

Children's Services Committee

Report title:	Strategic and Financial Planning 2019-20 to 2021-22 and Revenue Budget 2019-20
Date of meeting:	22 January 2019
Responsible Chief Officer:	Sara Tough Executive Director Children's Services
Strategic impact	
<p>The proposals in this report will inform Norfolk County Council's decisions on council tax and contribute to the Council setting a legal budget for 2019-20 which sees its total resources targeted at meeting the needs of residents. Budget planning has been undertaken in the context of the Council's overarching Vision and Strategy.</p> <p>The information in this report is intended to enable the Committee to take a considered view of all the relevant issues in order to agree budget proposals for 2019-20 and the Medium Term Financial Strategy to 2021-22, and make recommendations on these to the Policy and Resources Committee. Policy and Resources will then consider how the proposals from Service Committees contribute to delivering an overall balanced budget position on 28 January 2019 before the Full Council meets 11 February to agree the final budget and level of council tax for 2019-20.</p>	

Executive summary

This report forms part of the strategic and financial planning framework for Service Committees and provides an overview of the financial issues for the Council, including the latest details of the Autumn Budget 2018 and the provisional Local Government Finance Settlement for 2019-20. It summarises this Committee's saving proposals for 2019-20, identified budget pressures and funding changes, and sets out the proposed cash-limited revenue budget as a result of these. The report also provides details of the proposed capital programme for 2019-20 to 2021-22.

In order to inform decision making, details of the outcomes of rural and equality impact assessments of the 2019-20 Budget proposals are set out in the paper, alongside the findings of public consultation in respect of specific savings proposals, where they are relevant to the Committee.

Policy and Resources Committee works with Service Committees to coordinate the budget-setting process, advising on the overall planning context for the Council. Service Committees review and advise on the budget proposals for their individual service areas. The report therefore provides an update on the Service Committee's detailed planning to feed into the final stages of the Council's budget process for 2019-20. The County Council is due to agree its budget for 2019-20, and Medium Term Financial Strategy to 2021-22, on 11 February 2019.

Children's Services Committee is recommended to:

- 1) Consider the content of this report and the continuing progress of change and transformation of Children's services;**
- 2) Consider and agree the service-specific budgeting issues for 2019-20 as set out in sections 5 and 6;**

- 3) Consider and comment on the Committee's specific budget proposals for 2019-20 to 2021-22;**
- 4) Consider the findings of equality and rural impact assessments, attached at Appendix 1 to this report, and in doing so, note the Council's duty under the Equality Act 2010 to have due regard to the need to:**
 - Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Act;**
 - Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;**
 - Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.**
- 5) Consider and agree any mitigating actions proposed in the equality and rural impact assessments;**
- 6) Consider the advice of the Executive Director of Finance and Commercial Services, and recommend to Policy and Resources Committee that the Council's budget includes an inflationary increase of 2.99% in council tax in 2019-20, within the council tax referendum limit of 3.00% for the year;**
- 7) Agree and recommend to Policy and Resources Committee the draft Committee Revenue Budget as set out in Appendix 2:**
 - a. including all of the savings for 2019-20 to 2021-22 as set out. *Or***
 - b. removing any savings unacceptable to the Committee and replacing them with alternative savings proposals deliverable in 2019-20 and within the Committee's remit.**

For consideration by Policy and Resources Committee on 28 January 2019, to enable Policy and Resources Committee to recommend a sound, whole-Council budget to Full Council on 11 February 2019.

- 8) Agree and recommend the Capital Programme and schemes relevant to this Committee as set out in Appendix 3 to Policy and Resources Committee for consideration on 28 January 2019, to enable Policy and Resources Committee to recommend a Capital Programme to Full Council on 11 February 2019.**

1. Introduction

- 1.1. The Council's approach to medium term service and financial planning is based on the preparation of a rolling Medium Term Financial Strategy, with an annual budget agreed each year. The County Council agreed the 2018-19 Budget and Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) to 2022 at its meeting 12 February 2018, at the same time as it agreed a new Strategy for the County Council, Norfolk Futures.
- 1.2. The Council has a robust and well-established framework for strategic and financial planning which updates the MTFS position through the year to provide Members

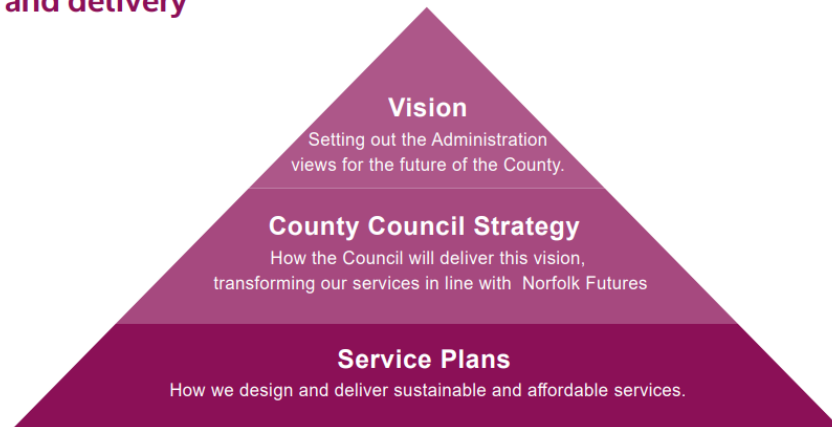
with the latest available financial forecasts to inform wider budget setting work across the organisation.

- 1.3. Norfolk County Council is due to agree its new Budget and Medium Term Financial Strategy for 2019-20 to 2021-22 on 11 February 2019. In support, this paper sets out the latest information on the provisional Local Government Finance Settlement and the financial and planning context for the County Council for 2019-20 to 2021-22. It summarises the Committee's pressures, changes and savings proposals for 2019-20, the proposed cash-limited revenue budget based on all current proposals and identified pressures, and the proposed capital programme.

2. County Council Strategy and Norfolk Futures

- 2.1. Caring for our County, the vision for Norfolk, was approved by members in February 2018 and outlines the Council's commitment to:
 - Building communities of which we can be proud
 - Installing infrastructure first
 - Building new homes to help young people get on the housing ladder
 - Developing the skills of our people through training and apprenticeships
 - Nurturing our growing digital economy
 - Making the most of our heritage, culture and environment
- 2.2. The Council's Strategy for 2018-2021 – Norfolk Futures – was approved at the same time. It focuses our transformation plan on priority areas of Council work, delivering in a context where demand for our services is driven both by demographics and social trends, and when increasingly complex and more expensive forms of provision are becoming prevalent.
- 2.3. Norfolk Futures is guided by four core principles that will frame the transformation we will lead across all our work:
 - Offering our help early to prevent and reduce demand for specialist services
 - Joining up work so that similar activities are easily accessible, done once and done well
 - Being business like and making the best use of digital technology to ensure value for money, and
 - Using evidence and data to target our work where it can make the most difference.
- 2.4. These four principles continue to underpin, inform and test everything that we do as an organisation.
- 2.5. The integrated transformation programme is also well underway and starting to deliver change across our critical priorities.
- 2.6. Each of the Service Committees has produced a 3 year forward plan setting out what will be delivered over the next 3 years within the resources available. These in turn are operationalised through annual Plans on a Page setting out aims and measurable objectives for each service area.
- 2.7. The alignment of our vision, to our strategy and to our service planning is shown below.

Service planning and delivery



How the Vision, Strategy and Service plans align

Figure 1 - Service Planning and Delivery Framework from The Council's Strategy 2018-2021

3. Strategic financial context

- 3.1. 2019-20 represents the final year of the four-year funding allocations for 2016-17 to 2019-20. These allocations have provided the Council with a degree of certainty about core elements of funding over the period, and only minimal changes to the funding in scope of the certainty offer have been made. Nonetheless, allocations still have to be confirmed annually in the Local Government Finance Settlement. The end of the four-year settlement combined with uncertainty about the outcomes of the Comprehensive Spending Review (CSR), Fair Funding Review (FFR), and 75% Business Rates Retention Scheme (BRRS) means that the Council faces a very significant level of uncertainty about funding levels after 2019-20.
- 3.2. The Chancellor of the Exchequer, Philip Hammond, announced the **Autumn Budget 2018** on Monday 29 October 2018. The Chancellor stated that the Budget was based on planning for all eventualities in relation to the UK leaving the EU, but that in the event of material changes to economic or fiscal forecasts, there remained the possibility of upgrading the Spring Statement to a full Budget if required. In contrast to recent Budgets, there were a number of announcements with implications for Local Government. Significantly for the 2019-20 Budget planning, this included additional funding for social care in 2019-20 worth £11.317m in total for Norfolk County Council broken down as follows:
 - £4.179m Winter Pressures Grant (to be pooled into the Better Care Fund via the iBCF and reported on accordingly in 2019-20. Government will confirm reporting requirements relating to the 2018-19 allocation separately).
 - £7.139m Social Care Support Grant (MHCLG advises that “where necessary” this should be used “to ensure that adult social care pressures do not create additional demand on the NHS” and to improve the social care offer for older people, people with disabilities and children. However, it is not ring-fenced, and there is no requirement for a specific adult or children’s share).
- 3.3. Further details of the Autumn Budget can be found in the November 2018 report to Policy and Resources Committee.

3.4. The **Provisional Local Government Finance Settlement 2019-20** was announced by the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, James Brokenshire, on 13 December 2018. The full details of the announcement can be found [here](#)¹ and the Secretary of State's statement to parliament [here](#)². Funding allocations arising from the Autumn Budget were confirmed. The following announcements were made as part of the Provisional Settlement:

- Norfolk's application to become a 75% Business Rates Retention Pilot in 2019-20 was successful. This is forecast to deliver a benefit of almost £8m to Norfolk as a whole and £3.9m for Norfolk County Council individually. The financial benefits of a pilot are likely to arise in 2020-21.
- Norfolk County Council's Settlement Funding Assessment has been confirmed as £191.233m for 2019-20 (compared with £207.151m 2018-19). Funding allocations are broadly in line with the four-year certainty offer previously announced, however this funding will now be delivered via the Business Rates Pilot. In overall terms, the Provisional Settlement indicates a cash change in the County Council's core spending power of 2.6% between 2018-19 and 2019-20. This includes Government assumptions about local decisions to raise council tax and is slightly below the national cash increase of 2.8%.
- Additional Rural Services Delivery Grant is to be provided in 2019-20 to maintain the allocation at the same level as 2018-19. This means an additional £0.786m for the County Council, which will also be delivered through the Pilot.
- £20m is being provided nationally to maintain the New Homes Bonus baseline at 0.4%. This will mean a lower reduction in New Homes Bonus allocations than previously assumed, providing £0.183m.
- The Secretary of State announced plans to distribute increased growth in business rates income which has generated a surplus in the business rates levy account in 2018-19. For Norfolk this amounts to £2.340m. 2018-19 is the first year this account has been in surplus and as a result £180m is being distributed to councils. This is not technically "new money" but funding as a result of growth nationally in business rates. It has not previously been included in budget planning as councils do not know the overall position until Government announces it. Funding is due to be paid by Section 31 grant in 2018-19, but is anticipated to be available to support the 2019-20 Budget.
- The Government also confirmed the intention to fund the issue of "negative RSG" through forgone business rates. Norfolk County Council is not in a negative RSG position and so does not benefit from this decision.

3.5. In respect of **council tax**, the provisional thresholds for a council tax referendum have been announced as 3.0% for the general element of council tax with discretion for a further 2% to be raised for the adult social care precept (subject to a maximum adult social care precept increase of 8% in the period 2016-17 to 2019-20). The County Council's planning assumes an increase of 2.99% in general council tax. The Council has previously taken decisions to raise the full adult social care precept across the period 2016-17 to 2018-19 and as such there can be no

¹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/provisional-local-government-finance-settlement-england-2019-to-2020>

² <https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/provisional-local-government-finance-settlement-2019-to-2020-statement>

increase in the adult social care precept in 2019-20 and it will therefore continue at the same level as in 2018-19 (£96.05 for a Band D property). A 2.99% increase in council tax is forecast to raise approximately £11.635m. This contributes to closing the forecast 2019-20 budget gap and mitigating the gap in future years. A council tax increase of 2.99% therefore enables a substantially more robust budget for 2019-20 and reduces risks for the council over the Medium Term Financial Strategy period.

- 3.6. Alongside the usual consultation on the Provisional Settlement, the Secretary of State announced two further consultations on reforms to the business rates retention system, and the new approach to distributing funding through the Review of Relative Needs and Resources. The Council will respond to these in due course. The Government also confirmed that the long-awaited social care green paper will be published “soon”.
- 3.7. On 16 December, the Government also announced³ additional funding to support children with special educational needs. The allocation of this to individual councils has now been announced and Norfolk should receive £3.605m of the £250m being provided nationally to support children and young people with complex SEND. This will be received as £1.803m in both 2018-19 and 2019-20. Government has also confirmed funding of £100m nationally for investment to create more specialist places in mainstream schools, colleges and special schools in 2019-20. The allocation of this has not yet been confirmed, but Norfolk could potentially expect approximately £1.268m if this were to be distributed on the usual basis. The additional SEND funding is expected to flow through Dedicated Schools Grant, however it is not anticipated to be sufficient to address the High Needs Block overspend position.
- 3.8. The latest estimate of the Council’s overall budget position for 2019-20 as a result of the above, and any other emerging issues, will be reported to Policy and Resources Committee in January.

4. 2019-20 Budget Planning

2018-19 Medium Term Financial Strategy

- 4.1. The current year’s Budget and Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) for the period 2018-19 to 2021-22 was agreed in February 2018 including £78.529m of savings and with a remaining gap of £94.696m. The MTFS provided the starting point for the Council’s 2019-20 Budget planning activity. Full details of cost pressures assumed in the Council’s MTFS are set out in the 2018-19 [Budget Book](#).⁴

2018-19 budget position

- 4.2. The latest information about the Committee’s 2018-19 budget position is set out in the budget monitoring report elsewhere on the agenda. The Council’s overarching budget planning for 2019-20 is based on the assumption that a balanced 2018-19 Budget is delivered (i.e. that all savings are achieved as planned and there are no

³ <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/new-funding-to-support-children-with-special-educational-needs>

⁴ <https://www.norfolk.gov.uk/-/media/norfolk/downloads/what-we-do-and-how-we-work/budget-and-council-tax/budget-book-2018-22.pdf?la=en>

overall overspends). Further pressures in the forecast 2019-20 Budget have been provided for as detailed later in this report.

The budget planning process for 2019-20

- 4.3. In July 2018, Policy and Resources Committee considered how the 2019-20 budget planning process would be aligned with the Council's Strategy, Norfolk Futures. Policy and Resources agreed budget assumptions, budget planning principles and guidance for 2019-20 which were then communicated to Service Committees.
- 4.4. In September, Service Committees therefore began their detailed budget planning by discussing both their approach to savings development and any key risks for the Council's budget process.
- 4.5. Following further input from Policy and Resources Committee, in early October, Service Committees then considered and agreed their detailed saving proposals for 2019-20, which were recommended to Policy and Resources Committee for consultation where appropriate. Policy and Resources duly considered the latest budget planning position for 2019-20 at its meeting on 29 October. This included the summary of all proposed savings from Service Committees, and a revised forecast of the remaining **budget gap for 2019-20, which at that point stood at £6.369m. Over the three year planning period, a gap of £45.980m remained to be closed.** In November, Policy and Resources was advised that following the announcements of additional funding at the Autumn Budget, it was anticipated these would assist in closing the gap identified for 2019-20, and as a result Services were not asked to seek additional savings. However, **Policy and Resources agreed that any change to planned savings or removal of proposals would require alternative savings to be identified by the relevant Service Committee.**
- 4.6. The budget position and associated assumptions are kept under continuous review. The latest financial planning position will be presented to Policy and Resources Committee in January prior to budget-setting by County Council in February. The outline budget-setting timetable for 2019-20 is set out for information later in this report (section 10, table 3).

Latest 2019-20 Budget position

- 4.7. Since the last report to Service Committees in October 2018, a number of additional pressures have emerged, including:
 - Pressures arising in Schools' High Needs Block budgets with a potential impact on the Council's General Fund;
 - Significant additional pressures in Children's Services budgets;
 - The addition of "Winter Pressures" funding within the Adult Social Care budget, and pressures relating to continuing support for the care market, and continued enhanced levels of social work capacity. The Adult Social Care budget makes use of some one-off funding and use of reserves.
 - Recognition of a part funded pressure in 2019-20 relating to an increase in the employer contribution rates for Fire Service pensions;
 - Final changes to inflation forecasts for 2019-20 and future years; and
 - Updated council tax forecasts from Districts for tax base and collection fund which will be finalised in January.

4.8. These additional pressures have been offset by proposed changes following a thorough review of all other pressures and savings included in budget planning, and by additional funding announced in the Autumn Budget and the provisional Local Government Finance Settlement as set out in section 3. As a result, a balanced budget is therefore expected to be presented to Policy and Resources Committee for 2019-20. Details of the remaining gap over the Medium Term Financial Strategy will be confirmed to Policy and Resources in January.

Budget planning assumptions 2019-20

4.9. In setting the annual budget, Section 25 of the Local Government Finance Act 2003 requires the Executive Director of Finance (Section 151 Officer) to report to members on the robustness of budget estimates and the adequacy of proposed financial reserves. This informs the development of a robust and deliverable budget for 2019-20. Further details are provided below, and the full report will be included in the Budget papers for Policy and Resources Committee.

4.10. The Executive Director of Finance and Commercial Services' judgement on the robustness of the 2019-20 Budget is substantially based upon the following assumptions.

- A 2.99% increase in council tax in 2019-20 and 1.99% in both subsequent years 2020-21 and 2021-22 based on the current amounts allowed by Government before a local referendum is required. The assumed council tax increases are subject to Full Council's decisions on the levels of council tax, which will be made before the start of each financial year. In future years there will be an opportunity to consider the required level of council tax in light of any future Government announcements relating to the Fair Funding Review and Comprehensive Spending Review.
- In addition to an annual increase in the level of council tax, the budget assumes annual tax base increases in line with recent trends.
- Revised assumptions about the future funding changes to be delivered through the Comprehensive Spending Review and Fair Funding Review based on recent announcements including those made at the Autumn Budget. Until now, the Council's assumptions about funding reductions have been based on the Government's stated intention to end Revenue Support Grant, with an expectation that all Revenue Support Grant would therefore cease after 2019-20. This would result in a cliff edge in 2020-21 and a budget pressure of almost £39m. Such a significant funding reduction would be out of line with recent experience and does not reflect the fact that Government has sought to provide additional levels of one-off funding for key areas such as social care. Taking all these funding sources in the round, the Council's current budget planning is therefore now based on an assumption that effectively half of the impact of the loss of Revenue Support Grant would occur in 2020-21 and half in 2021-22, although Revenue Support Grant itself may disappear. In other words, it is assumed that Government will provide alternative (potentially transitional) funding to mitigate the effect of a Revenue Support Grant cliff edge.
- No increase in the Adult Social Care precept from the 2018-19 level.
- 2018-19 Budget and savings will be delivered in line with current forecasts and plans (no overall overspend).

- Use of additional Adult Social Care funding for 2018-19 and 2019-20 as agreed with partners and in line with conditions, and that market pressures can be absorbed within existing budgets.
- Growth pressures forecast in Children’s Services relating to Looked After Children, and the overspend on High Needs Block, can be contained within the additional funding allocations.
- Pressures forecast within waste and highways budgets can be accommodated within the additional funding allocations.
- Revised assumptions to use an additional £3m capital receipts in 2020-21 rather than £10m (with £10m being required in 2021-22 and the balance of £7m in 2022-23 resulting in the use of an additional £20m capital receipts in total to support the revenue budget over the period 2020-21 to 2022-23).
- The assumed use of one-off funding including:
 - £1m from the Insurance Fund in 2019-20; and
 - £6m from the Adult Social Care business risk reserve over the budget planning period.
- That all the savings proposed and included for 2019-20 can be successfully achieved.

5. Service Budget, Strategy and Priorities 2019-20

- 5.1. As part of the 2018-21 medium term planning process, Children’s services committed to delivery of £2.641m savings in this financial year (2018-19) and further savings of £4.342m in 2019-20, £2.000m in 2020-21 and £2.000m in 2021-22. Subsequently, the Council has needed to plan for additional savings and these have been considered as part of the budget planning and consultation process during 2018. The total savings proposed for Children’s services for 2019-22 are:

	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	Total
	£m	£m	£m	£m
Existing savings programme	-4.342	-2.000	-2.000	-8.342
Proposed reprofiling of existing savings between financial years	1.700	-1.700		0.000
Additional savings proposals	-4.180	0.216		-3.964
Total new savings target	-6.822	-3.484	-2.000	-12.306

- 5.2. The service is currently on track in 2018-19 to deliver against the planned savings, except for the saving to reduce legal expenses. As reported elsewhere on this committee’s agenda, this budget is overspent due to a significant increase in the number of proceedings that have commenced in this financial year compared to 2017-18 and due to the complexity of the case work. However, the service can report that the aims of this saving have been achieved: the management focus on ensuring that legal resource is not used for elements of case preparation that could have been carried out more efficiently by other teams has been effective, and has resulted in costs being avoided and a further increase to the overspend if this action had not been taken.

Strategic Context

- 5.3. Children’s services for Norfolk is expected to continue to operate within a very challenging context, reflecting a national picture where the huge majority of Councils are seeing pressures on Children’s Services and net increases in

spending despite significant savings being delivered. This primarily reflects that a very significant proportion of Children's services spend is through demand led budgets and we are experiencing high and increasing levels of need and demand (both the number of children and families presenting for support and the complexity of need that is presented) across numerous areas of service. We are responding to new issues within society and the range of responsibilities for the department is widening to tackle issues such as child sexual and criminal exploitation and the threat of radicalisation.

- 5.4. We are tackling these challenges in the context of ever diminishing resources. The level of grant funding to local authorities diminishes year on year and there is now a clear national evidence base around a significant strategic funding shortfall in Children's Services, estimated by the Association of Directors of Children's Services to be growing to around £2 billion by 2020 for the nation as a whole. Additional funding announced for 2019-20 specifically in relation to Children's services is one-off, the social care grant and additional funding to support children with special educational needs, whilst the challenges are recurring.
- 5.5. Furthermore, the evidence shows that the pressure on, and need for, children's services are driven to a very large extent by external factors beyond the control of Children's Services. The levels of deprivation, the size of the local 0-25 population, levels of household income, levels of unemployment and levels of crime have been identified as the key contributing factors nationally and in many of these areas our own analysis of the demographics shows an increasingly challenging picture in Norfolk. We know that relative deprivation is increasing in the County, our population of children and young people is expanding and the national economic outlook is having an impact. Those trends are now beginning to translate into additional demand for services and pressure on budgets and capacity.
- 5.6. Further information about the strategic context, both national and local, is presented elsewhere on this Committee's agenda in section 1 of the Budget Monitoring Period 8 (November) report.

Financial Strategy

- 5.7. Norfolk County Council and its Children's Services are responding in a bold, positive and ambitious way to this context. That began with the business case for a major investment in transformational change agreed at Policy and Resources Committee in September 2017, the Launch of the Norfolk Futures Transformation programme and the subsequent development of a comprehensive programme of transformation, as illustrated in diagram 1 below (budget values shown reflect the 2018-19 budget for reference purposes) This strategy for Children's services has embedded the core principles set out within Norfolk Futures and firmly works towards the agreed vision for Norfolk.
- 5.8. Our Safer Children and Resilient Families transformation programme is integral to our financial strategy for achieving savings. This agenda is a 3-5 year programme. It was always anticipated that the pressures on our system would persist in the short term and that the impacts on demand and cost would begin to be delivered from 2019-20 and, in particular, from 2020-21 onwards. The savings expected to be delivered in 2019-20 are included in those additional savings proposed shown in table 1 above.
- 5.9. The current financial year, 2018-19, has allowed for the foundations of this work to be built and, although the impact is largely still to come, we have already made

significant progress in several areas and are building a track-record of successful transformational change. A further full update on transformation will be provided to the March Committee meeting, but some key highlights to date that our integral to our financial strategy over the medium term planning period include;

- We have successfully implemented the **new Children's Advice and Duty Service** at the 'front door' to Children's Services and we are already seeing the anticipated benefits in terms of reducing the rate of referral into social work teams now being realised. This will give teams more time to focus on the direct work with families which will make the difference
- We are starting to see a positive impact from the **focussed work on Foster carer recruitment** with numbers of enquiries on the up and now a projection for a net increase in the number of carers this year - reversing the previous trend
- We have successfully **implemented the Valuing Care programme** – which gives us a consistent way to understand and articulate the needs of children in care and so ensure we provide exactly the right placement and support. We've already embedded this new tool in our practice model and are using the analysis to inform our strategic commissioning priorities
- We have completed the refurbishment and **preparation work for the new semi-independent accommodation provision** and the first new places will be available for young people at the end of January
- We have completed the design of the **new Norfolk Family Networks approach** and are moving into implementation. A new team due to start work from February delivering family group conferences and coaching team around working with extended families to prevent children from needing to be taken into care
- The **new therapeutic support service for families at the edge of care** is also going to begin to be available within the next few weeks, offering intensive support for families with complex needs, helping them to address their challenges and stay together as a family
- Further significant development has been undertaken in relation to the SEND workstream of the transformation programme. This workstream will focus on SEND assessment and support to schools and providers to **increase the numbers and complexity of children that can be appropriately supported to be educated in the mainstream sector**, which will run alongside the £120m capital investment in new provision programme previously approved by Policy and Resources Committee

Diagram 1: Children's Transformation Strategic Approach

Children's Transformation Strategic Approach

All teams and investments are targeted to supporting children and families to avoid the need for high intensity and high cost direct care

Majority spend is on direct delivery of care to the most vulnerable or highest need children. Overlaps between LAC, SEN and transport cohorts

Inclusion

- Investing in Specialist Resource Bases
- Additional direct inclusion work
- Increasing the proportion of children with SEN who are supported to stay in mainstream settings
- Investing in independence – enabled by technology

Prevention and Early Intervention

- Transformed model at the front door enabling more demand to be managed preventatively and the social work teams to focus only on appropriate cases
- Enhancing Early Help – with a focus on building capacity in the partnership system

Effective Practice Model

- Creating a new multi-disciplinary social work model
- Driving quality interventions through signs of safety and restorative practice
- New panels deploying resources earlier rather than at the point of crisis
- Wrapping specialist help around social work plans e.g. substance misuse, mental health and domestic abuse

Edge of Care Support and Alternatives to Care

- New therapeutic service for families with children at the edge of care (SIB)
- Turnaround short breaks alternatives to care provision
- A focus on family finding and building support networks from extended families

Increasing levels of demand in communities (in Norfolk and mirrored nationally)

Placements and Support for Looked After Children

Residential = 19.4m
Fostering = 28.4m
Semi-Independent = 5.3m
SGOs = 3.9m

Home to School Transport

SEN = £13.1m
Mainstream = £11.6m
Post 16 = £3.1m

Education & Care for Children with SEND (HNB)

Maintained Special Schools = £30.5m
Independent Special Schools = £21.2m
Alternative provision = £4.9m

Managing the care market & creating the capacity we need

- Step-change investment in Special Schools
- Creating high-quality semi-independent provision
- Family Values - using behavioural science to redesign our approach to recruiting foster carers
- Enhanced fostering model – building a network of capacity around foster carers to work with higher needs
- Valuing Care Model – robust needs analysis and outcome based commissioning of placements

5.10. The changes made to date as part of the Safer Children and Resilient Families transformation programme for services and interventions for children at risk of harm have resulted in the numbers of children in care appearing to stabilise during as the 2018-19 financial year has progressed, despite the rising national trends as reported in national media. This stabilisation evidences the change being seen by the department in the throughput of work to social work and family focus teams; i.e. the demand is continuing to increase, but the department is managing it differently.

Additional one-off funding

5.11. As referenced in section 3.2 above, the one-off Social Care Support Grant totalling £7.137m in 2019-20 has been incorporated within the Children's services planning assumptions, due to significant pressures arising for children's social care services. Although MHCLG has indicated the purpose of this funding, it is not ring-fenced

5.12. As referenced in section 3.7 above, Norfolk will receive £1.803m in 2019-20 to support children and young people with complex SEND. This funding is expected to be provided through the High Needs Block of the Dedicated Schools Grant and will, therefore, be ring-fenced for these specific purposes. Please see the Dedicated Schools Grant paper that is also on this Committee's agenda for details of how this funding is planned to be utilised.

Pressures

5.13. The budget plans set out in Appendix 2 include cost pressures facing the service in 2019-20 and future years, with £21.256m recurring pressures identified for 2019-20 compared to the 2018-19 approved budget, split as follows:

- a. Staff pay –2% and the impact of the national living wage of £1.550m
- b. Price inflation of £2.061m – primarily assumed at 2%
- c. Budget pressures of £14.500m – see section 5.14 below for further details
- d. Contribution to High Needs Block pressures including £1.000m for transformation (council tax funded) – see section 5.15 below for further details
- e. Preventing Radicalisation of £0.120m – Children's services are taking the lead for the Council to ensure that that the authority is meeting its additional statutory duties (no new burdens funding)
- f. Teachers' Pension increased employers' contribution of £0.024m

5.14. £14.500m has been allocated for Children's services pressures in the 2019-20 cash-limited budget, which takes into account the current level of forecast overspend in 2018-19, including which elements have the potential to be recurring and which are one-off, and the recognised priority of these services to the Council as a whole. The funding will be allocated to a variety of areas including demographic growth, leaving care support, and the impact on staffing, placements and support costs of increasing demand (numbers and increased complexity). Numbers of children and families requiring social care support is expected to continue to rise nationally over the 2019-22 period, along with the complexity of need as changes in society continue to have an impact on children and families and improvements in medical care results in children living with longer with more complex needs.

Whilst this level of funding recognises the significant challenges and pressures facing the department, it will still require Children's services to avoid costs through demand management, ensuring the right investment is happening at the right time, and through ensuring the cost effectiveness of provision available in the market place. For 2019-20, modelling has identified the following key pressures, compared to the 2018-19 approved budget:

- a. Placements and direct support for children looked after will increase as a result of demographic pressure by approximately £1.6m (based upon numbers of presenting children and families accessing provision and support currently available);
 - b. Placements and direct support for children with disabilities (children looked after and children supported at home) are expected to remain high due to needs continuing to increase with medical advancements, lack of capacity and suitable provision to meet these needs within the Norfolk market resulting in a large number of out of county placements, and the national Transforming Care initiative that has resulted in more children living in the community who would previously have been accommodated with hospital settings with health bearing the full cost of their support number;
 - c. Transport costs for children with special educational needs and disabilities increasing by approximately £4.5m (the costs of educational provision is charged against the Dedicated Schools Grant, but the cost of transportation to the provision is charged against the General Fund budget and these costs have risen and are expected to rise further whilst additional provision is developed due to the numbers of individuals transported, the distances they are travelling and the increase in those assessed as requiring individual and / or accompanied journeys, partly as a result of the provisions of the SEND Reform Act 2014);
 - d. Leaving care and staying put placement and direct support by over £1.1m (these increased statutory duties came without sufficient new burdens funding from central government);
 - e. Legal costs due to increased numbers of cases and increasing complexity by over £1.2m (this is after significant management focus during the last 18 months to ensure that legal resource is not used for elements of case preparation that can be carried out more efficiently by other teams as per the 2018-19 savings target);
 - f. Additional front-line staffing costs to support the current level of children, young people and families requiring either preventative support or statutory intervention of approximately £4.7m (the front-line staffing provision currently includes 'dual-running' of services as the department makes changes in its approach through the transformation programme, including for assessment of complex SEND needs, and reflects the partial loss of the Troubled Families grant in 2019-20 that has been enabling the preventative support of some families).
- 5.15. Steps are being taken as part of the Safer Children and Resilient Families transformation programme, and as part of business as usual, to address these, and other, pressures. However, as already advised in 5.6 above, the Council has embarked on a 3-5 year programme, with the early stages focussed on ensuring that the right foundations are in place and a significant proportion of the financial

impact not expected to be seen until the latter years of the programme. These longer-term impacts will be considered as part of future budget planning for the Council.

- 5.16. The High Needs Block of the Dedicated School's Grant continues to forecast a deficit for 2018-19 due to the demand for complex SEND provision. The DSG is forecast to be carrying a cumulative deficit of £13.601m at the end of 2018-19. A workstream of the Safer Children and Resilient Families workstream is focussed on transforming both the landscape and culture across Norfolk's SEND system, alongside the £120m agreed capital investment in complex SEND provision.
- 5.17. A disapplication request has been made to the Secretary of State to transfer £4.580m from the Schools Block to the High Needs Block and a decision is awaited.
- 5.18. Financial modelling for 2019-20 including the assumption that the disapplication request is agreed, and building in the one-off funding of £1.803m that has been announced for 2019-20 (see section 5.11 above), still indicates that there is expected to be an increase the cumulative deficit by the end of the next financial year.
- 5.19. The Council has recognised that these pressures are going to exist for a number of years without significant changes to the funding regime nationally. In light of this, £3.000m General Fund pressures funding is a proposed part of the budget plan for Children's Services: £1.000m to fund revenue transformation costs of the SEND workstream and the remaining £2.000m to contribute towards the overall High Needs Block pressures.
- 5.20. As Section 151 Officer, the Executive Director of Finance and Commercial Services is required by section 114 of the Local Government Finance Act 1988 to report to Members if it appears that the expenditure the authority proposes to incur in a financial year is likely to exceed the resources available to it to meet that expenditure. It is the view of the Executive Director of Finance and Commercial Services that, if left unresolved, the pressures and level of forecast overspend are such that the HNB position could represent a very real medium-term threat to the overall financial viability of the whole Council. The level of deficit, even if the disapplication request were approved in full, will still be rising, and the position is likely to be a factor considered by the Council's external auditors. The DfE's decision on the Council's disapplication request will therefore have a very significant bearing on the Executive Director of Finance and Commercial Services' judgement about the Council's financial resilience and the robustness of its Budget.

Risks for the service

- 5.21. In setting the budget it is not possible to make financial provision for all potential risks. The key risks for this Committee are:
 - a. Pressure on services from a needs led service where the number of children accessing services nationally continues to rise and the complexity of presenting need continues to increase. A key part of transformation is about managing demand to reduce the impact of this risk through ensuring that access to the right services is in place at the right time to prevent needs from escalating;

- b. The ability to deliver the forecast savings, particularly in relation to the demand led element of savings, which will also be affected by partners within the wider system such as health bodies, schools and providers;
- c. The cost of support to children with disabilities requiring intensive support to enable them to live at home and / or to remain within the community that have not previously been identified;
- d. Additional legislative requirements as a result of government policy that have not been foreseen and are not subject to new burdens funding.

6. Budget Savings Proposals for Children’s Services Committee

6.1. The Children’s Services Committee held in October agreed new budget savings proposals to be developed to help meet the Council’s budget shortfall. There has been no change to these proposals, and further information about each of the proposed savings is contained with Strategic and Financial Planning 2019-20 to 2021-22 report to that Committee meeting.

6.2. A summary is shown in table 2 below combining the previously agreed budget savings and the additional new proposals. The table also takes into account the amendments to previously agreed savings agreed at October’s Committee:

- a. reprofiling the agreed budget saving CHL041 (Redesign of the Early Childhood and Family Service) for £3.000m in 2019-20 across 2019-20 and 2020-21 ‘CHL041’
- b. replace the previously agreed savings target CHL044 (Reduced Looked After Children’s costs through implementation of the Demand Management and Prevention Strategy transformation programme) for £1.000m in 2019-20, £2.000m in 2020-21 and £2.000m in 2021-22 with a new proposed savings target CHL049 (Norfolk Futures Safer Children and Resilient Families Programme: Better outcomes for children and young people and reducing demand for services)

Table 2: Additional savings

Savings / Proposals	Reference	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2019-22
Note: savings are shown as a negative figure					Total
		£m	£m	£m	£m
Redesign of Early Childhood and Family Services	CHL041	-1.300	-1.700		-3.000
Reduction in legal expenses	CHL042	-0.142			-0.142
Reduce the reliance on agency social workers through the improved permanent recruitment and retention	CHL043	-0.200			-0.200
More effective and efficient commissioning of mental health assessments	CHL046	-0.750			-0.750
Cost efficiencies delivered by strategic partnership and joint commissioning with Mental Health Services	CHL047	-0.300	-0.200		-0.500

Move to best practice model of parenting assessments	CHL048	-0.500			-0.500
Norfolk Futures Safer Children and Resilient Families Programme: Better outcomes for children and young people and reducing demand for services	CHL049	-3.630	-1.584	-2.000	-7.214
Children's Services Total		-6.822	-3.484	-2.000	-12.306

6.3. The impact of the additional savings proposed is set out within the Equality and Rural Impact Assessment in Appendix 1.

7. Revenue Budget

7.1. The tables in Appendix 2 set out in detail the Committee's proposed cash limited budget for 2019-20, and the medium term financial plans for 2020-21 to 2021-22. These are based on the identified pressures and proposed budget savings reported to this Committee in October, which have been updated in this report to reflect any changes to assumptions.

7.2. Since the position reported to this Committee in October, amendments have been made to the identified pressures to reflect a review of their robustness considering the increase in the 2018-19 forecast position for Children's services (both for the General Fund and Dedicated Schools Grant). The amendments made are as follows:

- a. Budget pressures including demographic growth – increased from £5.000m to £14.500m for 2019-20, and £2.000m to £3.000m each for 20-21 and 21-22 – details of the related pressures for 2019-20 are given in section 5.14 above;
- b. Contribution to High Needs pressures – £3.000m council tax funded contribution, including £1.000m for the SEND transformation workstream further detail provided in section 5.16 above.

7.3. There are no changes from the position reported to this committee in October with respect to the additional proposed budget savings.

7.4. The proposed revenue budget includes capital related charges (depreciation, debt management and REFCUS (revenue expenditure allowed to be funded by capital under statute) transfers) expected in each financial year based upon the assets held by the department and the planned capital programme. These charges are recorded against the expenditure of the department to show the full cost of the provision of Children's services, but they are fully funded corporately with budget amendments made in each year to reflect the planned and then actual charges made.

7.5. Therefore, to understand the year-on-year investment within the revenue budget for Children's services, the budget amendments for capital related charges and grant funding need to be ignored. Removing these amendments shows a net increase of £14.433m from 2018-19 approved budget to 2019-20. Additionally, removing the increases relating to inflation (pay and prices) shows that the 'real term' increase is £10.822m.

- 7.6. Cost neutral adjustments for each Committee will be reflected within the Policy and Resources Revenue Budget 2019-20 to 2021-22 paper which will be presented on 28 January 2019.
- 7.7. The Revenue Budget proposals set out in Appendix 2 form a suite of proposals which will enable the County Council to set a balanced Budget for 2019-20. **As such, any recommendations to add growth items, amend or remove proposed savings, or otherwise change the budget proposals, will require the Committee to identify offsetting saving proposals or equivalent reductions in planned expenditure.**
- 7.8. As set out elsewhere in this report, the Executive Director of Finance and Commercial Services is required to comment on the robustness of budget proposals, and the estimates upon which the budget is based, as part of the annual budget-setting process. This full assessment will be reported to Policy and Resources Committee and County Council.

8. Capital Programme 2019-20

- 8.1. A summary of the Capital Programme and schemes relevant to this committee can be found in Appendix 3.

9. Public Consultation

- 9.1. Under Section 3(2) of the Local Government Act 1999, authorities are under a duty to consult representatives of a wide range of local people when making decisions relating to local services. This includes council tax payers, those who use or are likely to use services provided by the authority, and other stakeholders or interested parties. There is also a common law duty of fairness which requires that consultation should take place at a time when proposals are at a formative stage; should be based on sufficient information to allow those consulted to give intelligent consideration of options; should give adequate time for consideration and response and that consultation responses should be conscientiously taken into account in the final decision.
- 9.2. Saving proposals to bridge the shortfall for 2019-20 were put forward by committees, the majority of which did not require consultation because they could be achieved without affecting service users.
- 9.3. Where individual savings for 2019-20 required consultation:
- Consultation took place between 5 November and 23 December with consultation feedback on both individual budget proposals and council tax available for Committees in January;
 - Proposals were published and consulted on via the Council's consultation hub, Citizen Space <https://norfolk.citizenspace.com/consultation/budget2018/>;
 - Consultation documents were made available in large print and easy read as standard, and other formats on request;
 - The Council made extra effort to find out the views of people who may be affected by the proposals and carry out impact assessments;
 - Opportunities for people to have their say on budget proposals and council tax were promoted through the Your Norfolk residents' magazine, news releases, online publications, and social media.

- Every response has been read in detail and analysed to identify the range of people's opinions, any repeated or consistently expressed views, and the anticipated impact of proposals on people's lives.

9.4. Childrens services had no individual proposals requiring consultation for 2019-20

10. Equality and rural impact assessment – findings and suggested mitigation

10.1. When making decisions the Council must give due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity and eliminate unlawful discrimination.

10.2. Equality and rural impact assessments have been carried out on each of Children's Services Committee's four budget proposals for 2019/20, to identify whether there may be any disproportionate or detrimental impact on people with protected characteristics or in rural areas.

10.3. The Committee's proposals will primarily impact on children and families – which is inevitable, because these groups constitute the majority of service users.

10.4. However, there is no evidence at this stage to indicate that the proposals will have any detrimental impact on children and families, or families in rural areas.

10.5. Broadly speaking, this is because although the proposals may lead to some changes in how services are delivered, or who delivers them, these are not anticipated to have any significant impact on service users. This means that service users, including service users from rural areas, should not experience any changes in the quality or standards of the services they currently receive or be disadvantaged. They will continue to receive support relative to their needs. No changes are proposed to the assessment process or eligibility of needs.

10.6. In addition, the principles guiding design and delivery of the proposals will be child and family centred, which prioritises the independence, dignity and safety of children and families, and draws directly on the voices of children and their families to guide service design. Opportunities for building greater levels of accessibility for disabled children and families into the design of services will be considered as part of the commissioning process.

10.7. As in previous years, if the proposals go ahead, implementation will be monitored and, in the unlikely event that any equality impacts emerge, this will be reported to Children's Services Committee for consideration.

10.8. In addition, HR Shared Service will continue to monitor whether staff with protected characteristics are disproportionately represented in redundancy or redeployment figures, and if so, take appropriate action.

10.9. The full assessment findings are attached for consideration at Appendix 1. Clear reasons are provided for each proposal to show why detrimental impact is not predicted, and the nature of this impact.

11. Budget Timetable

11.1. The Council's overarching budget setting-timetable for 2019-20 was agreed by County Council in February as part of the 2018-19 Budget. The timetable is

updated as further information becomes available (for example about the timing of Government announcements). The latest version of the timetable is set out in the table below.

Table 3: Budget setting timetable 2019-20 to 2021-22

Activity/Milestone	Time frame
County Council agree recommendations for 2018-22 including that further plans to meet the shortfall for 2019-20 to 2021-22 are brought back to Members during 2018-19	12 February 2018
Spring Statement 2018 announced	13 March 2018
Consider implications of service and financial guidance and context, and review / develop service planning options for 2019-22	February – June 2018
Member review of the latest financial position on the financial planning for 2019-22	July 2018
Development of savings proposals 2019-22	June – September 2018
Member review of service and budget planning position including savings proposals	Committees in October 2018
Chancellor's Autumn Budget 2018	29 October 2018
Consultation on new planning proposals and council tax 2019-22	5 November to 23 December 2018
Provisional Local Government Finance Settlement	13 December 2018
Service reporting to Members of service and financial planning and consultation feedback	January 2019
Committees agree revenue budget and capital programme recommendations to Policy and Resources Committee	Mid-January 2019
Final Local Government Finance Settlement	TBC January / February 2019
Policy and Resources Committee agree revenue budget and capital programme recommendations to County Council	28 January 2019
Confirmation of District Council tax base and Business Rate forecasts	31 January 2019
County Council agree Medium Term Financial Strategy 2019-20 to 2021-22, revenue budget, capital programme and level of council tax for 2019-20	11 February 2019

12. Financial implications

- 12.1. Potentially significant financial implications for the Committee's Budget, including those arising from the Autumn Budget 2018 and the Provisional Local Government Finance Settlement, are discussed throughout this report. The implications of the three changes expected to be implemented in 2020-21 remain the subject of considerable uncertainty and although they have been reflected as far as possible in the Council's 2019-20 budget planning, these impacts will need to be refined as further information is made available by Government.
- 12.2. Significant amounts of additional central government funding to the Council in recent years has been one-off or on a short-term basis both for Children's services

and for the rest of the Council as a whole. These short-term funding approaches increase the pressures in future years as much is required to fund recurrent costs. Significant additional legislation in recent years, along with significant rising demand and complexity within the Children's services remit (educational related and social care duties), has not been fully supported by additional burdens funding to meet new and enhanced statutory duties.

13. Issues, risks and innovation

- 13.1. Significant risks, assumptions, or implications have been set out throughout the report.
- 13.2. Specific financial risks in this area are also identified in the Corporate Risk Register, including the risk of failing to manage significant reductions in local and national income streams (RM002) and the potential risk of failure to deliver our services within the resources available over the next 3 years commencing 2018-19 to the end of 2020-21 (RM006).
- 13.3. Risks relating to budget setting are also detailed in the Council's budget papers. There is a risk in relation to the Comprehensive Spending Review and the Fair Funding Review that a failure by the Government to provide adequate resources to fund local authorities could lead to a requirement for further service reductions, particularly where the Fair Funding Review results in a redistribution between authority types or geographical areas.
- 13.4. Decisions about significant savings proposals with an impact on levels of service delivery have required public consultation. As in previous years, new 2019-22 saving proposals, and the Council's Budget as a whole, have been subject to equality and rural impact assessments as described elsewhere in this report.
- 13.5. The majority of the departmental expenditure is demand led and, by its very nature, difficult to predict. Significant management action is being taken as part of the department's everyday 'business', as well as through the transformation programme, to manage the demand to ensure that needs are being met at the most appropriate time in the most appropriate way, and to ensure that care provision to the County's most vulnerable children and families is provided in the most cost effective way to achieve the identified outcomes. The level of change within the department bring inherent risk both from a timeliness of implementation and the effectiveness of implementation. Additionally, some packages of support and / or placements for individuals are very expensive; meaning that a small change in the individuals being cared for can result in a large financial impact. Mitigation is being put in place with each project, and for the whole programme, to pro-actively manage the delivery and financial risks.

14. Background Papers

Norfolk County Council Vision and Strategy

<https://www.norfolk.gov.uk/what-we-do-and-how-we-work/policy-performance-and-partnerships/policies-and-strategies/corporate/council-vision-and-strategy>

Norfolk County Council Revenue and Capital Budget 2018-22 (Item 4, County Council 12 February 2018)

<http://norfolkcc.cmis.uk.com/norfolkcc/Meetings/tabid/70/ctl/ViewMeetingPublic/mid/397/Meeting/592/Committee/2/SelectedTab/Documents/Default.aspx>

Norfolk County Council Budget Book 2018-22

<https://www.norfolk.gov.uk/-/media/norfolk/downloads/what-we-do-and-how-we-work/budget-and-council-tax/budget-book-2018-22.pdf?la=en>

Strategic and Financial Planning 2019-20 to 2021-22 (Item 10, Policy and Resources Committee, 16 July 2018)

<http://norfolkcc.cmis.uk.com/norfolkcc/Meetings/tabid/128/ctl/ViewMeetingPublic/mid/496/Meeting/1419/Committee/21/SelectedTab/Documents/Default.aspx>

Strategic and Financial Planning 2019-20 to 2021-22 (Item 9, Children's Services Committee, 11 September 2018)

<http://norfolkcc.cmis.uk.com/norfolkcc/Meetings/tabid/128/ctl/ViewMeetingPublic/mid/496/Meeting/1470/Committee/8/Default.aspx>

Children's Transformation Programme (Item 8, Children's Services Committee, 11 September 2018)

<http://norfolkcc.cmis.uk.com/norfolkcc/Meetings/tabid/128/ctl/ViewMeetingPublic/mid/496/Meeting/1470/Committee/8/Default.aspx>

Strategic and Financial Planning 2019-20 to 2021-22 (Item 9, Policy and Resources Committee, 24 September 2018)

<http://norfolkcc.cmis.uk.com/norfolkcc/Meetings/tabid/128/ctl/ViewMeetingPublic/mid/496/Meeting/1420/Committee/21/SelectedTab/Documents/Default.aspx>

Strategic and Financial Planning 2019-20 to 2021-22 (Item 8, Children's Services Committee, 16 October 2018)

<http://norfolkcc.cmis.uk.com/norfolkcc/Meetings/tabid/128/ctl/ViewMeetingPublic/mid/496/Meeting/1471/Committee/8/Default.aspx>

Transforming the system for Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) in Norfolk (Item 8, 29 October 2018 Policy and Resources Committee)

<http://norfolkcc.cmis.uk.com/norfolkcc/Meetings/tabid/128/ctl/ViewMeetingPublic/mid/496/Meeting/1421/Committee/21/Default.aspx>

Strategic and Financial Planning 2019-20 to 2021-22 (Item 12, Policy and Resources Committee, 29 October 2018)

<http://norfolkcc.cmis.uk.com/norfolkcc/Meetings/tabid/128/ctl/ViewMeetingPublic/mid/496/Meeting/1421/Committee/21/SelectedTab/Documents/Default.aspx>

Implications of the Autumn Budget 2018 (Item 9, Policy and Resources Committee, 26 November 2018)

<http://norfolkcc.cmis.uk.com/norfolkcc/Meetings/tabid/128/ctl/ViewMeetingPublic/mid/496/Meeting/1422/Committee/21/SelectedTab/Documents/Default.aspx>

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