider aspects of the project.

7.8 The Executive Director of Community & Environmental Services agreed that there was a challenge outside of King's Lynn and the aim of improving the accessibility and connectivity which would lead to improved economy and he reassured Cabinet that the Steering Group would work through the proposals and would not stop at the town boundary.

#### 7.9 **Decision**

Cabinet considered the report and **RESOLVED** to:

1. **Agree** and adopt the King's Lynn transport strategy and implementation plan.
2. **Establish** a West Norfolk Transport and Infrastructure Steering Group, consisting of elected Members from both Councils, to oversee and advise on these matters within the Borough area.
3. **Note** that work on a Sustainability Appraisal is being carried out in conjunction with work on the Local Transport Plan.

#### 7.10 **Alternative Options**

Refer to Cabinet report.

#### 7.11 **Reasons for Decision**

Over recent years Kings Lynn has not benefitted from significant funding from government sources like the New Anglia Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP). The Transport Strategy and Implementation Plan will provide a pipeline of schemes that have been derived from a sound evidence base and been informed by stakeholder opinion. Some measures are being developed further already and when funding sources are identified they can be taken forward for detailed design and construction. For other schemes in the implementation plan, these can be further developed to suit possible future funding programmes as appropriate, for example from the LEP.

### **8 The Blue Badge (Disabled Persons) Parking Scheme**

8.1 Cabinet received the report by the Executive Director of Community & Environmental Services, setting out the revised national policy for determining eligibility and also Norfolk County Council's appeals process. The policy was designed to operate a scheme which was fair and equitable for the residents of Norfolk as a whole, so those meeting the national eligibility criteria could fully enjoy the benefits. The Blue Badge (Disabled Persons) Parking Scheme was extended on 30 August 2019 to include those with non-visible ('hidden') disabilities such as autism and mental health conditions.

8.2 The Cabinet Member for Communities & Partnerships introduced the report, highlighting that the Blue Badge Scheme had been extended in August 2019 to include non-visible disabilities. She added that the report sets out the revised

national policy for determining eligibility and also added that Norfolk had a higher number of disabled people than other counties – estimated at 2% of its population with a disability or long-term illness. Therefore, Norfolk had one of the largest volumes of blue badge applications, with an average of 16000 applications processed each year which was expected to increase to 20000 by the end of 2019/20. The Cabinet Member continued that although the number of applications was high, the applications were usually completed in less than the 6-8 week average completion time, which was due to the increased capacity for dealing with them to ensure there was no backlog of applications waiting to be processed. The Cabinet Member moved the recommendations in the report.

8.3 In response to a question from the Cabinet Member for Highways, Infrastructure & Transport about whether Norfolk County Council had a good record of enforcement of the blue badge scheme, the Cabinet Member for Communities and Partnerships said that the application scheme was dispensed by customer services, supported by the occupational health team in Adult Social Services; enforced by Highways; with the legal process provided by Trading Standards. She added that if someone was unsuccessful in their application and requested a review of the decision, those reviews were carried out by a qualified occupational therapist.

8.4 The Chairman reiterated that the revised Policy was based on the new Government Policy.

## 8.5 **Decision**

Cabinet **RESOLVED** to

- **Note** the new national criteria for eligibility under the Blue Badge (Disabled Persons) Parking Scheme.
- **Approve** the County Council's policy for the implementation of the Blue Badge scheme.

## 8.6 **Alternative Options**

An alternative option would be to relax eligibility criteria and issue badges to applicants not meeting the guidelines published by the DfT. However, there is a need for consistency at a local and national level and the proposed policy delivers against the fundamental principles detailed at sections 2.1.1, 2.1.2 and 2.1.3 at the same time as enabling a standard approach to enforcement.

## 8.7 **Reason for Decision**

The policy was considered to be the most effective way for the Council to fulfil its statutory obligation and ensure a scheme which is fair and equitable for the residents of Norfolk and consistent with national standards.

## 9 **Holding Highways England to Account**

9.1 Cabinet received the report by the Executive Director of Community & Environmental Services setting out the details of the Office of Rail and Road (ORR) consultation on their revised policy for Holding Highways England to

Account. The deadline for receipt of responses to the consultation was 14 February 2020.

- 9.2 The Executive Director of Community & Environmental Services stated that it had been a matter of frustration for the wider community in Norfolk since 2014 that the A47 improvements were not forthcoming. He added that the report included a draft response to the Consultation that the Office of Road and Rail (ORR) Regulation had issued which gave an opportunity to try to focus Highways England on the delivery of schemes that several Government's had committed to and hopefully, over the next 12-18 months, some delivery would be seen.
- 9.3 In introducing the report, the Cabinet Member for Highways, Infrastructure & Transport stated that everyone was frustrated at the time it was taking to get the schemes developed. He added that funding had been agreed in 2014 for RIS1 schemes and that Highways England had yet to deliver those schemes.
- 9.4 The Cabinet member for Highways, Infrastructure & Transport updated Cabinet on the following points which had arisen from the Infrastructure & Development Select Committee meeting held on 29 January 2020:
- The Select Committee recognised that Members and Officers have made efforts to work with Highways England and help them to understand Norfolk's issues and priorities and support them to bring much needed improvements to the county. It is unfortunate that these efforts have not resulted in the appropriate improvements being secured for Norfolk.
  - The Select Committee strongly recommends to Cabinet that the County Council's response to the consultation clearly makes the following points:
    1. That we do not consider Highways England to be fit for purpose.
    2. We are extremely concerned that Highways England appear to be unable to bring projects to delivery in a timely fashion, meaning much needed funding promised for local communities remains unspent.
    3. We do not believe that such significant levels of public funding should be managed by an unelected and undemocratic organisation.
  - The Select Committee recommends to Cabinet that the Leader, the Cabinet Member and Norfolk MPs take immediate and collective action to address the unaccountability and inefficiency of Highways England and for the Government to explore the establishment of an alternative body with demographic and geographical accountability.

The Cabinet Member went on to highlight some of the topics the A47 Alliance had been working on with the County Council, businesses and MPs along the route, saying that a very successful dual-it campaign had been held in conjunction with Archant, culminating in a reception at Westminster, hosted by David Powles from Archant.

The Cabinet Member also highlighted that the Leader had recently written to the new Prime Minister, Boris Johnson and in November, the Prime Minister had

pledged to complete the A47 dualling. He added that the Alliance continued to push for delivery on RIS1 schemes and officers from the County Council continued to meet with managers from Highways England.

- 9.5 The Cabinet Member for Growing the Economy stated that the dualling campaign had commenced in 2012 with a business case being presented to Westminster in 2013; in 2014 Highways England had been awarded £300m for five schemes and said that if those five schemes had been delivered in the last five years, the business case proved there would have been at least a £500m upsurge in Norfolk's economy.

The Cabinet Member added that he was frustrated by the incompetence of the organisation that had been awarded the money and had not yet delivered anything and that they had actually pushed back schemes which were supposed to have been delivered in the RIS1 timetable. He continued that the RIS2 timetable was now approaching and it was his fear that the £300m would not be enough for the five schemes and they would start talking about taking money from RIS2 to fund RIS1 projects.

The Cabinet Member stated that the incompetence of Highways England in not delivering the schemes in a timely manner meant Norfolk would lose out again and Highways England needed to be accountable for that.

The Cabinet Member agreed with the comments made by the Infrastructure & Development Select Committee that Highways England were not fit for purpose.

- 9.5 The Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, Public Health and Prevention agreed that the level of frustration was high, as moving the timetable was not something Highways England consulted on, they just moved the start date. The Cabinet Member said he was particularly interested in this scheme as it went right through the middle of his Division, where a number of villages had been waiting for six years to find out where the road was going to see how it affected them. He also added that David Cameron, when he was Prime Minister, had visited Hockering and announced the scheme, which meant that there had been three general elections since then and no ground had been broken.

The Cabinet Member also highlighted that £300m had been awarded in 2015, with no indexation of this money, which meant there would be issues about who could be making up any funding gap between the original money allocated for the scheme and the final costs.

The Cabinet Member added that one of the most frustrating things was that no-one from Highways England was prepared to be accountable and added that he fully supported the recommendations in the report and the findings of the Infrastructure & Development Select Committee.

- 9.6 The Cabinet Member for Communities & Partnerships stated that the starting dates slipping made local people question if the scheme would actually happen. She added that she was a Member of the A47 Alliance in 2014 and had nominated the dualling of North Tuddenham to Easton, which had been agreed and formed part of RIS1 in 2020. She continued that some years later, the project had slipped and that it could 2020/21 before commencement and recently she had been told that it would be 2021 but in the latter quarter,



therefore likely to be in March 2022, making residents think the scheme would never happen.

9.7 The Cabinet Member for Innovation, Transformation & Performance said that the delays with the A47 dualling affected the whole of Norfolk; the economic wellbeing; the bringing in of business; tourism and the quality of life for residents. He therefore felt it was really important that Highways England were held to account for their failure to deliver.

9.8 The Chairman referred Cabinet to the report and the paragraph “Members may wish to review the proposed response and consider whether we wish to invite ORR to hold a public hearing to review Highways England’s performance on the A47, or even consider transferring responsibility for delivery (including budget) from Highways England to Norfolk County Council”, adding that Cabinet would like to make that happen.

9.9 The Cabinet Member for Highways, Infrastructure & Transport agreed that the points in paragraph 9.8 above should be included and felt that the recommendations from the Select Committee should also be included in the response to the consultation.

9.10 In summing up, the Chairman clarified that Cabinet agreed the response to the consultation as set out in the report, subject to the addition of the points raised by the Cabinet Member for Highways, Infrastructure & Transport from the Infrastructure & Development Select Committee meeting, together with the inclusion of inviting ORR to hold a public hearing to review Highways England’s performance on the A47 and consider transferring responsibility for delivery (including budget) from Highways England to Norfolk County Council.

#### 9.11 **Decision**

Cabinet **RESOLVED** to

**Agree** the response to the consultation, as set out in the report, with the addition of the following:

- Invite Office of Rail and Road (ORR) to hold a public hearing to review Highways England’s performance on the A47, and consider transferring responsibility for delivery (including budget) from Highways England to Norfolk County Council.
- We do not consider Highways England to be fit for purpose.
- We are extremely concerned that Highways England appear to be unable to bring projects to delivery in a timely fashion, meaning much needed funding promised for local communities remains unspent.
- We do not believe that such significant levels of public funding should be managed by an unelected and undemocratic organisation.

#### 9.12 **Alternative Options**

If the County Council chooses not to respond to the consultation it means that the opportunity is lost to outline our concerns and contribute to ensuring better performance in the future.

#### 9.13 **Reason for Decision**

Norfolk County Council has worked hard to achieve government commitment to improvements on trunk roads. However, performance in delivering the current round of schemes on the A47 has been agonisingly slow and there is concern about the effectiveness of Highways England's delivery. We are anticipating that the subsequent trunk road programme, for 2020 to 2025, will be announced soon. This review by ORR provides an opportunity to ensure more effective delivery of these important schemes.

## **10 Norwich Western Link**

10.1 Cabinet received the report by the Executive Director of Community & Environmental Services setting out the next stages for the project and specifically seeking Cabinet's approval to the proposed procurement process and timescales as set out. The proposals build on the learning and experience gained from other major projects, including the Great Yarmouth Third River Crossing.

10.2 The Executive Director of Community & Environmental Services highlighted that the former Northern Distributor Route (NDR) had been designed approximately 10 years ago to the standards at that time and had been ultimately tested and approved at Public Inquiry. The Norwich Western Link was being designed to today's standards and requirements including environmental mitigation. Norfolk County Council had chosen to go beyond this by committing to a net bio diversity gain for the proposal and subject to Cabinet approval, a business case for the scheme would be developed and this would ultimately be tested at public inquiry by an independent inspector.

10.3 In introducing the report and moving the recommendations, the Cabinet Member for Highways, Infrastructure & Transport said that the Norwich Western Link was a priority scheme for Norfolk County Council and that since it had been agreed as a priority in 2016, work had kept to timescale and he thanked everyone for achieving that.

The Cabinet Member said it was hoped to start construction in 2022 with the road being fully opened in 2025.

The Cabinet Member also highlighted the purpose of the report, the strategic objectives and the proposals for the next financial year, together with the financial implications as set out in the report.

10.4 The Cabinet Member for Commercial Services and Asset Management said that, as the entire Norwich Western Link route ran through his Division from start to finish, he fully supported the recommendations, adding that he was pleased to see a further public consultation would be held as some of the residents in his division were affected more than others and they would be pleased to see that some of their concerns could be taken into consideration.

The Cabinet Member added that he was in favour of the scheme, particularly as some of his constituents were suffering from rat-running through their villages, which was likely to continue until the NWL was built. He added that he was being lobbied by various environmental groups who were concerned about the effect on the environment and highlighted the work county farms was

doing to plant 1m trees to mitigate the environmental impact. He added that work had already started on county farms, with a commitment to a net gain of 1 million trees to replace those removed for the road, with 150 trees being planted at a care farm together with 18000 hedging plants and 152 trees at three properties, hopefully by the end of March 2020.

- 10.5 The Cabinet Member for Innovation, Transformation & Performance supported the Norwich Western Link and although his division didn't run through the link road, the Broadland Northway had brought benefits to his division, allowing residents easy access to the airport and allowing them to travel to and from Fakenham and other parts of the division without having to cut through Norwich. The Western link was important for his division as it would help cement the economic importance of Fakenham and the existing manufacturing businesses there, allowing access for jobs and allowing easier access for travelling further afield. He continued that there had been recent press reports about ambulance response times and building the NWL could help improve those response times.
- 10.6 The Chairman highlighted the paragraphs in the report which demonstrated the links to this project with Transport for Norwich and the Transforming Cities Fund which highlighted the work around sustainable transport for Norfolk.
- 10.7 The Cabinet Member for Communities & Partnerships added that as well as improving response times for the ambulance service, the Norwich Western Link would improve response times for the Norfolk Fire & Rescue Service.

#### 10.8 **Decision**

Cabinet **RESOLVED** to:

1. **Approve** the contracting strategy outlined in the report and agree that an OJEU (Official Journal of the European Union) contract notice should be published in due course.
2. **Agree** the proposed approach to social value.
3. **Agree** the proposed high-level evaluation criteria set out in the report.
4. **Delegate** to the Executive Director of Community & Environmental Services authority to approve the detailed valuation criteria and weightings, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Highways, Infrastructure & Transport and the Head of Procurement, taking account of the views of the Norwich Western Link Member Working Group.
5. **Proceed** with a public consultation on the emerging details of the preferred route.

#### 10.9 **Alternative Options**

Refer to paragraph 5 of the report.

#### 10.10 **Reason for Decision**

Procurement will enable the D&B contractor to be engaged and allow them to feed into statutory process and provide robust costs and construction methodology, thereby reducing the project risks. This approach has been

developed following practice developed from other major projects, notably the Great Yarmouth Third River Crossing.

## **11 Life Opportunity Services for adults with learning disabilities and/or autism.**

11.1 Cabinet received the report by the Executive Director of Adult Social Services describing the proposal to transform Life Opportunities for adults with learning disability and/or autism and analyses the impact for service users and the provider market.

11.2 The Director of Commissioning, Adult Social Services advised that, in Norfolk 3.1% of the people with learning disabilities the council supported were in paid employment. Across England this figure was 5.9% and our neighbours in the eastern region achieved 8%. He added that if Norfolk County Council could perform as well as the east of England neighbours, it could mean a further 125 people would be in paid work in Norfolk.

The Director of Commissioning continued that the proposal in the report was to make changes to support more people and was about piloting different approaches to support people with more complex needs or who required more support to develop skills. The proposals in the report upheld the ambitions of the users who had co-produced our local learning disabilities strategy “My Life, My Ambition, My Future”.

11.3 In introducing the report and moving the recommendations, the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, Public Health & Prevention said he was pleased to present this report to Cabinet as it was something that had been in gestation for a number of years and which had come out of a decision by the previous Administration run by Cllr George Nobbs, to implement a radical reshaping of day centres which was associated with cuts of several £m to the programme. The Cabinet Member continued that the new Administration had considered the proposals unsustainable and non-deliverable and work was undertaken to see how the proposals could be changed and refocused.

Work commenced by commissioning a new strategy, to be co-produced by service users “My Life, My Ambition, My Future” which was completed in 2018. This outlined the aspirations of the service users to have a more normal life and become more integrated in society, together with having more variation to reflect the different levels of disability. That document has helped formulate the proposals contained in the report to Cabinet for three distinct pathways within the Life Opportunities Framework:

1. Promoting Independence Pathway – will support people to develop life skills , providing greater opportunities to access mainstream activities and take part in training or learning activities.
2. Wellbeing Pathway – will support people with complex and challenging needs which often require specialist equipment and facilities as well as specially trained staff
3. Skills and Employment Pathway. Will support people into employment through a tailored employment and outcomes plan .

The Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, Public Health and Prevention continued that providers were very keen to engage with supporting people into paid employment, with discussions about the pathways happening during the normal course of events with the social worker of the service user which would eliminate the need for additional paperwork and also hopefully alleviating stress for the service user.

- 11.4 The Cabinet Member of Community & Partnerships, as the Member Champion for Equality and Diversity, welcomed the proposals which would give service users more choice.
- 11.5 The Cabinet Member for Growing the Economy asked if there were any other pilot schemes happening. In reply the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, Public Health & Prevention advised that, if Cabinet agreed the proposals, the pilot would be launched immediately.
- 11.6 The Cabinet Member for Children's Services endorsed the initiative, and said that he knew someone who had taken part in the trial pilot and had found it so rewarding they were now trying to find employment in a placement closer to their home as they had previously been cycling from Fakenham to Wells. He added that he understood there may be some opportunities to engage with smaller parish councils who may be able to help get them on the pathway.
- 11.7 The Cabinet Member for Finance supported the initiative which he felt was a very welcome addition to the transformation programme being put in place as part of "Together for Norfolk" and Norfolk Futures as this would help the County Council to deliver the Adult Social Services programme, helping reablement and this, along with other service departments and the transformation programme would then help create a more effective service.
- 11.8 The Chairman added that this project was not about financial savings, it was about the project being cost-neutral and he also emphasised that this was a new model of pathway delivery which would support people to have more skills to enable people to be more confident.

11.9 **Decision**

Cabinet **RESOLVED** to:

- a) **Agree** the phased implementation of the Life Opportunities framework.
- b) **Agree** to pilot the new Wellbeing and Promoting Independence Pathways, before being implemented as part of the framework.
- c) **Agree** the launch of the employment pathway, previously piloted in 2019 following the decision in February 2019.
- d) **Agree** that future reports to Cabinet and Committees relating to matters of Learning Disability and/or Autism are accompanied by an easy read version.

11.10 **Alternative Options**

Refer to Cabinet report.

11.11 **Reason for Decision**

Refer to paragraph 5.1 to 5.5 of the Cabinet report.

## **12 Human Resources and Finance System Transformation Project**

12.1 Cabinet received the report by the Executive Director of Strategy and Governance providing an update on the Programme and requesting approval for the decision to award the contract be delegated to the Executive Director of Strategy & Governance, as Programme Sponsor, in consultation with the Executive Director of Finance & Commercial Services, the Leader of the Council and the Cabinet Member for Innovation, Transformation and Performance.

12.2 In introducing the report and moving the recommendations, the Cabinet Member for Innovation, Transformation and Performance highlighted that the project had arisen from the realisation that the existing Financial and HR programmes were reaching the end of their life and the opportunity had been taken to replace them, whilst transforming the service delivery which had presented an opportunity to realise savings and improve services.

Corporate Select Committee were overseeing the implementation programme which was working well. The Select Committee had received reports in May and November 2019 and held an all-member workshop in November 2019 with further workshops planned for February 2020, to engage Members in the scope of the programme, explain the technology opportunities to transform the service and realise savings.

The Cabinet Member highlighted that, following the procurement process, the tenders had been received on 20 December 2019 and these were currently being evaluated with a view to awarding the contract on 31 March 2020.

12.3 The Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, Public Health & Prevention endorsed the report and fully supported the recommendations. He added that good progress was being made on this vital project to deliver over £20m of net savings to the Council, after the £12m to implement the project had been paid. He added that this was not coming from front-line services but was coming out of efficiencies through the county council.

### **12.4 Decision**

Cabinet **RESOLVED** to:

- **Note** the progress made on the procurement of a cloud-based ERP system.
- **Delegate** the decision on award of the contract to the Executive Director of Strategy & Governance, as Programme Sponsor, in consultation with the Executive Director of Finance & Commercial Services, the Leader of the Council and the Cabinet Member for Innovation, Transformation and Performance.

### **12.5 Alternative Options**

None.

## 12.6 **Reasons for Decision**

Delegating the procurement decision will allow the programme to proceed at pace with the successful supplier mobilising their resources in good time. Any delay in the programme at this stage will impact the planned go-live of the new system (October 2021) and incur costs; a delay of 6 months has been costed as resulting in additional project costs in the order of £250,000, plus additional supplier costs. There would also be a delay in realising benefits and savings.

Delegating the decision is felt to be the most practical way of keeping the Programme on track in terms of both timescale and benefits realisation and is consistent with other major procurement processes

## 13 **Acquisition of Pump Farm, Weston Longville**

13.1 Cabinet received the report by the Executive Director of Finance & Commercial Services setting out proposals aimed at supporting Norfolk County Council priorities by acquiring a property to support the Norwich Western Link project.

13.2 The Cabinet Member for Commercial Services and Asset Management introduced the report and moved the recommendations to purchase Pump Farm Weston Longville for £1.25m on terms agreed and instruct the Head of Property to oversee the implementation of the acquisition.

### 13.3 **Decision**

Cabinet **RESOLVED** to :

- **Agree** to the purchase of Pump Farm, Weston Longville for £1,250,000 on terms agreed and instruct the Head of Property to oversee the implementation of the acquisition.

### 13.4 **Alternative Options**

The acquisition of Pump Farm, Weston Longville by agreement is the result of the issue of a Blight Notice.

### 13.5 **Reason for Decision**

The acquisition of Pump Farm, Weston Longville supports the Norwich Western Link project.

## 14 **Finance Monitoring Report 2019-20 P9: December 2019**

14.1 Cabinet received the report by the Executive Director of Finance & Commercial Services giving a summary of the forecast financial position for the 2019-20 Revenue and Capital Budgets, General Balances and the Council's Reserves at 31 March 2020, together with related financial information.

14.2 In introducing the report, the Cabinet Member for Finance highlighted the following:

- The revenue budget overspend had been reduced in Period 9 from £3.969m to £1.921m, a decrease of £1.775m. During this period Children's Services overspend had been increased by £1.1m to £13.3m which was a net figure.
- The main reason for the increased overspend was down to additional placement costs although there were also additional transport costs, which could be partly ameliorated by the increase in the finance general underspend as additional capital receipts were being used to repay debt rather than the revenue budget as well as capitalising some transformation costs.
- On 30 January 2020, the Department for Education had confirmed the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) conditions in line with their recent consultation which clarified that Norfolk County Council was not required to fund the Dedicated Schools Grant deficit. It would be carried forward, but in essence it would mean that the Auditors would not be expecting to qualify our accounts on a DSG deficit in future.
- It should be noted an early years underspend was used to partly offset a high needs block. Confirmation from the DfE was sought who confirmed this was acceptable.
- In terms of balancing the overall position by the end of March 2020, a grant from the Local Government departments and Section 31 grant guidance had changed, which should see some money coming back to the County Council.
- All departmental projected overspends were being reviewed and between now and the end of March 2020 it was expected that the Adult Social Services overspend in particular would reduce, although that depended on the remaining winter months. Any remaining shortfall at that stage would be found from reviewing reserves.
- The Cabinet Member was confident that a balanced budget would be achieved by the end of the financial year.
- The Cabinet Member for Finance moved the recommendations as set out in the report.

14.3 The Chairman reiterated that the overall overspend had reduced with the expectation that the 2019-20 budget would balance by the end of the year.

14.4 The Cabinet Member for Children's Services thanked the Cabinet Member for Finance for explaining the issues regarding the Dedicated Schools Grant deficit which was outlined in paragraph 6.1 of the report and which had identified that there was not sufficient money in the system by the fact that they had now decided our deficit would be ignored. The Cabinet Member for Children's Services advised that he had recently spoken with some of Norfolk's MPs and had raised the issue with them.

He added that Children's Services department was aware of its pressures regarding transportation of home to school transport for special educational



needs and general school transport. A working group had been established which would be considering all aspects of transport to optimise services and bus routes.

The Cabinet Member thanked Cabinet for understanding the pressures faced by Children's Services and for its help in addressing those issues.

14.5 The Cabinet Member for Innovation, Transformation and Performance thanked the Portfolio Holder and the finance team for all the work they had done and said that given the size of the budget a lot of work had gone into reducing the deficit and delivering services in difficult circumstances.

#### 14.6 **Decision**

Cabinet **RESOLVED** to:

1. Recommend to County Council an amendment to the Council's Flexible Use of Capital Receipts Strategy for 2019-20 to 2021-22 as set out in Appendix 2 Paragraph 3.4, increasing the capital receipts that can be applied to the Children's Services Demand Management & Prevention Strategy and other transformation costs from £2m to a maximum of £3m.
2. Recommend to County Council an addition of £1.250m to the capital programme for the acquisition of Pump Farm, Weston Longville as explained in Appendix 2 section 4 and subject to Cabinet approval of the purchase.
3. Note the period 9 forecast general fund revenue overspend of **£1.921m** noting also that Executive Directors will take measures throughout the year to reduce or eliminate potential over-spends;
4. Note the period 9 forecast shortfall in savings of £4.916m, noting also that Executive Directors will take measures throughout the year to mitigate savings shortfalls through alternative savings or underspends;
5. Note the forecast General Balances at 31 March 2020 of £19.623m, before taking into account any over/under spends;
6. Note the expenditure and funding of the revised current and future 2019-22 capital programmes.

#### 14.7 **Alternative Options**

In order to deliver a balanced budget, no viable alternative options have been identified to the recommendations in this report.

#### 14.8 **Reason for Decision**

Two appendices are attached to this report giving details of the forecast revenue and capital financial outturn positions:

Appendix 1 summarises the revenue outturn position, including:

- Forecast over and under spends

- Changes to the approved budget
- Reserves
- Savings
- Treasury management and
- Payments and debt performance

Appendix 2 summarises the capital outturn position, and includes:

- Current and future capital programmes
- Capital programme funding
- Income from property sales and other capital receipts.

## **15 Delegated Decisions Reports**

Cabinet **noted** the following Cabinet Member Delegated Decisions made by the Cabinet Member for Highways, Infrastructure and Transport:

- Salt Supply Contract.
- Wells TRO
- Dereham Greenfields - TRO

The meeting ended at 11.15am.

**Chairman**



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**Cabinet**  
**3 February 2020**  
**Public & Local Member Questions**

**Appendix A**

**Agenda Public Question Time**  
**item 5**

**Question from Louise Cooper**

Why can't we choose the route which has the least environmental impact for the western link? Choosing a route before the appropriate surveys have been completed surely means the environment is not a priority for the council.

**Response:**

A great deal of work was undertaken considering a range of factors including the environment, traffic implications and value for money to determine the preferred route. This followed national guidance. This was appropriate and proportionate to the stage in the project and is detailed in the [Option Selection Report](#).

---

**Question 1 from Hanne Schierff**

How could the decision about the route of the A47 extension be taken without a thorough investigation of the environmental impact of the chosen route?

**Response:**

The environmental impact has been considered in line with national guidance. This is given in the Option Selection Report which was published ahead of the preferred route decision in July 2019 and is available via our [website](#).

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**Question 2 from Hanne Schierff**

Has an environmental, financial and traffic volume impact review been carried out in relation to the original business plan for the current stretch of the road?

**Response:**

Yes, environmental, financial and traffic monitoring has been carried out since Broadland Northway opened. Information on this can be found on our [website](#).

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**Question from Mr Euan Broughton**

How come the choice on route for the Wensum Link was chosen when no traffic or environmental surveys were undertaken?

**Response:**

Traffic and environmental surveys were undertaken prior to the preferred route being agreed and details are in the Option Selection Report available via our [website](#).

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**Question 1 from Cecilia Rossi**

The woodland I own contains a significant number of veteran trees listed on the Woodland Trust's Ancient Tree Inventory. This area of woodland is directly in the path of the Western Link Road. The National Planning Policy Framework is clear that "development resulting in the loss or deterioration of irreplaceable habitats (such as ancient woodland and ancient or veteran trees) should be refused, unless there are wholly exceptional reasons." Can the cabinet provide evidence that it has followed government guidance and that the proposed road scheme is a "wholly exceptional reason" under the policy framework?

**Response:**

The work on which decision-making has been based has been published and is available via our website. The development of the project will follow national requirements and all details will be tested through the statutory process.

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**Question 2 from Cecilia Rossi**

The National Planning Policy Framework guidance also states "that veteran trees are irreplaceable, discussions over possible compensation should not form part of the assessment to determine whether the exceptional benefits of the development proposal outweigh the loss." Why does the cabinet insist on perpetuating the myth that biodiversity net-gain can compensate for their loss when expert guidance says otherwise?

**Response:**

Biodiversity net gain is assessed against national Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) criteria to ensure that, overall, habitats for wildlife are left in a measurably better state than before construction began.

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**Question 1 from Mr John Wells**

REF: Section 8.5.5

Why has the proposed Norwich Western Link route, chosen to deliberately destroy a small area of amenity woodland, immediately after crossing the Wensum, that is owned by at least 12 individual owners, who own plots there to enjoy with their families and friends?

**Response:**

The [Option Selection Report](#) details the range of factors assessed, including ecology, to determine the preferred route.

Biodiversity net gain is assessed against national DEFRA criteria to ensure that, overall, habitats for wildlife are left in a measurably better state than before construction began.

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**Question 2 from Mr John Wells**

This needless destruction of trees and animal habitats, is not 'Biodiversity Net Gain' where trees that are hundreds of years old are replaced with new saplings, this will NOT leave habitats in a better state than before this development. This is NOT just open farmland. If the surveyors employed by NCC are 'competent professionals' why do they not adhere to Health and Safety guidelines when 'surveying' these woodlands, by wearing appropriate safety equipment?

**Response:**

When attending site NCC appointed surveyors undertake a risk assessment, which informs the level of safety equipment required and complies with the relevant health and safety legislation.

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**Question 1 from Mr Andrew Cawdron**

This a challenge to the Norwich Western Link proposal and request for funding..... Please justify why this Council remains so committed to an excessive road building policy, (such as the NWL), when the consequential environmental destruction is proven and cannot be mitigated against, (as evidenced by the deficient and dying landscaping and bat bridge failure of the NNDR Northway), and particularly when funds are also deficient and climate action demanding traffic volume reduction measures are required ?

**Response:**

In a largely rural county like Norfolk, making improvements to the road network is important to help reduce congestion, improve road safety, support businesses and the local economy, improve bus journeys and support use of public transport, and reduce emergency response times. However, improving roads and travel by vehicle alone is not the only solution.

As part of the Norwich Western Link project, we are committed to supporting people to walk, cycle and use public transport in the local area. Taking vehicles off small rural roads and in residential areas will help with this, but we will also put a package of complementary transport measures together. We are working with local parish councils, walking and cycling groups, bus companies and others to develop measures that will be most effective.

The council has also been investing in better cycling, walking and public transport infrastructure across Norwich and Norfolk, particularly – but not exclusively – in urban and suburban areas where we can link more people and homes to places of work, study and leisure and be most effective at shifting shorter journeys to more sustainable forms of travel. The recent Transforming Cities bid is an example of this.

In relation to Broadland Northway, we are in the process of replacing all planting that has died (which was impacted by the exceptionally dry summers in 2018 and 2019). We commissioned specialist consultants to carry out monitoring of the bat mitigation measures on Broadland Northway and the details published on our website. Monitoring will be carried out over a number of years (up to 15 years in relation to bats) to ascertain their long-term effectiveness.

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### **Question 2 from Mr Andrew Cawdron**

To gain any credibility will cost our community 7 Million pounds this year with no guarantee of a planning consent at the end of it, or is our planning system so profoundly broken that NCC has a guarantee in it's pocket ?

#### **Response:**

The Norwich Western Link is a major infrastructure project with regional priority status and has received strong support from members of the public, the business community, local councils and MPs. These projects require significant investment to deliver, but we anticipate a significant amount of the funding will be provided by the Department for Transport. The case for the scheme will be thoroughly tested as part of the statutory processes, which will be held in public.

---

### **Question 1 from Nicola Harrison**

Please read the report by the Campaign to Protect Rural England (CPRE) "The end of the road? Challenging the road building consensus" <https://www.cpre.org.uk/resources/the-end-of-the-road-challenging-the-road-building-consensus/>. Then answer how the NWL will prevent induced traffic, and fragmentation of habitat leading to bio diversity loss for example similar to the loss of the two barbastelle bat colonies that has occurred as a result of the NDR (BBC Inside out 28.1.20).

#### **Response:**

We are delivering infrastructure that is appropriate to accommodate planned growth, provide better links between the Major Road Network and Strategic Road Network, and deal with significant traffic issues that have existed for many years in communities to the west of Norwich.

While two previously recorded bat colonies were not found as part of monitoring carried out after Broadland Northway opened, this cannot be equated with them disappearing. In relation to one of these previously recorded colonies, surveyors were unable to gain access to the buildings where they had previously been located due to the safety of the structures. It is therefore possible that one or both of these bat colonies still exist but that they have not been located.

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### **Question 2 from Nicola Harrison**

Given that building this road will increase car use how can you defend building this road when instead we need to change the way we travel to sustainable public transport and cycling or walking to combat the real threat posed by climate change (see the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change report 2018 <https://www.ipcc.ch/sr15/chapter/spm/> )

#### **Response:**

In a largely rural county like Norfolk, making improvements to the road network is important to help reduce congestion, improve road safety, support businesses and the local economy, improve bus journeys and support use of public transport, and reduce emergency response times. However, improving roads and travel by vehicle alone is not the only solution.

As part of the Norwich Western Link project, we are committed to supporting people to walk, cycle and use public transport in the local area. Taking vehicles off small rural roads and in residential areas will help with this, but we will also put a package of complementary transport measures together. We are working with local parish councils, walking and cycling groups, bus companies and others to develop measures that will be most effective.

The council has also been investing in better cycling, walking and public transport infrastructure across Norwich and Norfolk, particularly – but not exclusively – in urban and suburban areas where we can link more people and homes to places of work, study and leisure and be most effective at shifting shorter journeys to more sustainable forms of travel. The recent Transforming Cities bid is an example of this..

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### **Question 1 from Iain Robinson**

Item 10, 2.9.1 of the agenda pack states, “further work has been undertaken on the environmental mitigation measures which will form part of the NWL scheme and achieve Biodiversity Net Gain”. There is evidence that the woodland that will be felled on the route of the Western Link Road is vital Barbastelle bat habitat, and an investigation by BBC ‘Inside Out’ has cast doubt on the efficacy of mitigation efforts on the NNDR. Exactly how does Norfolk County Council propose it will achieve Biodiversity Net Gain whilst destroying ancient/veteran trees and habitat vital to a species listed as Near Threatened globally on the IUCN Red List?

### **Response:**

We commissioned specialist consultants to carry out monitoring of the bat mitigation measures on Broadland Northway and the details are published on our website. Monitoring will be carried out over a number of years (up to 15 years in relation to bats) to ascertain their long-term effectiveness.

In relation to the Norwich Western Link, we carried out a range of bat surveys across a wide area in May 2019 and combined this data with information from bat records and habitat assessment work to help inform the selection of the preferred route. This work was then balanced against many other factors in determining the best overall route for the Norwich Western Link.

We continued to carry out a variety of bat surveys throughout the 2019 season (May – September) and will conduct further bat surveys in the 2020 season to further inform our work and provide up-to-date information ahead of submitting the planning application.

Biodiversity net gain is assessed against national DEFRA criteria to ensure that, overall, habitats for wildlife are left in a measurably better state than before construction began.

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### **Question 2 from Iain Robinson**

WSP have yet to complete a full year of surveys and will, by this council’s own admission, not report its findings until later this spring. The decision made in July was thus based on insufficient data (only two months of bat survey completed, for example). On what data set do you base your confidence in delivering successful mitigation and can this data set be released in the public interest?

**Response:**

Prior to identifying Route C as the preferred route, we carried out an appropriate and proportionate amount of surveying. This work was then balanced against many other factors in determining the best overall route for the Norwich Western Link.

Survey work continued throughout 2019 and will continue in 2020 to further inform our work and provide up-to-date information ahead of submitting the planning application. All details will be presented as part of the statutory approvals process the project will need to go through.

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**Question from Steven Tozer.**

The Cabinet papers refer to NCC working towards carbon neutrality by 2030. Please clarify what this means. Does it mean:

- 1) overall carbon emissions in Norfolk will be zero by 2030 – that is, the balance of positive emissions (sources) and negative emissions (sinks) will be zero. As usually referred to as “net-zero”, or
- 2) the policies of NCC will introduce no additional emissions over the current baseline levels ie NCC will be carbon neutral with respect to the current baseline of emissions, or
- 3) something else ?

**Response:**

The target date of 2030 applies to NCC’s own operations and not Norfolk as a whole, though we intend to support, encourage and work in partnership with others in Norfolk to join us in aiming for this target. Our approach will follow the United Nations lead: to include a mix of greenhouse gases, of which Co2 is the main constituent by volume. We are currently gathering this baseline information for presentation to Cabinet in April.

Baseline figures will be monitored carefully and practices changed to both reduce greenhouse gas emissions and maximise carbon sequestration to ensure a net zero carbon balance; for example the Councils target to plant 1 million trees in Norfolk over the period of five planting seasons.

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**Question from Michelle Pett**

The Cabinet state :‘This includes a substantial number of further environmental / ecological surveys, along with topographical, geotechnical and other work to inform the scheme design and potential mitigation. In addition, data has been compiled to update the traffic model, including traffic counts. This will provide a robust evidence base for further assessment of the preferred option.....’ The implication here is that when the preferred route was decided upon there was not to hand full and sufficient data to make a safe and informed decision. Can Cabinet confirm it will be making this new data public and also undertake a review and public consultation on all previously considered route options?

**Response:**

A great deal of work was undertaken considering a range of factors including the environment, traffic implications and value for money to determine the preferred route. This followed national guidance. This was appropriate and proportionate to the stage in the project and is detailed in the [Option Selection Report](#).



The further work described in section 1.2.2 of the Cabinet report will be used in subsequent business cases and the planning application.  
All details will be tested through the statutory process which will be held in public.

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### **Question from Daphne Sampson**

While appreciating the current public online consultation on the King's Lynn Transport Plan, gauging people's concerns over different means of transport, I want to ask if the council has considered taking a lead in actually working on influencing public opinion as part of its laudable policy of moving to zero carbon by 2030, for example, has it considered adverts on billboards, buses, in the paper, encouraging bus use in terms of climate change concerns, eg 'For our kids, cut your carbon footprint, take the bus!?'

### **Response:**

The issues that you raise are ones that not only affect King's Lynn. They apply to the whole county where we need to make sure that people can get to where they need to, whilst at the same time taking account of, amongst other things, the recently-adopted environmental policies to reduce carbon emissions.

The current online consultation is on the countywide local transport plan, which we are reviewing. As part of our work on this we are looking at ways that we can influence people's travel choices. We are working with a range of partners including public health and also looking at the evidence from behavioural insights on what works to influence the changes we need to see. Although this work hasn't yet concluded I would expect that it will include public information campaigns similar to what you have raised..

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### **Question from Jenn Parkhouse, on behalf of Wensum Valley Alliance.**

The Inside Out East programme broadcast on BBC 1 on Mon 27th January supplied incontrovertible evidence that bat gantries, green bridges, dark corridors and an underpass had failed to protect bats and their habitat from the NDR. Would it not be more appropriate for the Cabinet to discuss today the scrapping of the NWL rather than awarding still more millions to this project?

### **Response:**

It is not accurate to say there is incontrovertible evidence that the mitigation measures on Broadland Northway have failed to protect bats and their habitats. We commissioned specialist consultants to carry out monitoring of the mitigation measures on Broadland Northway and their findings are published on our website. Monitoring will be carried out over a number of years (up to 15 years in relation to bats) to ascertain their long-term effectiveness.

There is strong support in Norfolk to create a Norwich Western Link, from members of the public, local councils, MPs, emergency services and the business community. The new road would reduce long-standing problems of congestion and rat-running on small rural roads and through communities to the west of Norwich. In doing so, it would improve the quality of life of local residents, which is currently impacted by noise, safety, air quality and the severance created by rat-running traffic.

It is also vital that we ensure infrastructure is in place to help Norfolk grow successfully, taking account of anticipated housing and employment growth and the associated increasing population that will increase pressure on transport networks. The Norwich Western Link is a much-needed piece of infrastructure that will complete a dual carriageway orbital route around Norwich, reducing the need for traffic to enter the city and alleviating local transport issues.

We are committed to building this road in an environmentally-responsible way and to following national guidance and requirements. All details will be tested through the statutory process.

---

**Question from Richard Ward**

Regarding proposed changes to Life Opportunities commissioning in Norfolk: Given the positive experience of some of the service users of the Assist Trust - one of the providers involved in the NCC Skills and Employment pilot - why has the response to new proposals been so negative and how can providers and the public at large be assured that the potential positives from new life opportunity proposals will not come at a cost to essential day services generally?

**Response:**

We welcome the positive outcomes achieved by Assist Trust and the other providers that took part in in the pilot of the Skills and Employment pathway. In doing so we also acknowledge that people who use existing services for other reasons have raised some concerns.

NCC will continue to ensure that there are services in place that meet people's needs, as close to home as possible. This includes people with complex needs, as well as those who have an aspiration to find paid work. The pilot of the Wellbeing and Promoting Independence pathways will ensure that any future roll out is based on evidence and learning.

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**Question from Robin Ward**

We have seen some very positive and encouraging Pathway 3 developments and outcomes at Dereham Community Hub. One of our customers has successfully applied for paid work, and another is gaining work experience at the local library. Success looks different for each of our customers, who all have their own aspirations and interests: what would the Cabinet consider as a successful outcome in terms of Pathway 3?

**Response:**

Thanks for sharing these positive outcomes achieved by the people you support. They are good examples of the type of outcomes seen in the skills and employment pathway pilot.

You are right, positive outcomes for people taking part in the skills and employment pathway will be different for each person. For some people paid work will be a successful outcome, for others it will be taking on a regular volunteering role. Another positive

example from the pilot has been someone deciding to obtain a qualification having taken part in a successful volunteering role.

Whilst obtaining paid work, volunteering roles and qualifications are anticipated, other good outcomes are expected to be the benefits for the individual such as increased self confidence, a sense of purpose and satisfaction from making a contribution.

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**Question from Iris van Zon**

I think employment pathways are an excellent idea. We have worked with people with learning difficulties at Clinks Care Farm for the last 10 years. Our provision has often helped people prepare for employment and some people have moved into employment as a result. However employment opportunities are limited. Employers do not always see that taking someone on with a learning disability or other label can benefit and enrich their business/organisation. They are concerned about the support someone will need. How does the cabinet envisage to address this issue and overcome the barriers in businesses, organisations and the labour market in general?

**Response:**

It is really important that alongside the introduction of the skills and employment pathway we do more to work with employers to create new employment opportunities. This is why Norfolk County Council has created a new team of advisors whose role is to work directly with employers to encourage and support them to employ people with disabilities.

There are 165 employers who are signed up and committed to be “disability confident” employers. The new NCC team was set up in November. In the short time it has been established the team has had contact with 150 different employers and developing these relationships to create new employment opportunities will continue to be its focus over the coming months and years.

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## Appendix B

### Agenda Local Member Issues/Questions item 6

#### Question from Cllr Ed Maxfield

Do you agree with me that public sector organisations must show integrity and be open and transparent when making mistakes in order to retain public confidence so public scrutiny can help them to learn and respond properly and will the Leader condemn the appalling “we got away with it” email by Norwich and Suffolk Foundation NHS Trust and demand that the Trust carries out an in-depth review of its corporate culture so that the people of Norfolk and Suffolk – and partner organisations like Norfolk County Council – can be confident it has the interests of patients at the forefront of its actions?

#### Response by the Chairman:

I’m glad that the Chief Executive at the Norwich and Suffolk Foundation NHS Trust is dealing swiftly with the issue by undertaking an investigation regarding these comments.

The NSFT has its own code of conduct for staff so it would be improper for Norfolk County Council to comment.

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#### Question from Cllr Tim Adams

Service providers were expecting a new framework for this service to become effective last summer but it is now proposed to divide it up, pilot some of it and phase in other parts. Is that because the Council didn’t have the resources to deliver the changes on time or because service providers have told them they can’t deliver the services for the price they were offering?

#### Response:

We have been working with providers for over two years on this new framework, so it has been co-produced with them. Providers tell us that they want to work with us to shape services, to pilot new ways and learn from the results. The approach has worked well and we want to replicate the same process going forward so we get the pricing and the model right. The new timescale is not as a result of a lack of NCC resource, but about making sure we get it right for all stakeholders.

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#### Question from Cllr Emma Corlett

Will Cabinet commit to providing independent, qualified, welfare rights advice to Town Close residents with a learning disability or autism where they are placed on the ‘Life Opportunities’ ‘Skills and Employment Pathway’ or ‘Promoting Independence Pathway’ so that they can fully understand the financial implications of engaging in any voluntary or paid work?

#### Response:

Considering the financial implications of paid work will be part of the new Skills and Employment pathway. People will be supported to obtain the support and advice that is right for them. For some people this will be support from their Life Opportunities pathway, for some it will be support to access the advice of the department of work and pensions and other external agencies. For those that need it advice will be available through NCC’s welfare rights service.

**Question from Cllr Danny Douglas**

People in Mancroft Ward need good rail links over and above the Norwich to 90 Service. At the council meeting on 25th November 2019, I asked the Leader if he would support a change in the direction of the A47 Alliance to include the development of sustainable travel mode. The leader replied that it was not an unreasonable suggestion to widen the remit of the A47 Alliance and he was sure Councillors on the Alliance would take notice of the comments and take it forward. Can Councillor Wilby confirm how he will be raising this at the Alliance's February 2020 meeting?

**Response:**

The A47 Alliance brings together representatives from all along the route, from Lowestoft to the A1 at Peterborough. Its objective is to act "as a special interest group to support the strategic case for improvements on the A47 corridor between Lowestoft and the A1. The ultimate objective of the Alliance is full dualling of the A47 with grade separation at its junctions."

In this respect the Alliance can consider strategic sustainable transport issues pertaining to the A47, but is not the appropriate vehicle to push for investment into, for example, east west rail links. There are more appropriate bodies that do this. The county council is a member of the East West Rail Consortium. This Consortium is similar to the A47 Alliance in that it brings together relevant interests to make the case for investment into rail links that would ultimately connect Norwich via Cambridge to Milton Keynes, Bedford, Oxford and the south west.

These groups' effectiveness relies on consensus around relevant issues, and I consider that the A47 Alliance should retain its objective around the A47 rather than attempt to include other modes such as rail. There are other established groups doing good work furthering these interests, such as the East West Rail Consortium, which the county council is a member of.

If there are specific, strategic, sustainable transport issues that the member would like raised pertaining to the A47, I am happy to consider raising these at the next meeting of the Alliance.

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**Question from Cllr Alexandra Kemp**

The secondary school, KES, was once the town's Grammar School and a beacon of academic excellence. Now it is an Academy in special measures, reported as having the highest level of suspensions and exclusions in Norfolk. There is a strong case that failing schools should, like failing train companies, be renationalised. KES is in the catchment area for South Lynn, an area of great deprivation. I have taken up serious safeguarding and safety casework from parents and children at the school. Middle-class parents are taking their children away because of County Lines exploitation. What is this Council doing to raise achievement, quality of education and safety of children attending KES?

**Response:**

We take any evidence of safeguarding and safety concerns extremely seriously. Our Assistant Director for Quality Assurance, Intervention and Regulation has met with Cllr Kemp to hear the concerns raised and we are urgently seeking more information in order to determine our next steps. Academies are not local authority maintained or controlled schools and oversight of educational performance rests with the Regional Schools Commissioner (RSC). We engage routinely with the RSC and her team to discuss any matters that give cause for concern. We monitor the outcomes for all schools, including Academies, in terms of pupil achievement, safeguarding, exclusions and Ofsted inspection judgements. We noted that in their recent Ofsted safeguarding was judged to be satisfactory by inspectors. We are working with the school to reduce exclusions and in the last two terms there has been a dramatic reduction in Permanent and Fixed term exclusions. We will gather information rapidly in relation to the concerns raised and work will all parties to ensure that we are satisfied that young people continue to be safe in the school. Cllr Kemp will be given further updates as we make progress in resolving these concerns.

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**Question from Cllr Brenda Jones**

#Please could you provide a breakdown of the 1400 people who currently access commissioned day services in Norfolk currently receive Employment Support Allowance (ESA) in the Support Group, ESA in the Work-Related Activity Group, Universal Credit (UC) Limited Capability for Work Group, UC Limited Capability for Work and Work Related Activity Group and how many of those people identified live in Lakenham and Tuckswood?

**Response:**

An analysis of our records shows that 1361 people in Norfolk use a commissioned day service AND receive either Employment Support Allowance (ESA) in the Support Group, ESA in the Work-Related Activity Group, Universal Credit (UC) Limited Capability for Work Group, UC Limited Capability for Work and Work Related Activity Group.

Of these, 32 people live within the Lakenham and Tuckswood postcodes

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## Questions requiring written responses from the Cabinet Meeting held on Monday 3 February 2020

	<b>Question and response:</b>
<p>Agenda item 6 Local Member Supplementary Question from Cllr Danny Douglas</p>	<p>Cllr Danny Douglas asked, as a supplementary question, and referring to the A47 towns, if the Leader would commit to examining Councillor Harry Clarke of Dereham (Breckland Council) to review the new rail improvement fund (announced on 30 January) regarding the restoration of rail services principally to Dereham, either via the existing railway or a new alignment via the A47 and further into Fakenham and elsewhere in Norfolk. He added that such a development could alleviate the massive gap in scheduled transport investment between road and sustainable transport.</p> <p><b>Response from the Cabinet Member for Highways, Infrastructure &amp; Transport:</b></p> <p>The county council's adopted Norfolk Rail Prospectus identifies the Wymondham to Dereham line as having potential for reopening to scheduled rail services as part of the national network. Although the prospectus is currently under review, I am confident that there is sufficient evidence to support this position. As such I have asked officers to examine the recent government announcements on Re-opening Beeching era lines and stations to establish the opportunity for accessing the funding to take this forward. This will include giving consideration to the line north of Dereham.</p> <p>You will also be aware that we agreed, at Select Committee in September, to put some funding towards looking at the business case for King's Lynn to Hunstanton. Officers will therefore also be examining the implications of the recent government announcement on this line.</p>
<p>Agenda item 6 Local Member Supplementary Question from Cllr Brenda Jones.</p>	<p>Cllr Brenda Jones said that her question had asked for the numbers in each of the specific groups and she had hoped the response would reflect numbers for each group rather than a general total. As a supplementary question, Cllr Jones asked if she could have the specific numbers for each group</p> <p><b>Response from the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, Public Health &amp; Prevention:</b></p> <p>The Leader deferred the question to Cllr Bill Borrett, Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, Public Health &amp; Prevention who agreed to provide a written response if the information was available.</p> <p>Having investigated further, it is not possible to break down the information in the way requested but only aggregated as supplied at the Cabinet meeting.</p>