

Cabinet

Date: **Monday 6 November 2023**

Time: **10 am**

Venue: **Council Chamber, County Hall, Martineau Lane,
Norwich NR1 2DH**

Membership

Cllr Kay Mason Billig

Cllr Andrew Jamieson

Cllr Bill Borrett

Cllr Penny Carpenter

Cllr Margaret Dewsbury

Cllr Fabian Eagle

Cllr Jane James

Cllr Graham Plant

Cllr Alison Thomas

Cllr Eric Vardy

Role

Chair. Leader and Cabinet Member for Strategy and Governance

Vice-Chair. Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for

Finance Cabinet Member for Public Health and Wellbeing

Cabinet Member for Children's Services

Cabinet Member for Communities and Partnerships

Cabinet Member for Economic Growth

Cabinet Member for Corporate Services and Innovation

Cabinet Member for Highways, Infrastructure and Transport

Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care

Cabinet Member for Environment and Waste

Advice for members of the public:

This meeting will be held in public and in person.

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

We also welcome attendance in person, but public seating is limited, so if you wish to attend please indicate in advance by emailing committees@norfolk.gov.uk

Current practice for respiratory infections requests that we still ask everyone attending to maintain good hand and respiratory hygiene and, at times of high prevalence and in busy areas, please consider wearing a face covering.

Please stay at home if you are unwell, have tested positive for COVID 19, have symptoms of a respiratory infection or if you are a close contact of a positive COVID 19 case. This will help make the event safe for attendees and limit the transmission of respiratory infections including COVID-19.

A g e n d a

1 To receive any apologies.

2 Minutes

To confirm the minutes from the Cabinet Meeting held on 2 October 2023

Page 5

3 Members to Declare any Interests

If you have a **Disclosable Pecuniary Interest** in a matter to be considered at the meeting and that interest is on your Register of Interests you must not speak or vote on the matter.

If you have a **Disclosable Pecuniary Interest** in a matter to be considered at the meeting and that interest is not on your Register of Interests you must declare that interest at the meeting and not speak or vote on the matter

In either case you may remain in the room where the meeting is taking place. If you consider that it would be inappropriate in the circumstances to remain in the room, you may leave the room while the matter is dealt with.

If you do not have a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest you may nevertheless have an **Other Interest** in a matter to be discussed if it affects, to a greater extent than others in your division

- Your wellbeing or financial position, or
- that of your family or close friends
- Any body -
 - Exercising functions of a public nature.
 - Directed to charitable purposes; or
 - One of whose principal purposes includes the influence of public opinion or policy (including any political party or trade union);

Of which you are in a position of general control or management.

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

4 Matters referred to Cabinet by the Scrutiny Committee, Select Committees or by full Council.

5 Updates from the Chairman/Cabinet Members

6 Public Question Time

Fifteen minutes for questions from members of the public of which due notice has been given. Please note that all questions must be received by the Committee Team (committees@norfolk.gov.uk) by 5pm on Tuesday 31 October 2023. For guidance on submitting a public question, please follow this link: [Ask a question to a committee - Norfolk County Council](#)

Any public questions received by the deadline and the responses will be published on the website from 9.30am on the day of the meeting and can be viewed by clicking this link once uploaded: [Click here to view public questions and responses](#)

7 Local Member Issues/Questions

Fifteen minutes for local member to raise issues of concern of which due notice has been given. Please note that all questions must be received by the Committee Team (committees@norfolk.gov.uk) by 5pm on Tuesday 31 October 2023.

- | | |
|--|-----------------|
| 8 Preparing for Seasonal Pressures: Integrated Winter Plan for 2023/24 | Page 29 |
| Report by the Interim Executive Director of Adult Social Services | |
| 9 A140 Long Stratton Bypass | Page 47 |
| Report by the Interim Executive Director of Community and Environmental Services | |
| 10 Abbey Estates Thetford Memorandum of Understanding | Page 67 |
| Report by the Interim Executive Director of Strategy and Transformation | |
| 11 Public Health Strategic Plan | Page 77 |
| Report by the Interim Executive Director of Adult Social Services | |
| 12 Summary of Annual Report of Norfolk Adoption Service 2022-2023 | Page 123 |
| Report by the Executive Director of Children's Services | |
| 13 Statement of Purpose of Norfolk Fostering Services | Page 148 |
| Report by the Executive Director of Children's Services | |
| 14 Finance Monitoring Report 2023-24 P6 | Page 158 |
| Report by the Director of Strategic Finance | |
| 15 Reports of the Cabinet Member and Officer Delegated Decisions made since the last Cabinet meeting: | |
| To note the delegated decisions made since the last Cabinet meeting. | |

Decision made by the Cabinet Member for Children’s Services

- [Music Hub Investment Process](#)

Decisions made by the Cabinet Member for Highways, Infrastructure and Transport

- [Draft Norfolk Walking, Wheeling and Cycling Strategy Consultation 2023](#)
- [Norwich City Centre Experimental Traffic Regulation Orders \(TROs\)](#)

Decision made by the Cabinet Member for Environment and Waste

- [Annual Regional Flood and Coastal Committee Local Levy Vote](#)

Tom McCabe
Chief Executive
Norfolk County Council
County Hall
Martineau Lane Norwich
NR1 2DH

Date Agenda Published: 27 October 2023



If you need this document in large print, audio, Braille, alternative format or in a different language please contact Customer Services 0344 800 8020 or 18001 0344 800 8011 (textphone) and we will do our best to help.

Cabinet

Minutes of the Meeting held on 02 October 2023 in the Council Chamber, County Hall, at 10am

Present:

Cllr Kay Mason Billig	Chair. Leader and Cabinet Member for Strategy and Governance
Cllr Andrew Jamieson	Vice-Chair. Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance
Cllr Bill Borrett	Cabinet Member for Public Health and Wellbeing
Cllr Penny Carpenter	Cabinet Member for Children's Services
Cllr Margaret Dewsbury	Cabinet Member for Communities and Partnerships
Cllr Fabian Eagle	Cabinet Member for Economic Growth
Cllr Graham Plant	Cabinet Member for Highways, Infrastructure and Transport
Cllr Eric Vardy	Cabinet Member for Environment and Waste

Deputy Cabinet Members Present

Cllr Greg Peck	Deputy Cabinet Member for Finance
Cllr Shelagh Gurney	Deputy Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care

Executive Directors Present:

Harvey Bullen	Director of Strategic Finance
Debbie Bartlett	Interim Executive Director of Adult Social Services
Grahame Bygrave	Interim Executive Director of Community and Environmental Services
Paul Cracknell	Executive Director of Transformation and Strategy
Kat Hulatt	Assistant Director of Governance
Tom McCabe	Chief Executive
Sara Tough	Executive Director of Children's Services

- 1a** The Chair announced that at the weekend she had visited Trowse Fire Station to see firemen returning from their relay run around the County, covering 385 miles and visiting 42 fire stations to raise money for the Fire Service Charity. Important firefighting work continued during this relay run showing their dedication. The Chair encouraged donations to the Fire Service Charity.

1 Apologies for Absence

- 1.1 Apologies were received from The Cabinet Member for Corporate Services and Innovation, The Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, The Deputy Cabinet Member for Children's Services

2 Minutes from the meeting held on 04 September 2023

- 2.1 Cabinet agreed the minutes of the meeting held on 04 September 2023 as an accurate record.

3 Declaration of Interests

- 3.1 No declarations were made.

4 Matters referred to Cabinet by the Scrutiny Committee, Select Committees or by full Council.

4.1 No matters were referred.

5 Update from the Chair/Cabinet Members

5.1 No updates were given.

6. Public Question Time

6.1 No questions were received from the public.

7 Local Member Questions/Issues

7.1 The questions received are published in appendix A to these minutes.

7.2.1 Cllr Neale asked a supplementary question:

- Cllr Neale thanked the Cabinet Member for Highways, Infrastructure and Transport for his response; he had worked with officers for the Treescape funding and 40 tree wardens had been recruited to assist with this.
- The response to Cllr Neale's substantive question said that the lack of funding could be supplemented from the local member funding which Cllr Neale had done twice however, he had calculated that the £11k per year in funding gave his ward 5.7 trees. Since lots of trees were dying and needed replacing at around 30-40 per year this did not add up.
- Cllr Neale suggested funding was put in to replace these and noted that there had been an underspend in Members' discretionary funding in 2017-23 of £2.6484m. He suggested that this could be used to replace urban street trees in Norfolk.

7.2.2 The Cabinet Member for Highways, Infrastructure and Transport replied that underspends were put back into the general fund and used to balance the books but would check this with the Vice-Chair. He said the funding being spent through the member discretionary fund was helpful; replacing each tree each year would be unaffordable but this was being done as frequently as possible and funding being sought where possible.

8. Safeguarding across the life course in Norfolk: The work of the Norfolk Safeguarding Children Partnership and Norfolk Safeguarding Adults Board in 2022-23

8.1.1 Cabinet received the report presenting the 2022-23 work of both the Norfolk Safeguarding Children Partnership and Norfolk Safeguarding Adults Board.

8.1.2 The Cabinet Member for Public Health and Wellbeing introduced the report to Cabinet:

- The Norfolk Safeguarding Children Partnership Annual Report and Norfolk Safeguarding Adults Board Annual Report were presented to Health and Wellbeing Board and Integrated Care Partnership in September 2023.
- Both of these reports were positive and showed the good work being done

in this area.

- 8.2 The Cabinet Member for Children’s Services noted the multi-agency arrangements for children which were in place, with a strong partnership between Norfolk County Council, the police and health, and with the voice of children at the centre. The report discussed the wide-ranging activities which took place within a single sustainable system to safeguard children.
- 8.3 The Executive Director for Children’s Services discussed that safeguarding was part of the core business of the council. The council ensured that safeguarding was executed to a high level and each area within safeguarding was led by different statutory partners. Over the past years the council had invested in audit, scrutiny, use of data and focus on continuous learning to contribute to a mature partnership which worked with the strategic alliance to help all children flourish.
- 8.4 The Deputy Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care noted that this was an important piece of work for safeguarding adults. She reported that there was a regular safeguarding newsletter which was growing in importance.
- 8.5 Cabinet **RESOLVED** to:
- a) endorse and comment the contents of the annual report 2022/23 for NCSP and NSAB
 - b) To promote NSCP and NSAB’s work to the public via social media enabling more people to see it, helping to give important safeguarding messages to Norfolk’s communities.
- 8.6 **Evidence and Reasons for Decision**
- N/A
- 8.7 **Alternative Options**
- N/A
- 9. Market Sustainability and Improvement Fund – Workforce Funding**
- 9.1.1 Cabinet received the report outlining detail of the further £600m of funding for Adult Social Care announced by the Department of Health and Social Care on 28th July 2023, £570m of which would be distributed to Local Authorities over two years, with the residual £30m for Local Authorities in the most challenged health systems. The report also discussed challenges the Council would face in areas in scope of the grant.
- 9.1.2 The Deputy Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care moved the report, noting that this was a detailed report on the market improvement funding.
- 9.1.3 The Interim Executive Director for Adult Social Services introduced the report to Cabinet:
- This was funding would give additional capacity for this year and funding for next year, 2024-25, with clear grant conditions which fit well with the direction of travel.

- Officers had discussed with the market how best use could be made of this funding and come up with a balanced set of proposals to focus on the areas where the most difference could be made.
- There had been a focus on the learning disability market and mental health and the effective work in recruitment, retention and training would continue with colleagues in the care market.
- There had been work on the capacity to reduce waiting times and ensure people were supported in a timely way.
- This funding was not ongoing and so decisions had to be made about where the most benefit could be given.

9.2 The Cabinet Member for Public Health and Wellbeing endorsed the report noting the £10m extra funding for the service; the report showed the areas in which this funding would be spent and how waiting times would be reduced, by being targeted in the areas in which it could make the most difference.

9.3 Cabinet **RESOLVED** to discuss and agree the proposed use of the Market Sustainability and Improvement funding – Workforce fund as set out in section 3.6 of this report. Funding available is £6.3m in 2023/24 and a provisional £3.5m in 2024.

9.4 **Evidence and Reasons for Decision**

Please see section 4 of the report.

9.5 **Alternative Options**

Please see section 5 of the report.

10. **Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) Integration Plan**

10.1.1 Cabinet received the report outlining the approach being taken to integrate the Local Enterprise Partnership into Norfolk County Council and including the Local Enterprise Partnership Integration plan being prepared for Government.

10.1.2 The Chair noted that the Local Enterprise Partnership was being incorporated into the Council; a detailed plan was needed as part of this in partnership with district councils and partners

10.1.2 The Director of Growth and Investment introduced the report to Cabinet:

- The information set out in the report followed a decision by Government to cease responsibility of Local Enterprise Partnerships and integrate them into upper tier authorities. As part of this there was a requirement for upper tier authorities to agree a transition plan for submission to Government.
- Norfolk's transition plan had been discussed at Scrutiny Committee, agreed by the Local Enterprise Partnership board and subject to consultation by District Council leaders and Chief Executives and other stakeholders.
- The plan was not final as transition funding had not been confirmed by Government.
- Integration would allow Norfolk County Council to strengthen existing

economic development and skills bringing together the work of the Local Enterprise Partnership and provide an opportunity to continue developing links with the District Councils and private and education sectors.

- 10.2 The Cabinet Member for Economic Growth supported the report noting that integration was an excellent opportunity for the council, improving engagement with district councils and strengthening business engagement for the council with the business community and strengthening the economy.
- 10.3 The Cabinet Member for Public Health and Wellbeing thanked everyone involved in the Local Enterprise Partnership over the past years and was pleased to note the return of the Local Enterprise Partnership functions to the Council.
- 10.4 The Cabinet Member for Highways, Infrastructure and Transport noted the good work of the Local Enterprise Partnership. Paragraph 2.2 of the report showed the Local Enterprise Partnership functions which the Government had indicated should continue. This integration would help strengthen the Norfolk economy.
- 10.5 The Vice-Chairman noted that economic development was best held within the council, and he welcomed the changes set out in the report.
- 10.6 The Chair noted that Suffolk were going through a similar process but Norfolk was at the forefront. She felt this was a good way forward and pointed out that that collaborations would continue with Suffolk and with Norfolk's district councils.
- 10.7 Cabinet **RESOLVED** to:
1. Approve the LEP Integration Plan
 2. Recommend that a progress report is brought back to Cabinet in April 2024.

10.8 **Evidence and Reasons for Decision**

N/A

10.9 **Alternative Options**

Please see section 8 of the report.

11. Climate Action Plans - Tranche 1

- 11.1.1 Cabinet received the report introducing the approach of publishing climate action plans, proposing to bring these for member consideration in tranches, and presenting the first of these action plans for review and approval.
- 11.1.2 The Cabinet Member for Environment and Waste introduced the report to Cabinet:
- Since setting out the ambitious climate strategy in June 2023, officers had been putting together action plans, including getting the council's estate to net zero by 2030.
 - These action plans would give a clear view of the initiatives which would take place across the council, focussing on 7 focus areas as set out in the report.
 - The report to Cabinet proposed that these action plans were brought in

three tranches, and the first tranche set out the actions for buildings, digital solutions and connectivity, the local nature recovery strategy, street lighting, the council's vehicle fleet and procurement.

- The second and third tranches were planned to be brought to Cabinet in early 2024 and an overview of their content was shown in the report.
- The action plans would be brought together and published as a single document which would be updated each autumn. The Cabinet Member for Environment and Waste would work with the Chair of Infrastructure and Development Select Committee to keep the committee updated. The new tranches would be taken to Infrastructure and Development Select Committee before being brought to Cabinet for adoption.
- The Cabinet Member for Environment and Waste moved the recommendations as set out in the report.

11.2 The Chair had recently seen one of the new electric buses in Norwich and noted that 70 new electric buses were due to be introduced in the city. The Cabinet Member for Environment and Waste noted that the Council was working with Medicare to electrify their fleet.

11.3 The Cabinet Member for Communities and Partnerships pointed out that it was library week, and their theme was "go green", Through this libraries would point people towards the green economy and how they could support net zero.

11.4 The Cabinet Member for Public Health and Wellbeing noted that this report showed the practical work being carried out to meet green objectives.

11.5 The Vice-Chairman welcomed the report as the next stage in implementing the climate strategy, which was comprehensive and showed what would be done across a range of services. The work on digital services would benefit rural residents and allow infrastructure to grow.

11.6 The Cabinet Member for Highways, Infrastructure and Transport noted the discussion in the report about carbon reduction for passenger transport; the council was working closely to meet the targets it had set out in its green strategy.

11.7 The Chair noted that this was a step on the way towards meeting the council's goals. She would like Government to help improve electrical infrastructure in Norfolk so that more electrical charging points could be provided. This could be extended to the Norfolk Broads for electric boat charging for example, and help the council implement its strategy and support partners.

11.8 Cabinet **RESOLVED** to:

1. Approve the proposed approach to climate action planning.
2. Approve the first tranche of actions as set out in the report.

11.9 **Evidence and Reasons for Decision**

Please see section 6 of the report.

11.10 **Alternative Options**

The Council could decide to publish all actions related to the Climate Strategy in

one rather than to release the action plans in tranches. This would lead to the same end result for creating a reporting structure for delivery of the strategy. However, this approach would slow down the publication of actions for areas which are ready or soon to be ready for release. They would have to be held back by development of actions around more complex areas, which could impact on the momentum for building up the reporting framework.

12. Procurement Strategy 2023-2026

12.1.1 Cabinet received the report setting out the procurement strategy for 2023-26 which set out the 8 overarching goals for procurement at Norfolk County Council.

12.1.2 The Vice-Chairman introduce the report to Cabinet:

- Each year the council spent £900m on procurement made up of £650m revenue spend on contracts, which was 40% of the gross revenue budget, and £250m in the capital programme.
- Many people's experience of council services came from contractors and not directly from council staff as many services were provided from third party services. This meant that getting procurement right was essential to providing effective public services. To achieve best value for money from goods and services that the council procured it was important to ensure that contracts achieved what was expected of them.
- Much of the work behind this report relied on compliance with new national legislation and regulations. This showed how devolution would allow the council to set its own priorities.
- The procurement strategy would help the council to build on its social value priorities.

12.2 The Cabinet Member for Economic Growth noted that this had huge benefits for the council and its economy; the economic development team would be pushing to ensure there were more contractors on the approved list.

12.3 The Cabinet Member for Environment and Waste noted paragraph 2.2 of the report which showed the goals and medium-term priorities; one of these was reducing emissions through the council's work with Medicare and electrification of buses in Norwich. The report showed how the council was prioritising its green credentials.

12.4 The Deputy Cabinet Member for Finance welcomed the report which showed that the council was regularising its purchasing procedures; work had begun to improve purchase procedures through a review and drive improvements across commissioning and contract management.

12.5 Cabinet **RESOLVED** to agree the Norfolk County Council Procurement Strategy 2023-2026

12.6 Evidence and Reasons for Decision

Under the Local Government Act 1999 Act, local authorities must deliver 'Best Value' – to "make arrangements to secure continuous improvement in the way in which its functions are exercised, having regard to a combination of economy, efficiency and effectiveness".

The Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities is currently consulting on statutory guidance for local authorities to meet Best Value Standards. A 'fit for purpose' procurement strategy is specifically identified within the draft guidance as part of delivering Best Value. Therefore, member 101 approval of the strategy and monitoring of its achievement supports delivery of the Best Value Duty.

12.7 **Alternative Options**

The council could choose to continue without a member-endorsed Procurement Strategy. However, this would mean forgoing the opportunity to strengthen corporate governance for a significant function within the council through a published strategy that guides the focus of its procurement activities. Not publishing the strategy would also run counter to the anticipated good practice standards expected of local authorities in meeting their Best Value Duty.

13. **Risk Management Quarterly Report**

13.1 Cabinet received the quarterly risk management report setting out the reviewed and updated corporate risks, as well as departmental risk summaries for departmental risks as at October 2023

13.2 Cabinet **RESOLVED** to agree:

1. The key proposed changes to corporate risks since the last report to July 2023 Cabinet (paragraphs 2.1 and 2.2 and Appendix A of the report)
2. The corporate risks as at October 2023 (Appendices B and C of the report)
3. The departmental risk summaries (Appendix D) in the report.

13.3 **Evidence and Reasons for Decision**

Not applicable as no decision is being made.

13.4 **Alternative Options**

There are no alternatives identified.

14 **Corporately Significant Vital Signs**

14.1.1 Cabinet received the report providing an update on the Council's performance against its Corporately Significant Vital Signs.

14.1.2 The Executive Director of Transformation and Strategy introduced the report to Cabinet:

- This report showed a new measure for Adult Social Care
- The report showed mostly positive performance and progress
- 19 actions were indicated to support improving performance

14.2 The Vice-Chairman noted that a lot of work had been done on this, with the report now clearer. A deteriorating position was shown in the reserves forecast, but this was normal as reserves were held in departmental reserves which would build up and then be used across the financial year.

- 14.3 Cabinet **RESOLVED** to:
1. Review and comment on the end of Quarter 1 performance data.
 2. Review the considerations and next steps.
 3. Agree the 19 highlighted actions as set out in the report
- 14.4 **Evidence and Reasons for Decision**
- N/A
- 14.5 **Alternative Options**
- Information report
- 15. Mayton Wood Recycling Centre**
- 15.1.1 Cabinet received the report setting out a proposal to relocate Mayton Wood Recycling Centre operations to the new Norwich North Recycling Centre from December 2023.
- 15.1.2 The Vice-Chair introduced the report to Cabinet:
- Mayton Wood Recycling Centre had been discussed and considered by officers and it was therefore suggested that its operations be moved to Norwich North Recycling Centre.
 - Norfolk County Council had spent £2.8m on a new recycling centre with spilt level access so people did not have to go up steps with their waste, had access to larger bins and a purpose-built re-use shop, and with a better layout for traffic flow and parking.
 - Having done this The Vice-Chair felt it was not reasonable to maintain old and out of date recycling centres. The money saved from closing Mayton Wood Recycling Centre should instead be used to develop other nearby sites. Four other waste disposal sites in Norfolk were due for upgrade, including the nearby site of North Walsham Recycling Centre.
 - Residents around Mayton Wood Recycling Centre would receive a better service and could access better recycling facilities which were not much further away.
 - The Vice-Chair did not accept that the proposal would increase fly tipping as this was not often shown in evidence. 99% of Norfolk residents disposed of their waste properly and so the Vice-Chair believed it was unlikely that having to drive a few extra miles would encourage such people to fly tip.
- 15.2 The Deputy Cabinet Member for Finance used Mayton Wood Recycling Centre and would have to travel 4 miles further if the proposals went ahead, however that people from other areas would have a shorter distance to North Norwich Recycling Centre. He felt that Mayton Wood Recycling Centre was not fit for purpose as it was out of date.
- 15.3 The Cabinet Member for Public Health and Wellbeing agreed that new recycling centre facilities should be provided to residents, noting that the centres in Dereham and Kings Lynn which had already been upgraded. The new facility at Norwich North was already open and would make it easier for people to recycle.
- 15.4 The Cabinet Member for Environment and Waste noted there had been political

interest in this proposal; he noted that some people would have to travel further to recycle, however some people would have less distance to travel. The reuse shop at Norwich North was making a difference, providing funding for charity.

- 15.5 The Deputy Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care noted that Hellesdon residents were very happy with Norwich North Recycling Centre which had a better layout than their previous centre at Mile Cross; it had better accessibility, was outside the city being better for air pollution, and had better recycling opportunities. It was also positive that the reuse shop raised funding for charitable causes. Mayton Wood Recycling Centre was not as accessible as this new recycling centre since it was on a country lane.
- 15.6 The Cabinet Member for Highways, Infrastructure and Transport pointed out that fly tipping was a criminal offence which cost millions of pounds of council funding to address each year. This scheme would benefit the people of Norfolk.
- 15.7 The Cabinet Member for Environment and Waste clarified that fly tipping was down 4% in Norfolk which showed the work district councils had been taking to tackle it alongside measures in place at the County Council.
- 15.8 The Chair noted that Norfolk County Council was required to make strategic decisions; it was important to make a modern recycling centre within easy reach of everyone. She understood that some people would find this emotive however it was a decision for the whole of Norfolk so that centres would be safe, accessible and modern and was the right thing to do.
- 15.9 Cabinet **RESOLVED** to Agree to relocate Mayton Wood Recycling Centre operations to the new Norwich North Recycling Centre from December 2023.

15.10 **Evidence and Reasons for Decision**

See section 5 of the report.

15.11 **Alternative Options**

Cabinet could decide not to move operations to Norwich North Recycling Centre. This would mean that the associated saving could not be delivered, that the investment in the Norwich North Recycling Centre may not be fully realised and that we would continue to operate an inefficient site which has seen significant reductions in the number of users.

16. Strategic and financial planning 2024-25

- 16.1.1 Cabinet received the report setting out details of the initial proposals for Cabinet consideration prior to public consultation. It also explains the broad approach planned to enable further options to be brought forward in order to contribute to a balanced Budget being proposed for 2024-25.
- 16.1.2 The Vice-Chairman introduced the report to Cabinet:
- While less than last year, the scale of the budget gap agreed by Full Council in February 2023 including the 2024-25 gap was one of the largest this council had sought to bridge
 - Headwinds continued in the economy and public finance which would

increase costs to the council. Many upper tier authorities faced unprecedented challenges with no long-term solution in sight. Government's November 2023 statement should clarify the broad issues but there was no date for the local government provisional statement which would give individual detail.

- In summer 2023 the Council had developed proposals for the 2024-25 budget which were shown in table 5 of the report and summarised in table 4 of the report.
- The council would continue to pursue savings within the framework set out in the strategic review with a target saving of £10m.
- At this stage in the budget process there had been good progress towards transformation and efficiency savings.
- Savings of £26.485m in the report were recommended for public consultation between October and December 2023 to inform budget recommendations to Full Council.
- As set out in the report on page 271, at the time of preparing the report it was considered that proposal set out on page 260, "Review contracts providing respite for adults with learning disabilities and identify a more cost effective and efficient way of delivering this service" would require consultation. Following further review it had been confirmed this was not necessary and would form part of the overall consultation process.
- New pressures emerging since development of the 2024-25 budget in February 2023 would impact in the current and future financial years which could increase the size of the gap. £25m had been set aside to meet some of these pressures:
 - Pay inflation; an offer had been made on the national employer side for a pay award of a fixed increase of £1925 for all grades up to grade L and 3.88% above this. Every 1% increase in pay inflation equated to a cost pressure of £3m.
 - Non-pay inflation: inflation in 2023-24 remained above the level assumed in February 2023 and would need to be addressed in the budget planning. The budget would continue to be refined based on the latest inflation estimates.
 - Special Educational Needs and Disabilities: Under-funding of Special Educational Needs and Disabilities had caused significant financial issues to local authorities for many years. In 2023, the council had negotiated successfully with the Department for Education as part of the Safety Valve Programme and implemented Local First Inclusion as part of this. This would impact on Special Educational Needs and Disabilities home to school transport and would involve monitoring via reporting to the Department for Education.
 - Growth and demand of services: existing pressures in the Medium Term Financial Statement continued which could require increased growth in Children's Services and Adult Social Care. Market pressures remained intense, with uplifts driven by pay awards in the sector; the average increase in the national living wage was 6% and would be repeated in 2024. This budget pressure would be included in the Medium Term Financial Statement.
 - The outcome of the Fair Funding Review would not be seen before the next general election.
- Corporate finance options included the flexible use of capital receipts;

these would offset the additional costs but would not bridge the gap. Strategic work in departments such as connecting communities and Flourish would see savings emerging through departmental efficiencies.

- Work would start on the third budget challenge in December 2023 to address the remaining £20m budget gap if the proposals in this report were agreed; this would be focussed on further efficiency savings that did not require consultation to close the remaining gap, informed by Government announcements.
- The ability to borrow at low interest rates was over, and the council had taken advantage of these rates to allow transformations, but now needed to restrict its borrowing. This was reflected in the Medium Term Financial Statement; if capital schemes were not mainly funded externally they should focus on invest to save, promoting economic development or relate to end of life assets needed for essential service delivery of which were mainly funded from external funding services.
- £565m savings had been budgeted for over 2011/2012 to 23/24. Unless different funding was brought by the next Prime Minister, non-statutory services would need to be considered.

- 16.2 The Cabinet Member for Public Health and Wellbeing noted the financial issues experienced at some Councils in the country; Norfolk County Council had addressed the equal pay issue which had caused these councils' financial issues some time ago. People were living for longer which meant they required more from local authority services to keep them independent and well for longer meaning the cost for the council would increase and meaning the Council would be required to look at how they could provide services as well as they could with the money they had.
- 16.3 The Deputy Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care noted that this report showed the council was providing residents with best value for their council tax and supporting children, the elderly and people who needed support.
- 16.4 The Chair noted that the budget was increasing each year so it was important to work smarter and ensure core services were delivered. The council was competent and financially prudent. The Chair and the Vice-Chairman had spoken to the Local Government Finance Minister recently, and asked for the government to provide fairer funding for rural areas and three-year settlements so that the council could plan more strategically.
- 16.5 Cabinet **RESOLVED** to:
1. To consider and comment on the County Council's financial strategy as set out in this report and note that the Budget process is aligned to the overall policy and financial framework;
 2. To note that fiscal and policy decisions made by the Government in autumn 2023, may have implications for the County Council's budget planning position. The outcome of these national funding announcements, alongside the Local Government Finance Settlement, will have potentially significant impacts on the 2024-25 Budget position, which will not be fully known until later in the budget setting process.
 3. To consider and agree for planning purposes the latest assessment of significant areas of risk and uncertainty around emerging budget pressures for the 2024-25 Budget and Medium Term Financial Strategy, which remain to be

- resolved and which may have a material impact on budget planning (section 8 of the report).
4. To direct Executive Directors to identify proposals for further recurrent Departmental savings towards the original target of £46.200m agreed in June 2023, for consideration by Cabinet in January 2024 and to support final 2024-25 Budget recommendations to Full Council.
 5. To note that, taking into account the significant budget pressures for 2024-25, the S151 Officer anticipates recommending that the Council will need to apply the maximum council tax increase available in order to set a sustainable balanced budget for 2024-25;
 6. To note the responsibilities of the Director of Strategic Finance under section 114 of the Local Government Act 1988 and section 25 of the Local Government Act 2003 to comment on the robustness of budget estimates as set out in section 9 and the further actions which may be required to set a balanced budget as set out in paragraph 10.3 of the report;
 7. To consider and agree the proposals as set out in section 5 of the report (Table 5) to be taken forward in budget planning for 2024-25, subject to final decisions about the overall Budget in February 2024, noting the level of savings already included from the 2023-24 Budget process (Table 3 of the report);
 8. To agree that public consultation (as set out in section 11 of the report) and equality impact assessment (as set out in section 17 of the report) in relation to all other proposals for the 2024-25 Budget be undertaken as set out in section 11 of the report, and asking residents for their views on the level of council tax;
 9. To note that the Chief Executive (Head of Paid Service) has the delegation to undertake any staff consultation relating to specific proposals as required to inform and support 2024-25 Budget setting decisions in January 2024;
 10. To confirm the remaining next steps in the Budget planning process for 2024-25, and the Budget planning timetable (Appendix 1 of the report); and
 11. To note and thank Select Committees for their input into the Budget development process for 2024-25 in July, and to invite Select Committees to comment further on the detailed proposals set out in this report when they meet in November 2023 (section 19 of the report).

16.6 **Evidence and Reasons for Decision**

See section 12 of the report.

16.7 **Alternative Options**

See section 13 of the report.

17. **Finance Monitoring Report 2023-24 P5: August 2023**

17.1.1 Cabinet received the report and associated annexes summarising the forecast financial outturn position for 2023-24, to assist members to maintain an overview of the overall financial position of the Council.

17.1.2 The Vice-Chairman introduced the report to Cabinet:

- A balanced position continued to be shown at year end. Most savings continued to be delivered as forecast; the savings shortfall was forecast at

£2.845m out of £59.7m.

- Long-term borrowing was fixed and provided for in the revenue budget; there were no risky commercial financial investments.
- Demand led cost pressures in Children's Services continued within social care placements and SEND home to school transport.
- The cost of care was an issue for Adult Social Care with an overspend reported and met in the department; it was due to a range of factors in older peoples care packages and price of care packages for people with disabilities and learning disabilities in residential care
- There was a healthy cash balance of £267.554m at the end of August 2023.
- The period 5 forecast of interest receivable from treasury investments was £3.5m which was a £2.3m saving against budget. Interest receivable from non-treasury investments and capital loans was forecast at £2.355m.
- The Public Works Loan Board borrowing was £841.955m at the end of August 2023 and interest payable on associated borrowing was £30.72m of approximately 6% of the net budget.
- A reduction of £9.991m to the capital programme was set out in the recommendations due to release of capital previously budgeted for the refurbishment of Wensum Lodge and underspend in Highways. The capital programme would continue to be reprofiled so that the spike in 2024-25 was reduced. Reprofiling of the capital programme would continue to ensure the overall spend reflected a realistic annual spend.

17.1.2 The Director of Strategic Finance noted the agreement by Cabinet of the offer from the Integrated Care Board in September 2023; the Council received payment for this on Friday 29 September.

17.1.3 The Vice-Chairman added that Cabinet was asked to approve the £1.287m virement which was the transfer of capital funding from digital to fire and rescue for fire and rescue control system which would be delivered through a fire control collaboration with Hertfordshire Fire Rescue Service. Cabinet was also asked to approve deferral of repayment of the £2m Hethel loan from December 2023 to 2026. Delays to planning and external funding meant the completion of the project and income generation had been delayed. £526k will be earned on accrued income on the loan as a result.

17.2 The chair noted that local authorities were under increased pressure. She highlighted that children with the highest needs can cost the council £1m per year to provide services for. The home to school transport budget was £57m per year. The Chair thanked the Vice-Chairman and the Director of Financial Management for their work in ensuring a balanced budget was returned.

17.3 Cabinet **RESOLVED:**

1.To note the reduction of **£9.991m** to the capital programme to address capital funding requirements funded mostly from various external sources as set out in detail in capital Appendix 3, paragraph 1.4 of the report as follows:

- (£0.459k) reduction in NCC Borrowing requirement due to the release of surplus capital budgets in Corporate Property – Offices.
- (£3.878m) net reduction in Highways improvement and maintenance schemes, mainly due to a reduction in external grant funding forecasted following revisions to project forecasts for 2023-24, after allocations to

- various projects including the Great Yarmouth Harfreys Roundabout £1.262m, Caister on Sea bypass £0.7m
- (£5.515m) reduction in NCC Borrowing requirement due to the release of capital budget following the decision to dispose of Wensum Lodge and move the Adult Learning courses to more accessible premises across the county.
 - (£0.139m) net reduction in various other schemes
2. To recommend to Council the following amendments to the P6 capital programme for the following schemes as set out in Capital Appendix 3, paragraph 4.2-4.3 of the report as follows:
 - the inter-service virements of £1.287m from Digital Services to fund the Norfolk Fire and Rescue Service Command and Control System as set out in Appendix 3 of the report, note 4.2
 - £0.075m uplift to the Environment (Planning and Advice) project to fund the additional works associated with Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) responsibilities as set out in Appendix 3 of the report, note 4.3.
 3. Subject to Cabinet approval of recommendation 1, and following Council approval of recommendation 2, to delegate:
 - 3.1. To the Director of Procurement authority to undertake the necessary procurement processes including the determination of the minimum standards and selection criteria (if any) and the award criteria; to shortlist bidders; to make provisional award decisions (in consultation with the Chief Officer responsible for each scheme); to award contracts; to negotiate where the procurement procedure so permits; and to terminate award procedures if necessary.
 - 3.2. To the Director of Property authority (notwithstanding the limits set out at 5.13.6 and 5.13.7 of Financial Regulations) to negotiate or tender for or otherwise acquire the required land to deliver the schemes (including temporary land required for delivery of the works) and to dispose of land so acquired that is no longer required upon completion of the scheme;
 - 3.3. To each responsible chief officer authority to:
 - (in the case of two-stage design and build contracts) agree the price for the works upon completion of the design stage and direct that the works proceed; or alternatively direct that the works be recompleted
 - approve purchase orders, employer's instructions, compensation events or other contractual instructions necessary to effect changes in contracts that are necessitated by discoveries, unexpected ground conditions, planning conditions, requirements arising from detailed design or minor changes in scope
 - subject always to the forecast cost including works, land, fees and disbursements remaining within the agreed scheme or programme budget.
 - That the officers exercising the delegated authorities set out above shall do so in accordance with the council's Policy Framework, with the approach to Social Value in Procurement endorsed by Cabinet at its meeting of 6 July 2020, and with the approach set out in the paper entitled "Sourcing strategy for council services" approved by Policy & Resources Committee at its meeting of 16 July 2018.
 4. To recognise the period 5 general fund forecast revenue of a **balanced position**, noting also that Executive Directors will take measures to reduce or eliminate potential over-spends where these occur within services;

5. To recognise the period 5 forecast of 95% savings delivery in 2023-24, noting also that Executive Directors will continue to take measures to mitigate potential savings shortfalls through alternative savings or underspends;
6. To note the forecast General Balances at 31 March 2024 of **£25.410m**.
7. To note the expenditure and funding of the revised current and future 2023-28 capital programmes including the significant reprofiling undertaken to date and the reduction in the capital programmes of £9.991m in P5.
8. To approve the appointment of directors to Norfolk County Council owned companies and joint ventures as set out in section 2.3 of the report, as required by the Council's Financial Regulations.
9. To approve the deferment of the first repayment of the Hethel Innovation Ltd 2021 £2.000m loan to 18 December 2026 with the associated uplift to the annual repayments to £0.117k per annum for the remaining 33 years as set out in Appendix 3 of the report, note 3.7.

17.4 **Evidence and Reasons for Decision**

See section 4 of the report.

17.5 **Alternative Options**

To deliver a balanced budget, no viable alternative options have been identified to the recommendations in this report. In terms of financing the proposed capital expenditure, no further grant or revenue funding has been identified to fund the expenditure, apart from the funding noted in Appendix 3 of the report.

18 **Reports of the Cabinet Member and Officer Delegated Decisions made since the last Cabinet meeting**

- 18.1 Cabinet **RESOLVED** to **note** the Delegated Decisions made since the last Cabinet meeting

19 **Exclusion of the Public**

- 19.1 Cabinet **RESOLVED** to exclude the public from the meeting

20 **Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) Integration Plan: Exempt Appendix**

- 20.1 Cabinet did not discuss the exempt appendix, however noted its contents.

The meeting ended at 11:24

Chair of Cabinet

Cabinet
2 October 2023
Questions

	Member question and response
7.1	<p>Question from Councillor Saul Penfold It was reassuring to hear at last week's Full Council meeting that the administration is confident issues around equal pay that saw Birmingham issue a Section 114 Notice and is now threatening the same fate at Sheffield City Council, does not threaten the finances of Norfolk County Council. Has the administration conducted any assessment into potential historical disputes/issues that could, similar to events in the aforementioned authorities, directly threaten this Council's ability to deliver a balanced budget and maintain its statutory services?'</p> <p>Response from the Cabinet Member for Finance Officers have undertaken an assessment of the equal pay claims that have occurred in Birmingham and other Councils. NCC use a nationally recognised job evaluation scheme and have a robust process in place to apply this scheme in a way that is fair to all. Our current assessment of risk is very low but we will continue to watch and learn from new cases.</p>
7.2	<p>Question from Cllr Brian Watkins Can the leader of the council commit to members that the main motivation of Norfolk's Devolution Deal is to benefit the people of Norfolk through new investment, and is not simply motivated by the need to close the budget gap?</p> <p>Response from the Leader and Cabinet Member for Strategy and Governance Thank you for your question.</p> <p>A Level 3 Devolution Deal for Norfolk would see an investment of £600m of new money over a 30-year period. This money does not and cannot replace core funding and will be used to grow our economy, working with our District colleagues and other partners. It will be used to support local businesses and attract businesses to move to our county, creating jobs and to help develop and diversify skills in Norfolk.</p> <p>Second question from Cllr Brian Watkins You recently decided to scrap the transport for Norwich Advisory Committee, turning it into little more than a meaningless talking shop. This is an affront to local democracy as well as being utterly disrespectful to council colleagues on other neighbouring authorities. With ongoing public concern about the changes now taking place at the heartsease roundabout, will the chair now concede that this is absolutely the wrong time to take matters behind closed doors?</p> <p>Response from the Cabinet Member for Highways, Infrastructure and Transport The previous iteration of this body was dysfunctional, being made inoperative by members refusing to take part and depriving the Cabinet Member of advice to assist his timely decision making.</p> <p>The new steering group reflects the well- functioning arrangements of Great Yarmouth and King's Lynn, which have operated successfully for many years.</p>

7.3	<p>Question from Councillor Steffan Aquarone Will the cost of rent for use of the new recycling centre located in Sheringham exceed £19,000 per year?</p> <p>Response from the Cabinet Member for Environment and Waste The full detail (including comparable detail about the proposed replacement for Wymondham Recycling Centre) is available in a report to Cabinet dated 31 January 2022. This clarified that if the proposed development of the new Sheringham Recycling Centre went ahead then the term of the lease would be 25 years from the point at which the works contract was confirmed, with break points at 15 and 20 years and a rent of £20,000 a year subject to rent reviews every five years indexed to the Retail Price Index, but with fixed annual cap and collar between 2% and 4%.</p>
7.4	<p>Question from Cllr Alison Birmingham Can the Cabinet Member for Highways, Infrastructure and Transport explain how work is able to commence on the Heartsease Roundabout when the land required for the project has not yet been purchased?</p> <p>Response from the Cabinet Member for Highways, Infrastructure and Transport These are very small areas of land that do not compromise the delivery of the majority of the works, which as you highlight, have now started on site. This scheme represents a significant investment in the highway network in Norwich. To be clear, work is not taking place on areas of land which are still subject to acquisition and work will only take place on such areas once the land is vested in the County Council. This process is underway and is expected to be completed in time for when the construction phase of that part of the junction is reached later in the construction period. Construction is currently focussing on areas where land acquisition is not being undertaken and I am pleased to say that work is progressing in accordance with our construction programme.</p>
7.5	<p>Question from Cllr Mike Smith-Clare If the Council is not able to reduce the DSG cumulative deficit through a combination of the transformation programme, capital investment, high needs allocations and the Safety Valve programme from the DfE, then there remains a risk to the overall financial viability of the whole Council. Does the Cabinet Member for Children's Services agree that this risk be added as a separate item on the risk register?</p>

Response from the Cabinet Member for Children's Services

The risk register already holds risks relating to the DSG cumulative deficit at both the departmental and corporate risk level. At a departmental level, risk RM14506 "DSG fund overspend" covers the risk that the DSG overspend persists and increases due to rising demand / non delivery of objectives and that liability for this deficit would fall onto the NCC balance sheet. This risk is included on the departmental risk summary for Children's Services in Appendix D of the Risk Management Report on this meeting's agenda. Additionally, we hold two relevant corporate risks that include the Dedicated Schools Grant as well as core NCC funding. These cover the risks of non-realisation of Children's Services Transformation change and expected benefits (RM030) and Children's Services external demand-driven overspend (RM031).

Children's Services is focused on the delivery of Local First Inclusion and making a success of this very significant transformation programme for Norfolk.

The shortfall in DSG funding remains an issue which impacts on a large number of councils nationally and we are continuing to engage with Government about this.

Second question from Cllr Mike Smith-Clare

Misleading information about the responsibility of families to fund independent school places and home to school transport costs was recently withdrawn from phase transfer letters to families of children with EHCPs due to move schools in 2024. Would the Cabinet Member for Children's Services confirm how many of these letters were issued and that those families have now been notified of the council's error and issued with a correct, replacement letter?

Response from the Cabinet Member for Children's Services

We have recently learned that correspondence to families whose children with EHCPs are transitioning to a new phase of education in 2024 contained an error whereby responsibilities for arranging transport or meeting the fees of children in independent schools was not qualified to reflect the nuances contained within the relevant sections of the SEND Code of Practice 2014. We would like to thank our local Parent Carer Forums for bringing this to our attention and the letters have now been changed accordingly for future years. We are also in the process of writing to all families who have received the correspondence this year to provide clarification regarding the relevant aspects of the Code of Practice and to allay any concerns for a minority of cases to which these arrangements may apply.

7.6

Question from Cllr Terry Jermy

In a reply to my question about the Big Norfolk Holiday Fun scheme at the 4th September 2023 Cabinet Meeting, it was stated that 70 quality assurance visits had been planned to providers across the county over the summer holidays. Please can the Cabinet Member for Children's Services confirm how many visits took place, the full range of issues identified from those visits and if a detailed report will be available on the findings?

Response from the Cabinet Member for Children's Services

There were 81 quality assurance visits undertaken during the summer programme, plus follow up visits where this was needed. Where any issues are identified these are raised with the provider at the point of the visit or straight afterwards so they can be resolved in a timely manner. A report is written for every visit and feedback and recommendations are shared with the provider. We use the DfE requirements to score each provider across several criteria, including accessibility and inclusiveness, and safeguarding. The information is then used in a number of ways to continuously improve the programme:

- Providers must explain how they will address any recommendations for improvement in their future application or extension of their contract
- A meeting is held with staff undertaking the QA visits to share feedback and identify areas for improvement across the programme which are then shared with providers at sessions after each holiday period and via newsletters
- Additional training or guidance is offered to providers
- The multi-agency HAF Strategy Group receives an update after each holiday programme highlighting any areas for development and the actions being taken

From the Summer programme, the following areas for development have been identified: more embedding of opportunities to learn about food and nutrition as part of activities, training and support to enable younger staff and volunteers to be involved, ensuring appropriate signage at venues, more differentiation of activities when there is a large age range, and working with providers to encourage good levels of attendance.

Supplementary question from Cllr Terry Jermy

Now the summer holiday has ended please can the Cabinet Member for Children's Services confirm how many of the 2,765 places available for children in Thetford as part of this year's Big Norfolk Holiday Fun (HAF) scheme were taken up?

Response from the Cabinet Member for Children's Services

There were 11 holiday activity providers in Thetford over the summer across 8 locations. 2311 places were booked (83%), and of these 1691 places were actually attended (61% of total places available, 73% of places booked).

The HAF team has worked hard to increase the number of providers in Thetford and to offer a varied programme for children of different ages and interests. There was an increase of 820 spaces over this summer compared to Summer 2022.

Promotion of the programme remains a priority and the HAF team discuss low attendance with providers as part of the QA visits. We use newspaper advertisements, local radio, social media, and direct marketing to families eligible for free school meals as well as via schools. Schools receive free flyers and banners. We also expect providers to promote their offer and they receive a marketing pack of branded items to support them to do this. We monitor attendance and offer extra support to providers with targeted social media where necessary.

7.7	<p>Question from Cllr Maxine Webb</p> <p>Verges that have gone uncut all year in my division, despite my raising with officers, have now become cluttered with strewn and buried litter making cutting difficult and officers tell me that the verges now cannot be cut until the litter has been cleared. Since the Conservatives took back control of Norwich City highways, the previous coordination of litter clearing and verge cutting by the city council can't easily happen.</p> <p>Does the Cabinet Member for Highways, Infrastructure and Transport agree that this is not helpful for the residents ultimately impacted by having to live in messy, unkempt streets and what will he do about it?</p> <p>Response from the Cabinet Member for Highways, Infrastructure and Transport</p> <p>I am sorry to hear of the amount of litter within grass verges in the City, but it is worth highlighting that litter picking is the responsibility of the City Council. The local highways team have been working with our contractor to ensure the grass verges within the agreed highway boundary area are cut. Where locations have been missed, and they are within the County Council's areas of responsibility, they have been highlighted to the contractor to remedy. The fourth and final urban grass cutting operation has just commenced on 18 September.</p> <p>As litter picking is a responsibility of the City Council, discussions have already taken place to see how the two teams can better co-ordinate litter picking and grass-cutting activities in future.</p>
7.8	<p>Question from Cllr Ben Price</p> <p>Norwich is the economic centre of Norfolk. The transport infrastructure of the city is integral to the future prosperity of the county. The city's transport must reflect the needs of its citizens. Currently all major transport project decisions are made by one person who doesn't live in or represent the city. We now have a situation where meetings to discuss future transport proposals for the city will take place behind closed doors. The public are now being excluded. Does the cabinet member of highways agree with me that this contravenes the Nolan principles of Openness and Accountability?</p> <p>Response from the Cabinet Member for Highways, Infrastructure and Transport</p> <p>The previous iteration of this body was dysfunctional, being made inoperative by members refusing to take part and depriving the Cabinet Member of advice to assist his timely decision making.</p> <p>The new steering group reflects the well- functioning arrangements of Great Yarmouth and King's Lynn, which have operated successfully for many years.</p>

7.9	<p>Question from Cllr Jamie Osborn The Chancellor said last month that it is right to “be worried if we have an infrastructure project where the costs are getting totally out of control.” He added that the spiralling costs of infrastructure would lead to “having discussions”, to a state where the Government “haven't made any decisions”, and that “we do need to find a way of delivering infrastructure projects that doesn't cost taxpayers billions and billions of pounds.” Substitute “billions and billions” for “millions and millions”, and he could have been talking about the NWL, not HS2. Is the Cabinet Member for Finance “having discussions” with the Leader about the costs of this infrastructure project?</p>
	<p>Response from the Cabinet Member for Finance Thank you for your question. As you will be aware, the Council keeps the cost of all capital projects under careful review on an ongoing basis and reports on these within monthly financial reporting to Cabinet. While we await a Government decision, we have been actively engaging with Government over the funding for the Norwich Western Link (NWL), and continue to believe that a positive announcement will be made soon. As set out in the July report to Cabinet about the NWL, further updates are due to be presented to a future Cabinet.</p>
	<p>Second question from Cllr Jamie Osborn Following the revelation that thousands of trees planted by the county council along the NDR have died, the Cabinet Member said “Regularly watering such a vast number of plants so close to a high speed dual carriageway was not considered practical, safe or efficient.” If it was not considered practical, safe or efficient to water these trees, why were they planted where they were?</p>
	<p>Response from the Cabinet Member for Highways, Infrastructure and Transport All planting completed along the NDR was in accordance with the environmental mitigation measures included within the Development Consent Order for the project. As you will be aware we have suffered some significant dry summers over recent years since that planting was completed and this has resulted in some losses, however these are in line with Forestry Commission guidance and expectations for tree planting of this kind. The plants that have been lost have either already been replaced or are due to be replaced in the next planting season.</p>
7.10	<p>Question from Cllr Paul Neale Norwich’s 11,000 highway street trees are dying much faster than the £20,000 a year allocated to replace them with. Even with some one-off government funding our officers have been successful in winning, it still means only 158 trees will be replaced in the next growing season, that’s an average of 12 trees per ward. In my Nelson ward alone we currently have about 70 trees that need replacing plus an estimated loss rate of about 30-40 trees a year. Can the council increase the funding to save Norwich’s trees before our streets are left barren?</p>

Response from the Cabinet Member for Highways, Infrastructure and Transport

I fully acknowledge that trees offer considerable streetscene and environmental benefits to communities. This Council has successfully applied for 2 rounds of Local Authority Treescaping funding for Norwich street trees, resulting in £178,522 extra budget to be spent on planting street trees in Norwich, which is very welcome news. This is in addition to the general annual highways maintenance budgets. It is also worth highlighting that 100 watering bags have been purchased to help these new trees establish themselves more successfully. To supplement this, you also have the option of using your Local Member Fund (LMF) to plant trees within the highway. If you would like to explore this option further, please discuss this with your local Highway Engineer to agree locations for planting.

Cabinet

Item No: 8

Report Title: Preparing for Seasonal Pressures: Integrated Winter Plan for 2023/24

Date of Meeting: 6 November 2023

Responsible Cabinet Member: Cllr Alison Thomas (Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care) Cllr Bill Borrett (Cabinet Member for Public Health and Wellbeing)

Responsible Director: Debbie Bartlett, Executive Director of Adult Social Services.

Is this a Key Decision? Yes

Executive Summary / Introduction from Cabinet Member

The winter period can impact on the health and wellbeing of our population, with health conditions that can be caused or worsened by cold weather, higher incidences of seasonal illnesses, and impact on wider social wellbeing. Our system often faces greater pressures in winter which are managed by all partners in our Integrated Care System (ICS). Through partnership working we can alleviate and address these seasonal challenges to help support communities to remain resilient, address inequalities and prioritise prevention.

This report appraises Cabinet members of work being undertaken to support a resilient system able to face the impact of the 2023/24 winter.

As with last year, our ICS has not experienced a summer where pressures have abated. For winter 2023/24 there are an increased number of national planning priorities for local implementation, including urgent and emergency care requirements and adult social care workforce and care market priorities. Other partners in our system also experience similar seasonal pressure and our winter planning approach should ensure partners such as those in the Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise sector also have their specific role and needs reflected. Ensuring sufficient balance of action to meet national priorities and challenges specific to our local system will be critical.

This report establishes the winter framework with initiatives that will help our population live as healthier life as possible during winter. The four key strategic priorities that cross our range of partners are:

- 1) Meeting people's needs,
- 2) Resilient communities,
- 3) Supporting our workforce, and
- 4) Working together in Winter conditions.

Recommendations:

- 1. Approve the winter plan and work being carried out to support the system and residents of Norfolk during the coming winter months, and for Norfolk County Council to commit to working collaboratively with partners to promote and support the plan.**

1. Background and Purpose

- 1.1 As with last year, our Integrated Care System (ICS) and Adult Social Care has not experienced a summer where pressures have abated. Although winter is not an emergency or considered an unusual event, it is recognised as a period of increased pressure due to demand both in the complexity of people's needs and the capacity demands on resources within health, social care, and the wider system.
- 1.2 A local winter framework for 2023/24 establishes a dynamic plan, where activity will adapt and change to respond to developing needs and policies. It sets out initiatives across our partnership and focuses on both urgent and emergency care and community-based preparedness.
- 1.3 Adult Social Care and the Integrated Care Board (ICB) presented an Integrated Winter Planning report to the Integrated Care Partnership meeting on the 27th of September 2023 (please see section 11. Background documents). This subsequent report to Cabinet, provides a focus on the proactive steps Adult Social Care are taking to be in a good position to respond to the likely demand on services over the coming months.

2. Proposal

- 2.1 **Learning from last winter:** The system's winter framework last year was designed to support organisations to maintain high quality and safe service provision in a climate of increasing pressure and as we continued to recover from the COVID-19 pandemic. There were four system priorities, which have been built on and developed in this year's winter plan: 1) Meeting people's needs; 2) Resilient communities and care systems; 3) Supporting the provider market; 4) Business recovery.

2.1.1 Three key themes emerged in our experience that have been reflected on in this year's planning - demand, capacity, and communities:

2.1.2 Demand: As a result of continued focus on hospital discharge, reducing ambulance handover delays and support in the community, we achieved positive benefits as a system across community-based support and urgent and emergency care performance – in which NCC played a key supporting role. We also saw an increased demand for support and consequent management of that demand in a number of areas, including:

- Whilst addressing rising demand over winter, through the implementation of a tactical winter plan for home care, to address pressures in the care market, social care reduced the interim care list of people awaiting care by 75%.
- General Practice out of hours contacts rose from 8,000 per month in September 2022 to 12,000 in December 2022.

2.1.3 Capacity: Non-Emergency Patient Transport – increased provision to support discharge of patients from hospital and reduce transport related delays.

- Norfolk was the subject of a national NHS England Case study for its 'Housing with Care' flats being used to support people who are medically fit to be discharged from hospital but need care at home to leave. People were temporarily supported from hospital to a flat in a 'Housing with Care' scheme, where they received 24/7 support before moving back home.
- Bed based intermediate care capacity – 158 intermediate care bed-equivalents were commissioned by the Integrated Care Board across Norfolk and Waveney to support patients leaving hospital with associated 'wrap around' workforce support from primary care, therapy, and social work.

2.1.4 Support in communities: 'Keep Well, Keep Warm' campaign - Prevention campaign focused on supporting people to keep well in winter, including a focus on mental health, hardship, and fuel poverty support.

- Home Support Rate Increase – Increase of £1.08 to the hourly rate to increase workforce and enable providers to take on additional work that supports flow in to, and through, community care, supporting increased discharge activity.
- Carers Hardship Support – Additional Information and advice support for unpaid and family carers at point of discharge (acute and community), focused on winter hardship support.

2.1.5 National analysis: Nationally, the Office of National Statistics (ONS) completed an analysis of the impact of last year's winter pressures on different population groups in Great Britain. (Please see Section 11. Background documents) A number of these findings related to health and wellbeing and included learning that could inform local planning this year:

- Adults more likely to be classified as food-insecure included those who had moderate to severe depressive symptoms, were economically inactive but not retired, were unemployed, or had at least one dependent child. Those experiencing moderate-to-severe depressive symptoms living in the most deprived areas in England or aged 16 to 29 years were also significantly more likely to report difficulty keeping warm.
- Among adults taking prescription medication and paying for it, 10% reported taking less medication to save on prescription costs (previously 7%), with those aged 16 to 29 years, those economically inactive but not retired and those experiencing moderate-to-severe depressive symptoms significantly more likely to report this.

2.1.6 In Norfolk and Waveney, Place Boards and Health and Wellbeing Partnerships lead on wide ranging initiatives that support residents in their communities. For District Councils and the housing sector, the pressures of housing, benefit issues, and debt are significant. Winter could lead to hardship and cost of living pressure, with subsequent impact on mental health and wellbeing, so support for these issues is important.

2.2 Priorities

2.2.1 National Social Care priorities: This winter the Department of Health and Social Care have established a set of key actions to support adult social care systems to remain resilient and be able to provide people and their carers with the support they need. (Please see section 11. Background documents)

These are:

- Workforce capacity.
- Care market sustainability and improvement.
- Intermediate care and discharge from hospital, including relevant UEC high impact interventions.
- Energy and adverse weather.
- Infection prevention and control (IPC) and visiting.
- Carers.

2.2.2 Due to the increased number of national priorities for local implementation, including urgent and emergency care requirements, NHS recovery targets and adult social care workforce and care market priorities, ensuring sufficient balance of action against national priorities and challenges specific to our local system will be critical.

2.2.3 The national approach also established expectations for how NHS organisations will work with adult social care in both the planning and delivery of support. These priorities have been reflected in our local winter framework.

2.2.4 All parts of the adult social care sector will play a critical role over the winter period, including:

- Residential care.
 - Domiciliary care, housing with care, extra care, and supported living.
 - Shared lives.
 - Intermediate care.
 - Voluntary and community services.
 - Local authority adult social care staff including social workers and occupational therapists, families, and unpaid carers.
- 2.2.5 Urgent and Emergency Care: NHS England (NHSE) have published a winter letter and associated supporting documents related to system roles and responsibilities. (Please see section 11 background documents). Within the letter there is a strong reference to building resilience through planning and urgent and emergency care (UEC) recovery plans, with particular focus on 10 high impact interventions (which have been reflected in this document). Both the existing UEC recovery plan and the NHSE winter letter also identify objectives to improve ambulance and emergency department performance.
- 2.2.6 Six key lines of enquiry (KLOEs) have been identified that systems need to address in their urgent and emergency care winter preparations:
- KLOE 1: How will the system work together to deliver on its collective responsibilities?
 - KLOE 2: High-impact interventions
 - KLOE 3: Discharge, intermediate care, and social care
 - KLOE 4: H2 numerical submission
 - KLOE 5: Escalation plans
 - KLOE 6: Workforce
- 2.2.7 As part of our system's local preparation for winter, a series of key risks will also need to be considered and mitigated:
- Supporting ambulance response times.
 - Prioritising elective recovery.
 - Discharging people home after hospital stay.
 - Supporting local NHS trusts in times of surging demand.
 - Reducing deconditioning and preventing infection.
 - Supporting our workforce.
- 2.2.8 Elective and primary care recovery: The NHSE letter also sets out associated primary care responsibilities over the winter period. This includes delivering actions from the primary care access recovery plan that will support winter resilience, particularly:
- Increased self-directed care.
 - Expanding community pharmacy services.
 - Improving access to general practice.
 - Supporting practices to move to cloud-based digital telephony and to access the right digital tools.
 - Improving online patient journeys.

- Enhancing navigation and triage processes.

2.2.9 Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise Sector: The Empowering Communities Partnership have identified a series of challenges facing the sector, which could be further increased during the winter period. These include reduction in income, and associated impact on workforce, estates, and strategic management demand, coupled with demand for support increasing.

The partnership is using networks to drive partnership opportunities, sharing of properties, cross border collaborations and negotiating better support. It is also vital that in our system planning for winter, we increasingly ensure the role, opportunities and challenges faced by our sector are as central as those felt by other partners in our Integrated Care System.

2.2.10 **Adult Social Care Priorities**

Norfolk County Council is taking significant steps to ensure preparedness this winter that align with its wider strategic plans, including investment in provision through the Better Care Fund and Hospital Discharge Funding to meet winter demand. Key actions that will support Norfolk residents include:

2.2.11 **Recovery support - Growing reablement options, our capacity and our effectiveness, including:**

- Increase in Reablement starts by 2,000 this year.
- Investing £1.14m in additional re-abling capacity in the care market for geographic hard to reach areas and high complexity.
- Investing £0.36m (match funded by Integrated Care Board) in extra double-up capacity in Norfolk First Response

2.2.12 **Support to return home - Continued action to continue improvements in supporting people home after hospital or intermediate care including:**

- Scoping additional Step-down Housing with Care Flats, to build on the success of last year's pilot
- Reduction in the interim care list from its highest level on record at 888 people last year down to below 100
- Investment of £0.80m in incentive payments for home care providers to support people out of intermediate care.
- Continuation of discharge supported living for mental health, a successful project last winter

- Uplifted care market rates by £30m in 2023/24, which will support sustainability over winter.

2.2.13 More capacity to support strength-based assessment:

- Reduction in social care's holding list by c.1000 since last winter
- 8FTE additional posts to support community hospital discharges, incl. assessment.

2.2.14 Infrastructure to support hospital discharge:

- Recurrent Investment £1.2m from NCC in transfer of care hub staffing – stabilised and improved hub staff position since last Winter.

2.2.15 Supporting people with unplanned needs or in a crisis over winter:

- Swifts and night owls available 24/7 this winter
- Additional investment of £0.15m in VCSE capacity for discharge and community crisis, provided by a new collaborative (British Red Cross, Age UK, Voluntary Norfolk) which commenced September 2023.

2.2.16 Sustaining focus on improving residents' independence:

- Sustaining focus on improving residents' independence, through our Connecting Communities new ways of working

2.2.17 Please see **Appendix A** attached to this report which details the actions relating to Adult Social Care Priorities.

2.2.18 All these are supported by our Ways of Working approach, implemented through our Connecting Communities programmes: -

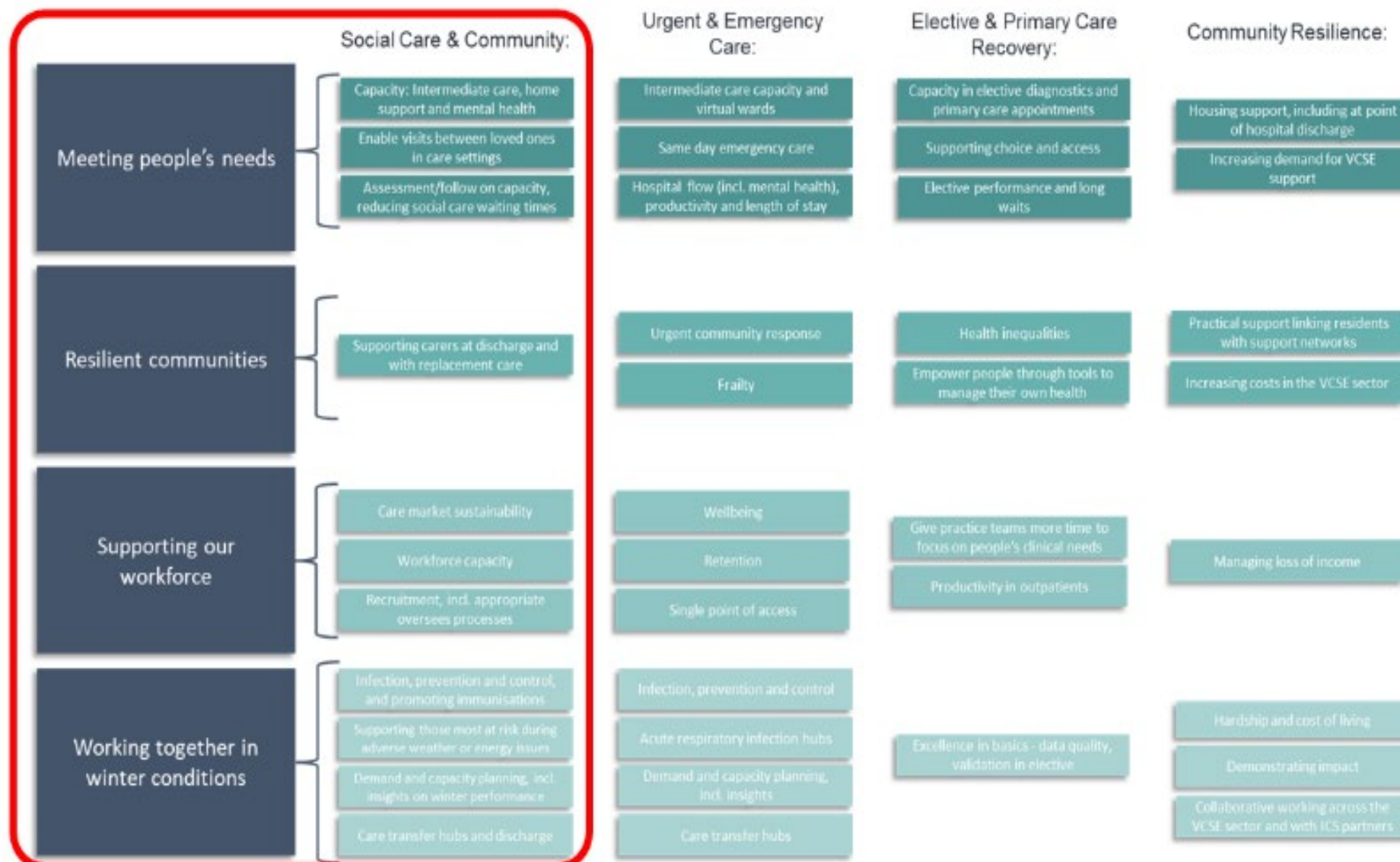
Ways of working



2.2.19 **Winter Plans and Framework:** In developing our plan for the winter period, we have engaged with a wide range of ASSD teams, wider NCC colleagues, and key external partners. The winter framework is also developing through a range of democratic forums. Engagement is a key part of both providing visibility on our planning and supporting teams to prioritise winter in their workplans.

Framework

Helping people live as healthy life as possible during winter, through working together and ensuring communities remain resilient, addressing inequalities and prioritising prevention



2.3 System Framework - Meeting Peoples Needs

- 2.3.1 Ensuring people can access the support they need during winter is important in delivering consistent health and wellbeing outcomes across the year. Our winter framework across the ICS will address this by:
- 2.3.2 **Supporting access in the community** - enabling visits between loved ones in care settings. *Example actions include urgent response on-call arrangements in place for concerns arising in care settings, and joint working between the Integrated Quality Service, Public Health and Infection Control partners in promoting best practice and advising on risk reduction whilst minimising social exclusion.*
- 2.3.3 **Supporting flow in hospital care** - prioritising delivery of Same Day Emergency Care. Taking action to enhance flow through inpatient services and improved length of stay, including acute and mental health provision, and focusing on community NHS bed productivity and flow. Increasing diagnostic volume as part of elective recovery.
- 2.3.4 **Collective action on intermediate care** - working together to deliver intermediate care capacity that recovers people after a hospital stay. Supporting home-based recovery through an increase in home-based reablement capacity and expanding reablement approaches through home support used at discharge. Delivering home support enhanced discharge incentives to support people who need long term care after recovery. NHS-commissioned intermediate Care Beds for those that require bedded support, including through residential and care providers and community health, with wrap-around support to deliver recovery.
- 2.3.5 **Virtual Ward expansion** - increased hospital stepdown through supported discharge and ongoing home-based health monitoring.
- 2.3.6 **Targeted tactical home care winter support** - A targeted set of deliverables to ensure winter readiness and support providers during the winter period, to sustain significant improvements in capacity seen over last winter and continuing in to 2023. Provider support as a vital component of the work with a collaborative approach to respond swiftly to increasing demand. Building on the community step down model with housing with care flats, for people who are awaiting a care package to return home but are currently in an Intermediate Care bed. *Example actions include enabling greater provider collaboration which sets an expectation around sharing of packages when demand dictates and embedding the use of Alcove technology device over the winter as part of a blended package of care with the aim of releasing more capacity for care calls requiring direct personal care and support.*

2.3.7 **Assessment capacity** - supporting social care teams to reduce waiting times. *Example actions include the ways of working implemented through Norfolk Social Care's Connecting Communities programme focused on better outcomes for people we support, and dedicated practitioners to support community hospital and intermediate care bed discharges and transfer of care.*

2.3.8 **Prioritising Mental Health** - schemes to support seasonal pressures for people with mental health needs, with specific focused plans including flow in hospital care and intermediate care. *Examples include monitoring of mental health demand, capacity and activity in relation to access to bedded support via daily system calls.*

2.4 Framework - Resilient communities

2.4.1 Support for people in the communities in which they live will ensure that we mitigate some of the challenges we see during winter. This will be addressed by:

2.4.2 **Health inequality actions** - building a health inequality focus into our delivery of all our collective actions over winter. This includes empowering people in primary care and community health and social care through care tools they can use to manage their own health.

2.4.3 **Supporting carers** - Ensuring the Better Care Fund (BCF) includes replacement care opportunities and at point of discharge we are taking carers views and circumstances into account at discharge. The Carers Matter Norfolk and Family Carers Suffolk services offer Information advice, assessment and support, carers breaks, access to a health and wellbeing fund and welfare advice. *Examples include sustaining additional resource from last winter in to providing advice focussing on enable carers to access additional financial support to cope with cost-of-living concerns such as heating and food resources.*

2.4.4 **Urgent Community Response** - increasing volume and consistency of referrals to improve patient care and ease pressure on ambulance services and avoid admission.

2.4.5 **Frailty** - reducing variation in acute frailty service provision. Improving recognition of cases that could benefit from specific frailty services and ensuring referrals to avoid admission.

2.4.6 **New Step-up/down model from 2023/24** - commencement of a new VCSE lead service from September 2023, with additional investment, to support people being discharged home from hospital and in the community when in

need. Self-directed support and use of Direct Payments is being promoted to give access to untapped support in the community.

- 2.4.7 **Focusing on people's needs** - continuing to deliver productivity improvement in outpatients and in primary care giving practice teams more time to focus on their patients' clinical needs.

2.5 Framework - Supporting our workforce

- 2.5.1 Our workforce is our key asset in supporting people with their health and wellbeing, and this is more important than ever during the winter period. Supporting our workforce, both in recruitment and in their welfare, will be addressed by:
- 2.5.2 **Care market sustainability and improvement** - increasing adult social care workforce capacity and retention. Focusing on recruitment including appropriate overseas processes.
- 2.5.3 **Supporting our collective workforce** - joining up between health and social care to carry out a large-scale recruitment drive, coordinating activities across system organisations to improve recruitment, retention, and wellbeing of our staff. Working to improve the welfare and resilience across health and social care working in operational roles. Targeting recruitment for specialist groups such as therapists.
- 2.5.4 **Collaborative training** - training through the Enhanced Health and Wellbeing in Care programme to support providers to safely help individuals with a growing complexity of need exacerbated by winter conditions.
- 2.5.5 **Single point of access (including mental health crisis)** - driving standardisation of urgent integrated care co-ordination which will support our workforce through whole system management of patients into the right care setting, with the right clinician or team, at the right time.

2.6 Framework - Working together in winter conditions

- 2.6.1 Winter presents a series of external challenges relating to weather, energy, and illness, which require individual and collective action:
- 2.6.2 **Energy and adverse weather** - preparing for, and responding to, winter conditions including identifying and prioritising those most at risk during the colder winter period. *Examples include joining up with partner-wide resilience forum arrangements, and ensuring corporate business continuity plans and incidents management arrangements are well prepared.*

- 2.6.3 **Acute Respiratory Infection Hubs** - support consistent roll out of services, prioritising acute respiratory infection, to provide same day urgent assessment with the benefit of releasing capacity in ED and general practice to support system pressures.
- 2.6.4 **Infection Prevention and Control (IPAC)** - protocols in place to manage and contain outbreaks of flu and COVID-19 and supporting and monitoring the care market to ensure a consistent IPAC approach. *Examples include the Integrated Quality Service supporting Public Health and Infection Control partners in promoting best practice to care providers and advising on risk reduction whilst minimising social exclusion in care settings.*
- 2.6.5 **Promoting winter immunisations with staff** - joint working across health and social care to promote vaccination programmes for staff and care residents. *Examples include NHS flu and COVID -19 vaccine programmes having been bought forward from October to September, encouraging staff (who will be contacted by their General Practice) to book in for a COVID-19 and flu vaccine, and communications and vaccinations already commenced with care providers.*
- 2.6.6 **Care transfer hubs** - continuing to implement and strengthen our hubs supporting discharge and escalation avoidance. *Examples include recurrent funding for transfer of care hubs now agreed, that enables improved stability and staff retention.*
- 2.6.7 **Using data to support effective system working** - completing operational and surge planning to prepare for different winter scenarios and understanding our position during winter using data. Developing our demand and capacity plans established through the BCF, which enables us to understand the impact of making changes in our system on future activity, demand, and the supply of services. *Examples include ensuring a single plan that projects hospital discharge demand, capacity to respond to that demand and the impact of actions on both. Increasingly base decisions (including commissioning, service design and strategic operational planning) on a greater evidence base provided by demand and capacity planning.*

2.7 Risks

- 2.7.1 **Communications to public:** Last winter, the ICS led a 'Warm and Well' winter campaign. The Integrated Care Board (ICB) are working with partner agencies, including NCC, to identify prioritised resource to deliver a winter campaign this year.

- 2.7.2 *Mitigating actions:* NCC leading ICS winter campaign approach, working with partners across the ICS to develop and deliver messaging.
- 2.7.3 **Ways of working & decision-making:** ASSD will be rigorously pursuing delivery of our connecting communities' ways of working, that will be vital to effective performance over winter. There is a risk that pressures arising from Urgent and Emergency Care, and potential knock-on decisions required, can pose challenges to our ways of working as wider system pressures impact on social care.
- 2.7.4 *Mitigating actions:* 1) Have a clear set of high priority ways of working; 2) Identify a touchpoint for urgent decisions, where they are assessed/reviewed against the way of working; 3) Communicate the process to our Senior Management Team.
- 2.7.5 **Staff resilience:** The impact of winter pressures on staff, particularly those in role facing the urgent and emergency care system, is frequently highlighted as an area of risk - to staff capacity, wellbeing and on how we sustain our ways of working.
- 2.7.6 *Mitigating actions:* 1) Comprehensive vaccination programme commenced early; 2) Joining up between health and social care to carry out a recruitment drive incl. targeted recruitment for specialist groups; 3) Increasing adult social care workforce capacity and retention.

2.8 Governance

- 2.8.1 Day to day operational issues will be monitored by the 24/7 System Control Centre with a clear system support and escalation process in place. It will adopt a responsive daily approach showing what is working and what is not so that plans can be adapted and flexed according to need giving a level of 'grip and control' required to manage the combined pressures of winter.
- 2.8.2 The ICB will coordinate submission of NHS-lead winter planning returns required by NHSE, including Seasonal Planning with NHS providers at place/locality level, risk led review, demand and capacity, business continuity review for seasonal plans such as adverse weather and communication plan.
- 2.8.3 Adult Care Services Senior Management Teams will have oversight and governance of their planning and activity.

3. Impact of the Proposal

- 3.1 This report sets out a Winter Framework of key activity planned across Adult Social Care to support system resilience over the coming months. The

framework supports our organisation at system and place level, to maintain high quality and safe service provision in a climate of increasing pressure as we continue as an Integrated Care System and prepare to face the additional strain that winter and cold weather inevitably bring.

- 3.2 The framework is a dynamic plan, where activity will adapt and change to respond to developing needs, policies, and national and system funding. Activity will be monitored regularly at the Internal Capacity Meetings and reported to the Adult Social Care Director Leadership Team.

4. Evidence and Reasons for Decision

- 4.1 The winter plan has been developed based on the evidence of effective working during previous winters. It offers a responsive way forward based on the current available evidence of how demand may rise over the winter period. Cabinet is asked to endorse the activity taking place across adult social care in response to the demand being placed on social care.

5. Alternative Options

- 5.1 The proposals presented have been developed over time with partners and are seen as the most appropriate solution to respond to the pressures within the social care and health system, within the current financial envelope.

6. Financial Implications

- 6.1 Planned work falls within the parameters of the annual budget with the addition of national funding made available from NHS England, including the 2023/24 £5.554m Additional Discharge Fund. NCC is also applied for £1.9m additional winter funding from Department of Health and Social Care to enhance and expand schemes within this plan. The plan is a dynamic one with the provision to scale up activity should further national funding become available.

7. Resource Implications

7.1 Staff:

Staffing capacity levels will be closely monitored over the winter period especially with regard to flu and COVID outbreaks.

7.2 Property:

There are no property implications foreseen.

7.3 IT:

There are no IT implications foreseen.

8. Other Implications

8.1 Legal Implications:

There are no legal implications foreseen.

8.2 Human Rights Implications:

There are no Human Rights implications foreseen.

8.3 Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) (this must be included):

We do not consider this decision relevant to equality, as it will not impact residents, staff, or vulnerable people.

8.4 Data Protection Impact Assessments (DPIA):

This decision will not impact on any collection or processing of personal data.

8.5 Health and Safety implications (where appropriate):

There are no Health and Safety implications foreseen.

8.6 Sustainability implications (where appropriate):

This proposal should have a neutral environmental impact.

8.7 Any Other Implications:

Officers have considered all the implications which members should be aware of. Apart from those listed in the report (above), there are no other implications to consider.

9. Risk Implications / Assessment

- 9.1 The risk of not taking forward this proposal would mean greater pressure on the system with more people at risk of a delayed discharge from a hospital bed and a rise in short term care before a suitable long term care package could be sourced, likely greater deterioration of health and wellbeing and a higher care package being required placing more financial pressure on the department.

10. Recommendations

Cabinet is recommended to:

- 1. Approve the winter plan and work being carried out to support the system and residents of Norfolk during the coming winter months, and for Norfolk County Council to commit to working collaboratively with partners to promote and support the plan.**

11. Background Papers

- 11.1 Background Document 1 – [ICP Winter Planning Report page 206](#)
- 11.2 Background Document 2 – [ONS research](#)

- 11.3 Background Document 3 – [DHSC Adult Social Care Winter Letter](#)
- 11.4 Background Document 4 – [NHS Winter Letter](#)

Officer Contact

If you have any questions about matters contained within this paper, please contact:

Officer name: Nicholas Clinch
Telephone no.: 01603 223329
Email: nicholas.clinch@norfolk.gov.uk



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

APPENDIX A

● Actions relating to social care's priorities

Care Market

- Support via the Market Sustainability Investment Fund
- Urgent Response On-call Cover arrangements in place
- Signposting to agency workforce where staffing levels fall below safe minimum
- Watching brief on 'High Risk' services over winter

Social Care Community Engagement (SCCE)

- Continue to keep holding list down (last winter 600+ currently 107)
- Increased overtime at weekends to manage demand
- Daily review of demand in line with contingency planning, [e.g.](#) actions taken if holding list increases

Immunisations

- NHS flu and COVID-19 vaccine programmes have been bought forward from October to September
- Comms issued to care providers 6th September
- Care home programme commenced 11th September

Home Care

- Continue with reduction in the interim care list (currently down to below 100)
- Provider incentive payments to support flow out of hospital and NFS
- Process for temporary and permanent hand back of packages.
- Identifying opportunities for additional double-assist support and night sit capacity
- Exploring expansion of Housing with Care for community hospital step-down

Voluntary Community & Social Enterprises (VCSE)

- Additional VCSE capacity for discharge and community crisis, provided by the new collaborative (British Red Cross, Age UK, Voluntary Norfolk) which commenced September 2023

Communications

- Last winter, the ICS had a 'Warm and Well' winter campaign, led by the ICB. ICB have no staffing resource to deliver a winter campaign and have requested NCC lead.
- Liaising with comms and ICB to agree resolution

Front line capacity

- Connecting Communities ways of working will support data driven action.
- Priorities enshrined in Development Plans.
- 8FTE additional temp posts to support community hospital discharges (incl. assessment)
- Partnership with Xyla over 12 months to reduce holding lists
- New Discharge improvement programme governance

Energy & weather

- Severe weather plan in place.
- Initial winter preparation briefing session
- Multi agency Risk and Information Group horizon scanning for potential issues and risks

Mental Health

- Crisis hubs scheduled to open across Norfolk in Q3
- Specific focused plans including flow in hospital care and intermediate care.
- Schemes to support seasonal pressures for people with mental health needs

Carers

- Carers Matter Norfolk (CMN) adding additional resource for dedicated advice and support on health and wellbeing over winter
- CMN and NCC working with the Trussell Trust, to promote Carer awareness

Infection Prevention and Control (IPAC)

- Enabling visits with loved ones in care settings
- Promoting best IPAC practice and advising on risk reduction to minimise social exclusion in care settings

Intermediate Care

- Increase in Reablement capacity by 2,000 starts per year
- Caring for better outcomes Implementation in October, providing additional reablement capacity.
- To be scaled up across the winter

Cabinet

Item No: 9

Report Title: A140 Long Stratton Bypass

Date of Meeting: 06 November 2023

Responsible Cabinet Member: Cllr Plant (Cabinet Member for Highways, Infrastructure & Transport)

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

Is this a Key Decision? Yes

If this is a Key Decision, date added to the Forward Plan of Key Decisions: 6th April 2023

Executive Summary/Introduction from Cabinet Member

The A140 Long Stratton Bypass (LSB) is a long-held infrastructure aspiration to improve the centre of Long Stratton for residents and businesses alike. The project will improve the quality of life and the local environment by the removal of through traffic. Highway users will also see a significant improvement in journey times and journey reliability by not having to travel through the town centre, especially in the morning and evening peak hours.

Successful delivery of the well-received Hempnall Roundabout scheme has improved the safety record at that junction and unlocked the scope for a small part of the planned development in Long Stratton, as set out in the adopted Joint Core Strategy and Area Action Plan. More significantly it has also provided the platform that has enabled the Council's focus to move to the next stage, which is to see the delivery of the long-awaited bypass.

Following on from the previously successful submission and approval of the Outline Business Case (OBC), I am pleased to update Cabinet that South Norfolk Council (SNC), as Local Planning Authority (LPA), were able to award full grant of planning to the planning application containing LSB in September 2023. This approval allows the scheme to move forward as the Section 106 Agreement linked to the planning approval also delivers the land for the bypass to the County Council.

The detailed design process has also been completed which has allowed the procurement process to commence and this is currently well underway. Full grant of planning has allowed the previously advertised and consulted legal Highway Order (Side Roads Order (SRO)) to be formally submitted to the Department for Transport (DfT) for consideration and determination by the Secretary of State (SoS) for Transport. This will be the final statutory approval required to allow construction to commence.

Achievement of all these major project milestones has allowed the project to move toward the next major milestone which is to submit the Full Business Case (FBC) to the DfT for approval. This report sets out the next phase of that process, as well as updating on the current position of the scheme and how construction of the long-awaited Long Stratton Bypass will be achieved.

Recommendations:

- 1. To confirm support for the delivery of the Long Stratton Bypass.**
- 2. To delegate the approval and submission of the Full Business Case to the Interim Executive Director of Community & Environmental Services in consultation with the Cabinet Member Highways, Infrastructure and Transport.**
- 3. To delegate the award of Contract for Long Stratton Bypass to the Interim Executive Director of Community & Environmental Services in consultation with the Director of Procurement and Sustainability and the Cabinet Member Highways, Infrastructure and Transport.**
- 4. To approve the increased costs of the scheme to £46.9m within the capital programme and note the funding sources are being finalised as detailed in section 6.2.2.**
- 5. To agree to commence advance environmental mitigation and initial mobilisation works from January 2024 ahead of the Full Business Case decision and main construction works in April 2024. The estimated delivery cost of these works is expected to be up to £1.3m and funded on a temporary basis by Norfolk County Council (for more details see section 6.1.5).**

1. Background and Purpose

1.1 Background

- 1.1.1 There has been a long-held aspiration to bypass the town of Long Stratton, with a record of this objective going back to the 1930s. The existing route of the A140, which forms part of the Major Road Network (MRN) in Norfolk and is a former trunk road, through the centre of the town brings a host of negative traffic impacts to the community.

- 1.1.2 Delivery of the LSB, which will facilitate removal of through traffic from the town, will provide relief for the community from particulate pollution, noise, accidents, visual intrusion and community severance. The continued presence of the A140 and its traffic in the centre of Long Stratton is inconsistent with the town's existing character and function and a serious barrier to the planned housing and economic growth. Provision of the bypass will also remove a notorious bottleneck on this key route, reducing journey times and increasing journey reliability.
- 1.1.3 A scheme to deliver a bypass for Long Stratton was promoted through the early years of this millennium. Although that scheme did not have exactly the same alignment and scope to that which is currently proposed, it did manage to achieve all of the necessary permissions, including grant of statutory Orders, to allow the project to proceed. Unfortunately, changes to funding mechanisms and available funds from Central Government meant that the scheme ultimately failed in 2008. However, the preferred route for that scheme provides the basis for the current proposal, linking to development objectives for Long Stratton.
- 1.1.4 The adopted Joint Core Strategy for Broadland, Norwich and South Norfolk identifies Long Stratton as a key location for growth and proposes the development of 1,800 new houses with supporting school facilities and green infrastructure and 9.5ha of employment land. This scale of development would not be acceptable unless a bypass were also provided to remove traffic associated with the A140 from the town centre. The adopted Long Stratton Area Action Plan (AAP) confirms that a bypass is an essential requirement for housing growth and must be in place before the 250th house is occupied.
- 1.1.5 Delivery of LSB will also improve the quality and reliability of the Major Road Network (MRN) within South Norfolk. This improvement will support the strategic ambitions set out by the New Anglia LEP within its Economic Strategy for Norfolk and Suffolk (2017). This aligns well with the County Council's Local Transport Plan for 2026, the Norfolk Infrastructure Delivery Plan (2012-2028) and the Norfolk Strategic Planning Framework (March 2019), all of which seek to deliver growth by investing in new infrastructure.

1.2 **Latest Position**

- 1.2.1 Following the successful approval of the Strategic Outline Business Case (SOBC) by DfT via Transport East and identification as a regional priority MRN scheme, a Cabinet report was submitted in August 2020 seeking approval to submit an Outline Business Case (OBC). Following Cabinet approval, the OBC was submitted to DfT in December 2020 seeking 70% funding of the proposed bypass costs of £37.44m. DfT announced their ongoing support for the

proposal in July 2021, granting programme entry for the bypass scheme and confirming a maximum DfT contribution of £26.21m.

- 1.2.2 Confirmation of the DfT scheme funding through the MRN funding mechanism, alongside CIL funding of £10m through Greater Norwich Growth Board and a Developer Contribution of £4.5m (underwritten by SNC) meant that the proposed bypass was in a fully funded situation. A further update on the project costs and budget was provided to Cabinet at its meeting in September 2022. An updated budget position is provided in section 6 of this report.
- 1.2.3 Following updates of the previously submitted planning applications (East and West side applications) SNC, acting as Local Planning Authority, approved the applications at its Development Management Committee in March 2023, subject to agreement of planning applications and completion of a Section 106 agreement. Following further negotiations between SNC, NCC, developer and landowners, the Section 106 Agreement was completed and full planning permission was granted to both applications on 15 September 2023.
- 1.2.4 In March 2022, Natural England (NE) issued new guidance in a letter titled 'Advice for development proposals with the potential to affect water quality resulting in adverse nutrient impact on habitats sites' for the Broads Special Area of Conservation (SAC). The new guidance required promoters to ensure that applications that contained overnight accommodation ensured that detailed proposals were in place to deal with Nutrient Neutrality as part of the submission. The Developer has provided a scheme of mitigation within the application documents that provided the LPA with assurance that the guidance requirements would be met.
- 1.2.5 The detailed design of the bypass proposal has been completed alongside the planning application process.
- 1.2.6 A full scale archaeological investigation has been completed since the September 2022 Cabinet Report. Post-fieldwork processing, assessment, reporting and archiving is being completed and is in alignment with planning conditions set by LPA.
- 1.2.7 The necessary highway statutory Order (SRO) has been drafted and advertised. Following successful consultations on the responses, a full package of information has been submitted to the DfT for consideration and determination to allow the Secretary of State to confirm the Order.
- 1.2.8 Following completion of a full ecological and environmental survey suite, regular walkover surveys are being carried out to ensure that there are no changes in accordance with planning conditions.

1.2.9 The Full Business Case (FBC) has been drafted on the most up to date information available. Details regarding submission of the FBC are contained within section 2 of this report.

1.2.10 As outlined in the September 2022 report, a competitive dialogue procurement process is underway. Four bidders have been selected, and have been invited to submit their tenders on 24th November 2023 which will contain their pricing offer as well as details on their quality submission, programme and risk management.

1.2.11 As a consequence of achieving an agreed Section 106 Agreement, the land required for delivery of the bypass proposal (both permanent and temporary) has now been secured by the County Council.

1.3 **Project Objectives**

1.3.1 The September 2022 Cabinet Report set out the wider project objectives. Those objectives are based upon national, regional and local legislation/guidance/aims. The Project Objectives remain the same as those previously outlined. These were set out in more detail in the Strategic Case included within the Outline Business Case previously approved by DfT. These objectives will also be included in the Full Business Case submission.

2. **Proposals**

2.1 **Work completed since September 2022**

2.1.1 The September 2022 Cabinet Report set out seven major workstreams that were in train within the 2022-23 financial year. All of the seven identified elements have been achieved.

2.2 **Work planned during this financial year**

2.2.1 Alongside the seven major workstreams identified for financial year 2022-23, three major elements were also identified for financial year 2023-24. These items are listed below:

- Complete procurement exercise;
- Submit FBC to DfT to draw down final funding for construction;
- Award contract and instruct preferred Contractor to start works.

2.2.2 As stated above, the procurement exercise to identify a preferred contractor is well advanced and on programme. The intention is to be able to complete the evaluation of the bidders' responses in late December 2023, to allow award of contract by delegated authority in early January 2024. The evaluation criteria were included in the September 2022 report to Cabinet. It is necessary to award early in 2024 to allow essential advance ecological mitigation works to

be completed in advance of a main works starting, currently programmed for early April 2024.

2.2.3 Drafting of the FBC is well advanced and this is also on schedule. Submission of the FBC to DfT is programmed for prior to Christmas 2023, allowing DfT sufficient time in early 2024 to consider the submission and award the remaining funding in advance of commencement of the main works.

2.2.4 The County Council, working with WSP, are liaising regularly with DfT representatives to ensure the information contained within the FBC is configured to DfT requirements to allow an expeditious award period.

2.2.5 Assuming that all outstanding approvals are achieved and the FBC submission is approved within DfT's minimum time period, main construction works of the bypass will be able to commence in April 2024 as planned, with completion currently programmed in late 2025.

2.2.6 To allow the timescales outlined above to be achieved, Cabinet is being asked to delegate the approval and submission of the finalised Full Business Case to the Executive Director of CES in consultation with the Cabinet Member Highways, Infrastructure and Transport.

2.3 **Contractor Procurement**

2.3.1 The approach set out in the September 2022 Cabinet Report has been utilised to support the contractor procurement exercise. This process built upon the previous successes and experience gained through the delivery of other major highway projects undertaken by the County Council.

2.3.2 Initial stages of market engagement and shortlisting to four bidders has indicated that the market supports the approach taken to procuring a contractor (see 2.4 below).

2.3.3 Following tender submissions from the four bidders (planned on 24th November 2023), the County Council team will conduct an evaluation process to assess the submissions through late November/early December. This process will score the tenders on both a quality and cost basis to determine a preferred contractor.

2.3.4 As mentioned in Construction Programme (2.9.8 below), it is necessary to award the contract to the successful contractor early in January 2024 to ensure the advanced ecological mitigation works are completed in advance of the main works. In advance of the award of contract, an intention to award letter must be sent to the successful contractor (and explanation letters to the unsuccessful contractors) which leaves sufficient time for a procurement standstill period. To

achieve the standstill period, the intention to award letter must be sent out by 27th December 2023.

2.3.5 As with the Delegated Authority to approve and submit the FBC, Cabinet is asked to delegate the award of contract to the Executive Director of CES in consultation with the Director of Procurement & Sustainability and the Cabinet Member Highways, Infrastructure and Transport.

2.4 **Commercial Viability**

2.4.1 Following the issue of a Prior Information Notice (PIN), the Council received 25 expressions of interest from the wider contracting market. This level of interest exceeded expectations in a very buoyant market environment.

2.4.2 Following on from the PIN, potential bidders were invited to participate in one-to-one discussions so that they were better able to ascertain the detailed scale and scope of the proposal.

2.4.3 The successful engagement with the contracting market yielded 12 pre-qualification responses from bidders. This number was reduced to four bidders that were carried through to the current tender process.

2.5 **Contracting Strategy**

2.5.1 As outlined previously, a New Engineering Contract (NEC4) Engineering Construction Contract (ECC) Option C contract will be used. This entails setting a target cost and a sharing of risk and reward between contractor and client.

2.6 **Other Commercial Issues**

2.6.1 Additional contract Clauses have been brought into the contract. The clauses identified in para 2.6.1 of the September 2022 Cabinet Report have been adopted.

2.7 **Social Value**

2.7.1 Social value has been discussed at length with the four Bidders through the dialogue process. Social Value has been split into three main headings and more detail on each element is provided below:

2.7.2 **Environmental Considerations and Local Impacts**

2.7.3 The Bidders will be required to submit details relating to environmental considerations within their Climate Change Plan as part of the quality submission.

2.7.4 The Climate Change Plan requires Bidders to demonstrate how they will reduce carbon impacts of the construction works. They will also be asked to supply details of their staffing arrangements so that it is clear how they will be able to support delivery of the project, reducing travel distances and minimising related carbon impacts.

2.7.5 Local employment and apprenticeships

2.7.6 Bidders will submit details of how their proposal supports development of the Norfolk workforce as part of the quality submission.

2.7.7 The development of the Norfolk workforce submission will include details of how they intend to support apprenticeships, provide work experience, develop skills, engage with local schools and colleges (notably in science, technology, engineering and maths), and leave a local legacy.

2.7.8 Engaging and supporting the local community

2.7.9 Bidders will submit details of how they intend to utilise the Supply Chain as part of the quality submission.

2.7.10 The Supply Chain methodology submission will provide detail around how Bidders will source and manage supply chain activities, including any contracted maintenance arrangements.

2.8 **Professional Services**

2.8.1 As the Council's professional services provider, WSP have been contracted to deliver the detailed design of the proposal. Discrete task orders for different elements of the project have been issued to WSP which have come together to deliver not only the design, but also information to support both the pre-qualification and tender process. This has included developing the contract drawings, specifications and quantities to allow Bidders to provide their final tender submissions.

2.8.2 As a consequence of the ongoing dialogue process with Bidders, WSP will also be updating the contract drawings so that a 'For Construction' bundle of drawings is available for contract award, as well as updated specifications where necessary.

2.8.3 WSP are also in the process of drafting the FBC for submission to DfT. WSP were responsible for drafting of the previously successful Strategic Outline Business Case (SOBC) and Outline Business Case (OBC), so are well versed in DfT's Business Case process as well as the detail of the bypass.

2.9 Timescales

2.9.1 The September 2022 Cabinet report set out timescales for delivery of the project. At the time of drafting that report, it was still unclear what impacts Natural England's nutrient neutrality guidance would have on programmed timescales for identification of an acceptable mitigation strategy that would achieve a successful grant of planning. Indications at that time suggested a revised planning application could be submitted for consideration by December 2022. Significant levels of dialogue and work by all parties involved resulted in an updated set of application documents being considered by SNC's Development Management Committee in March 2023.

2.9.2 As identified in the previous Cabinet report, the decision was taken to move forward on other elements required for delivery of the bypass before planning was granted. Working with the developer, the Council's project team identified tasks that could be carried out that would generally wait until planning had been agreed. Although there were risks associated with this, it was considered to be a measured approach to make best use of time that could have been lost and lead to a project delay had the usual consecutive approach to delivery been followed.

2.9.3 The Side Roads Order (SRO) process was advanced within the delivery programme to make best use of available time. This process is outlined further below.

2.9.4 Side Roads Order (SRO)

2.9.5 The SRO process requires full grant of planning to allow Secretary of State for Transport to confirm the Order. Generally the SRO process follows completion of the planning process, as having a confirmed planning position adds weight to the promoter's Statement of Reasons. However, it was clear that accelerating the SRO process would be necessary if a construction start as soon as possible in 2024 was to be achieved.

2.9.6 The Order was published in early December 2022 and notices were placed on site for seven weeks. Following advertisement, only one objection to the proposal was received from Cadent (a utility company). Following further dialogue with the objector, it was clear that they would be able to remove their holding objection as the proposed bypass scheme would be responsible for diverting their affected service and associated legal provisions.

2.9.7 As a consequence of the recent grant of planning, it has been possible to submit the SRO to DfT for consideration and determination. A successful outcome will allow the Secretary of State for Transport to confirm the Order which is a prerequisite for DfT to release the remaining funding via the FBC.

2.9.8 Construction Programme

2.9.9 As a consequence of working fluidly around programme constraints, it has been possible to improve on the programmed start of works date identified within the previous Cabinet report. At that time, a start in the summer of 2024 was considered realistic, but the current delivery programme identifies April 2024. As previously explained, making best use of the 'earthworks season' (May through October) offers the best opportunity to keep the construction duration to a minimum to avoid weather-susceptible ground conditions.

2.9.10 The recent dialogue process with Bidders has confirmed that an 18 month construction duration is achievable, which will lead to a possible opening of the bypass proposal in late 2025.

3. Impact of the Proposal

3.1 The August 2020 Cabinet report set out the key impacts of the project against a range of headings, most of which have not changed. There are three notable changes to the impacts of the proposal Cost Increase, Benefit changes and Methodology Changes since August 2020 which are explained below:

- **Cost Increase** - Since OBC stage, costs have increased for the project. This is due to inflation seen across the construction industry over the last 2 years. Any increase in whole scheme costs will have an adverse effect on the Benefit Cost Ratio (BCR);
- **Benefit Changes** - Reduced economic growth forecasts and reduced population growth forecasts (related to COVID and other external factors) provided by the government have impacted on the monetised benefits. DfT includes these forecast changes in its input data which all scheme appraisers are instructed to use within their modelling and appraisal work. All schemes moving from OBC to FBC over the last 2 years will have observed reduced benefits associated with these reduced forecasts;
- **Methodology Changes** – WSP have been in dialogue with DfT relating to changes in methodology between the OBC and FBC submissions. Use of differing model scenarios is now expected by DfT to those previously used which impact upon Dependent Development (the residential/commercial development associated with the planning application that the bypass will bring forward) and land value uplift (the increased value of land as a consequence of the bypass being implemented). Implementing these changes lowers the values of the initial and interim BCR, but the overall value for money assessment is anticipated to remain similar to that submitted in the OBC.

- 3.2 The preliminary value for money assessment results (based upon our current cost estimate) are not as strong as they were at OBC, however, it is anticipated that the final BCR that will be reported in the FBC remains in the **high** category, as it was at OBC.

4. Evidence and Reasons for Decision

- 4.1 The August 2020 Cabinet report set out the evidence and reasons for the project as contained within the OBC. These have not changed since that time.

5. Alternative Options

- 5.1 The August 2020 Cabinet report outlined the requirement for the bypass and that without it there would be a failure in delivering the scale of housing and employment growth as set out in the JCS, and tested and adopted as part of the Long Stratton Area Action Plan (LSAAP), as well as not delivering the highway improvement and relief to Long Stratton Town.

6. Financial Implications

6.1 Estimated Costs

- 6.1.1 Full cost details were provided in the September 2022 Cabinet Report

- 6.1.2 The cost of delivering the scheme will not be fully known until it has been possible to complete the current tendering process and the four Bidders have all submitted their tenders. At that stage, it will be possible for the Council's team to evaluate the tenders. Using previously agreed criteria (as set out in the September 2022 Cabinet report), it will then be possible to ascertain what the agreed Target Cost will be for the construction of bypass works with the identified preferred Contractor.

- 6.1.3 At the time of submitting the Outline Business Case (OBC), the estimated overall cost of delivering Long Stratton Bypass was £37.44m. Cabinet was updated on scheme costs in September 2022, when the revised cost estimate had risen to £46.2m, an increase of £8.789m. The additional increase in costs was reported as being attributable to the significant increase in inflation, maturing of the construction market, programme slippage and an identified discrepancy in earthworks quantities.

- 6.1.4 The project cost estimate has since risen slightly to £46.9m, an increase of £0.7m, based on our latest view of the market for construction and professional services. It is anticipated that this revised figure will be sufficiently robust to inform the development of the final FBC document that is currently being prepared.

6.1.5 To enable the main construction works to commence in April 2024, it is necessary to carry out advanced environmental mitigation works prior to the commencement of the bird nesting season along with initial mobilisation works. These works are programmed to run from January to April 2024 at which point the main construction works would commence, following FBC approval. The Council is unlikely to receive confirmation of DfT's funding decision associated to the FBC until around mid-March 2024. The estimated delivery cost of the advanced environmental mitigation works, and initial mobilisation works is anticipated to be up to £1.3m, but this would depend on the successful contractor proposals. It is preferable for the Council to adopt this approach to ensure earthworks can be fully delivered in 2024 and are not required to be spread over two seasons or delayed for a year which would increase the cost of the overall scheme by significantly more than the estimated advanced works cost. Whilst it is considered low risk that DfT would not approve the FBC, if this happened the project would be liable for the direct cost associated with the advanced works and indirect cost associated with the contract termination and demobilisation which could be up to £2m in the worst case. Any existing DfT funding remaining has restrictions that limit it from being used to fund advanced works until the point at which the FBC is approved. Therefore, it is proposed the works are funded on a temporary basis by the County Council until the FBC is approved at which point other funding streams will be triggered.

6.2 Funding

6.2.1 At the time of the last Cabinet report in September 2022, the funding profile associated with delivery of the bypass had not been confirmed. A shortfall of approximately £5.5m had been identified between the scheme cost estimate and the funding secured through the DfT (£26.2m), GNGB (£10m) and the Developer Contribution (£4.5m). Although there has been an increase in the cost estimate of £0.7m, there have also been receipts of £200,000 from Pooled Business Rates and £50,000 from the Highways Capital Programme. Therefore, the current budget shortfall is approximately £6m.

6.2.2 At present, discussions are ongoing with DfT regarding any uplift to their existing funding contribution, following the Prime Minister's announcement on [Network North](#) on 4 October 2023. This could potentially close the current funding shortfall. If there is no increase in the DfT contribution the shortfall would need to be closed by relevant local authorities ahead of FBC submission. Work, and any necessary approvals, to resolve the funding shortfall will continue alongside continuing discussions with the DfT.

7. Resource Implications

7.1 Staff:

7.1.1 No change since the September 2022 Cabinet report.

7.2 Property:

7.2.1 As mentioned earlier in the report, following the successful signing of the Section 106 Agreement and grant of planning permission, The Council has secured all the land necessary (both permanent and temporary) for delivery of the bypass proposal.

7.2.2 There are no perceived property issues but note the details relating to potential blight in section 8.1.2.

7.3 IT:

7.3.1 None.

8. Other Implications

8.1 Legal Implications:

8.1.1 A Side Roads Order (SRO), under Section 14 of the Highways Act 1980, is required to make all the necessary changes to existing Highways as well as incorporate any new provision. Successful promotion of the SRO commenced locally in December 2022. Following the Developer securing successful planning permission for the bypass through the Local Planning Authority, South Norfolk Council, in September 2023, Nplaw submitted updated information to the Secretary of State for Transport to allow consideration and determination. The SRO will also include any changes to Public Rights of Way required as a consequence of delivering the bypass.

8.1.2 It is considered unlikely that blight will be an issue associated with the delivery of the bypass. The proposal is being developed so that it may be delivered within land in control of the developer, so there should be no secondary claims.

8.2 Human Rights Implications:

8.2.1 Aarhus Convention implications

The requirement to deliver a bypass for Long Stratton has been long established within the Joint Core Strategy (JCS) and the Area Action Plan (AAP). Both the JCS and AAP have been subject wide scale consultation and

public examination before being adopted. Prior to this, a dual carriageway bypass project was promoted and concluded its statutory processes in 2005, having also been widely consulted. There remains strong local support for a bypass following many years of requesting and campaigning for it to be delivered.

- 8.2.2 The proposed bypass, along with the residential development that is associated to it (as agreed via the JCS and AAP), are both being progressed through the planning system regulated through the Town and Country Planning Act 1990. The Developer has already submitted one planning application to the Local Planning Authority which was uploaded onto the LPA's planning portal (ref 2018/0111), which is openly available to all to view. When re- submitted, the revised planning application will again be located on the LPA planning portal and will include environmental assessment documents and associated evidence.
- 8.2.3 The County Council has not carried out any formal consultations associated with the bypass scheme, but as set out in the Statement of Community Consultation documents published on the South Norfolk District Council Planning Portal, it can be seen that consultation was undertaken during 2017 on the development and bypass proposals, including:
- 8.2.4 "The Design Team held a public exhibition of the emerging proposals on the afternoon and evening of Monday 17 July 2017 at the Methodist Church, Manor Road, Long Stratton. The exhibition was publicised by a leaflet drop to individual houses, posters placed in shops and public buildings and by press adverts in the Eastern Daily Press and free circulating Mercury Series of newspapers."
- 8.2.5 The requirement for the scheme has already been tested in public and any updates to the planning application documentation will be subject to further consultation and all documents, including those related to the environmental statements, will be updated and available to view via the planning portal. Given the case for the scheme that will be set out in the OBC documents, the public availability of the OBC and planning documents and details, the previous public examinations of the JCS and AAP, the consultations already completed and to be completed for the updated planning application process, and the public decision making process that exists via the planning decision making process, we consider that the provisions within the Aarhus Convention will have been satisfied.
- 8.2.6 There are not expected to be any other Human Rights implications associated with the delivery of the proposal.

8.3 Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA):

8.3.1 The project delivery team has been working alongside the Equality, Diversity & Inclusion team to produce an agreed Equalities Impact Assessment.

8.3.2 As the proposed scheme has progressed through key delivery milestones (Detailed Design, Stage 2 Safety Audit, prior to Procurement and during the production of a Construction Management Plan), the EqIA has been revisited to ensure that the proposals and Assessment are still complimentary.

8.4 Data Protection Impact Assessments (DPIA):

8.4.1 No change since the September 2022 Cabinet report.

8.5 Health and Safety implications (where appropriate):

8.5.1 No change since the September 2022 Cabinet report.

8.6 Sustainability implications (where appropriate):

8.6.1 The previous Cabinet report highlighted sustainability implications that the scheme would be responsible for. These responsibilities have not changed, but an update on each is provided below where there has been change.

8.6.2 In November 2019, the County Council adopted a Corporate Environmental Policy which contains broad environmental themes, reflective of the Government's 25-year Environmental Plan. The LSB project team are working closely with the environment team to ensure the project contributes to the policy's aims and that its delivery is taken account of as part of the council's wider work. This requirement has been reinforced to the bidders through the procurement process.

8.6.3 The recently adopted Local Transport Plan 4 considers recent carbon reduction targets set by Norfolk County Council, which seeks to reduce carbon, contributing to our environmental policy targets for net zero on our own estate by 2030. This is set against a backdrop of the government's own 'net zero' target by 2050 which is now a statutory obligation within the Climate Change Act 2008. The scheme has been designed, wherever possible within constraints, to bring forward carbon reductions. Further to the design process, Bidders are required through the tender process to provide a Climate Change Plan outlining in detail their proposed approach to minimising embedded carbon.

8.6.4 In developing, submission and approval of the OBC the calculation of emissions for transport schemes, as given in the DfT's Greenhouse Gas Workbook has been used to assess changes to vehicle carbon emissions as a

result of the LSB. Since the previous report, the DfT has changed the way that CO2e savings are calculated over a 60 year appraisal period. The amended DfT appraisal guidance has been used and the scheme is showing a change from a carbon reduction, now indicating a small dis-benefit, primarily related to the slightly longer distance vehicles travel when using the bypass.

8.6.5 Carbon emissions resulting from the construction, operation and decommissioning of the road will be further developed once a Contractor has been appointed. Contractors will adhere to the principles set out in Carbon Management in Infrastructure guidance (PAS 2080), the leading specification for quantifying carbon infrastructure in the UK, when designing and constructing the project, minimising emissions where practicable. Significant levels of planting, included as part of the project's environmental mitigation and enhancement aims, will also help to offset carbon emissions.

8.6.6 Current national planning policy and the Council's own Environmental Policy encourages new or proposed development to demonstrate Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG), and, with its successful passage through parliament, the Environment Bill makes this mandatory. BNG involves leaving habitats in a measurably better state than before development took place. The national policy produced by Defra for biodiversity net gain seeks a 10% uplift in biodiversity after development and is based on the area of habitats directly and indirectly affected by a scheme. As the Environment Bill has received Royal Assent, BNG will be mandatory. Although national policy on BNG has been delayed, local policy still requires the scheme delivers 10% BNG and the scheme is conditioned accordingly.

8.6.7 Through progression of the LSB proposal alongside developer proposals from both the east and west side applications, the BNG percentage is expected to be in excess of the mandatory 10% level. This will be delivered by avoiding impacts upon identified habitats wherever possible, as well as provision of new habitats through extensive planting and provision of wetland areas to support a wide range of ecology and wildlife.

9. Risk Implications / Assessment

9.1 The September 2022 Cabinet Report identified twelve risks from the scheme Risk Register that had been most recently reported to Project Board. The twelve risks had been grouped together for ease under similar headings Funding/Third Parties (first 6 below), Programme/Contract (7 to 10) and Tender/Contract (11 and 12) and are shown below with their progress to date.

- Developer funding contributions may be withheld - no agreement with developer; - A loan agreement has been agreed with the Greater Norwich Growth Board (GNGB) to make funding available to underwrite

the Developer Contribution. The Section 106 Agreement has also confirmed repayment terms from the Developer to ensure the loan arrangement is serviced appropriately, so the Developer contribution will not be withheld;

- The project may receive a legal challenge based on the planning and environmental processes followed or if environment factors are encountered during surveys; - No legal challenge to the planning and environmental processes has been received;
- Failure to obtain land agreements; - Land has been secured through the Section 106 Agreement as part of successful grant of planning;
- Timescales associated with achieving grant of planning are longer due to extensive S106 obligation discussions and agreement of planning conditions; - This risk did arise as securing planning did take longer than expected. However, timescales on other tasks have been shortened or their start date accelerated to mitigate impact;
- Agreement of payment mechanism for Developer contribution for bypass delivery may delay agreement of S106 obligations; - Developer payment mechanism has been agreed though successful grant of planning;
- Nutrient Neutrality - A large number of Local Planning Authorities (LPAs) have been made aware by Natural England of new data and guidance relating to the adverse level of nutrients in protected water bodies, including the Broads and the Wensum. Under the Habitats Regs LPAs are unable to approve any applications which incorporate overnight accommodation if nutrient levels are further increased by the development. 126 Natural England's advice is that development can only proceed if it is "nutrient neutral" and the LPA can demonstrate appropriate mitigation. – A Nutrient Neutrality scheme of mitigation has been agreed with NE and LPA to allow planning conditions to be utilised through the planning process;
- Delays or inability to achieve grant of planning (could be late submission, extended consultations, extended time period for S106 /condition agreement or unsatisfactory submission); - This risk did partly arise as securing planning took longer than expected. However, timescales on other tasks have been shortened or their start date accelerated to mitigate impact;
- Scheme cost estimate increases; - There has been a small increase (£0.7m) in costs since the September 2022 Cabinet Report as mentioned in 6.1.3 above;
- Unforeseen changes to financial markets; - This risk has currently not arisen;
- Delays to planning, statutory or scheme delivery processes lead to slippage within delivery programme. – As mentioned above, delays to the grant of planning have been mitigated through a flexible approach to delivery of tasks;

- Adequacy of the base forecast for the works, i.e. tender pricing received exceed the budgetary allowances; We are content that with the £0.7m increase reference above the budget reflects the current market;
- Cost and availability of construction materials (steel, timber, OPC, aggregate) may impact upon project budget and timescales/programme.
 - Availability of construction materials does remain a risk, but this has reduced since the previous Cabinet report. The market has found different supply chains routes and providers to mitigate the concerns that were prevalent in 2022.

9.2 There is a risk associated to the DfT not approving the FBC, or the approval process being delayed. Should the FBC not be approved by the DfT, there will be insufficient funding to allow the project to continue. The Council will also be required to reinstate any advanced works and leave the site in a pre-mobilisation condition to which there will be a financial cost association. Should there be a delay to a successful approval of the FBC, this will also impact upon the delivery process depending on the length of the delay. Should any delay be relatively short, less than 4-6 weeks, it will still be possible to commence early in financial year 2024-25 as it may still be possible to make use of the earthworks season to allow the pavement (road) to be implemented and made weatherproof before the likely wetter late autumn/winter weather. Should the delay be longer, a decision will need to be taken in regard to postponement of the start of construction of the project until the following year. The ground conditions that the successful Bidder will need to work within are extremely sensitive to wet conditions, so the drive is to ensure as much construction work as possible during drier conditions.

9.3 There is a risk associated to the Authority not obtaining the outstanding £6m budget shortfall. As mentioned earlier (see 6.2.2), the difference between the current cost estimate and confirmed budget is approximately £6m. Should it not be possible for the County Council to agree a funding arrangement to confirm the additional monies, it will not be possible to complete the bypass. Reducing the scope of the project in alignment with a £6m budgetary shortfall, if possible, would mean changes that are so significant it would likely mean a need to resubmit a planning application to deal with the change. This delay would take the start of works outside the funding window associated to the DfT's Major Road Network fund.

9.4 There is a risk associated to the Secretary of State for Transport not confirming the statutory Orders associated to the scheme. The DfT are currently reviewing the information submitted associated to the scheme's Side Roads Order so that they may consider whether the proposals are appropriate and the necessary process has been followed accurately. Should the DfT consider the answer to those two questions is yes, they may request the Secretary of State for Transport to make a determination and provide a confirmation of the Highway Orders to the Council. However, should the DfT not be happy with either the

scheme or the process, they could request that the Council needs to redesign the scheme as they do not feel it is suitable as designed which would also require a full re-consultation, or if they consider the consultation process was not completed correctly it would need to be reconsulted. Both of these scenarios will impart a delay to the delivery process as confirmed Highway Orders are required before DfT will approve an FBC. Depending on the extent of the delay, the issues discussed in para 9.2 could also impact the project.

10. Select Committee Comments

10.1 N/A

11. Recommendations

- 1. To confirm support for the delivery of the Long Stratton Bypass.**
- 2. To delegate the approval and submission of the Full Business Case to the Interim Executive Director of Community & Environmental Services in consultation with the Cabinet Member Highways, Infrastructure and Transport.**
- 3. To delegate the award of Contract for Long Stratton Bypass to the Interim Executive Director of Community & Environmental Services in consultation with the Director of Procurement and Sustainability and the Cabinet Member Highways, Infrastructure and Transport.**
- 4. To approve the increased costs of the scheme to £46.9m within the capital programme and note the funding sources are being finalised as detailed in section 6.2.2.**
- 5. To agree to commence advance environmental mitigation and initial mobilisation works from January 2024 ahead of the Full Business Case decision and main construction works in April 2024. The estimated delivery cost of these works is expected to be up to £1.3m and funded on a temporary basis by Norfolk County Council (for more details see section 6.1.5).**

12. Background Papers

- October 2020 Cabinet Report for LSB Outline Business Case
- September 2022 Cabinet Report for Project Update, Side Roads Order and Contract Strategy

Officer Contact

If you have any questions about matters contained within this paper, please contact:

Officer name: Rod Kelly

Telephone no.: 01603 222469

Email: rod.kelly@norfolk.gov.uk



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

Cabinet

Item No: 10

Report Title: Abbey Estate Thetford – Memorandum of Understanding

Date of Meeting: 6 November 2023

Responsible Cabinet Member: Cllr Jane James (Cabinet Member for Corporate Services and Innovation)

Responsible Director: Paul Cracknell – Executive Director of Strategy and Transformation

Is this a Key Decision? No

If this is a Key Decision, date added to the Forward Plan of Key Decisions:

Executive Summary / Introduction from Cabinet Member

We have been approached by Flagship Housing, who own some 670 homes on the Abbey Estate in Thetford, to work with them, Breckland Council and importantly the local community to create meaningful change on the Abbey Estate.

The change being proposed would be significant, arguably the largest estate regeneration programme ever undertaken in Breckland, requiring around £250m of investment and taking place over 20 years.

The Abbey Estate, which provide homes for 1,200 households, faces a number of social economic challenges and is in the 10% most deprived communities in the country.

The proposed activity would seek to address these challenges and create places where people want to live, develop thriving communities and create a safe inclusive environment. It would also seek to improve the condition of the housing stock

In our discussions we have agreed that this work must be led by the needs and aspirations of the local community.

In 2019, we agreed improvements with all the parties through a Memorandum of Understanding, which aligned very closely with the outcomes we were looking for. Progress on this was delayed by the pandemic.

However, all parties are now keen to make progress and I am seeking Cabinet endorsement on the updated Memorandum of Understanding.

The updated Memorandum of Understanding has been developed to underpin this collaboration.

Recommendation:

- 1. To approve the updated Memorandum of Understanding.**

1. Background and Purpose

- 1.1 The Abbey Estate was built in the late 1960s to provide homes for people moving from London under the town expansion scheme. The design of the estate lacks recreational facilities and in places creates opportunities for anti-social behaviour.
- 1.2 The Abbey Estate faces a number of socio-economic challenges and is in the 10% most deprived neighbourhoods in the country.
- 1.3 On the other hand, the Abbey Estate has a strong sense of community and there is a passion for the area amongst residents. The Abbey Estate provides homes for 1,178 households and 670 of the homes are owned and managed by Flagship.
- 1.4 The change being proposed would amount to the largest estate regeneration programme in Breckland, requiring around £250m of investment over a 20 year period.
- 1.5 Since 2019 Flagship Group has been consulting and engaging with residents on the plans.

2. Proposal

- 2.1 Flagship is seeking the support of Breckland and the County Council to develop a shared vision for the estate. The public bodies will continue to commit to providing strategic leadership and influence and seek to align the work with other activity in the Thetford area.

2.2 The parties want to create meaningful change and enhance the Estate to achieve the following key objectives:

- Create places where people want to live.
- Develop thriving communities.
- Create safe, inclusive environments.
- Positively affect the environment to achieve improvements to deprivation indices.
- Actively promote Thetford as a destination of choice.
- Encourage economic investment and growth in Greater Thetford – enhancing opportunities for employment and prosperity.

2.3 This updated Memorandum of Understanding will not be legally binding, and no legal obligations or legal rights will arise between the parties. Nevertheless, the Memorandum of Understanding should be seen as a statement of intent and a shared commitment to deliver positive change to the Abbey Estate.

2.4 Breckland Council approved the MoU at its cabinet meeting on October 16th.

3. Impact of the Proposal

3.1 The Cabinet decision will publicly signal the County Council's intention to continue working with the other bodies and the local community. It does not prejudice the outcome or the feasibility of the work.

4. Evidence and Reasons for Decision

4.1 The Cabinet decision is considered to align closely with the County Council's stated outcomes in our agreed plan 'Better Together, For Norfolk'. The rationale behind the proposal is to improve the physical, environmental and community elements of the estate in a manner agreed with the local community.

5. Alternative Options

5.1 The County Council does not need to agree to the proposal – as Flagship and Breckland could develop the scheme themselves. If this alternative route is chosen, then the County Council would remain a statutory consultee on any planning applications.

6. Financial Implications

- 6.1 The County Council has previously committed and allocated a development budget of £100,000 to help in the preliminary stages of the project. This was to contribute to planning studies, projects management and enabling works.
- 6.2 Any further expenditure will be considered and approved through normal County Council procedures.

7. Resource Implications

- 7.1 **Staff:** No additional staff, but existing staff will engage with the scheme as they would any other development.
- 7.2 **Property:** Nil.
- 7.3 **IT:** Nil

8. Other Implications

- 8.1 **Legal Implications:** NPLaw has reviewed the revised Memorandum of Understanding.
- 8.2 **Human Rights Implications:** These will be considered as proposals emerge.
- 8.3 **Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) (this must be included):** This will be considered as proposals emerge.
- 8.4 **Data Protection Impact Assessments (DPIA):** N/A
- 8.5 **Health and Safety implications (where appropriate):** N/A
- 8.6 **Sustainability implications (where appropriate):** N/A
- 8.7 **Any Other Implications:** none

9. Risk Implications / Assessment

9.1 The county council has agreed to work with the other public bodies to seek consensus on an agreed way forward. The active support of the local community is key to the delivery of any proposals – and a lack of support would put any scheme at risk.

10. Select Committee Comments

10.1 Not applicable

11. Recommendations

- 1. To approve the updated Memorandum of Understanding**

12. Background Papers

12.1 Please see attached the updated Memorandum of Understanding (Appendix A)

Officer Contact

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

Officer name: Chris Starkie

Telephone no.:01603 224319

Email: c.starkie@norfolk.gov.uk



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

THIS AGREEMENT is dated [DATE]

PARTIES

- (1) **FLAGSHIP GROUP LIMITED** of 31 King Street, Norwich, Norfolk, NR1 1PD (“**the Association**”)
- (2) **BRECKLAND DISTRICT COUNCIL** of Elizabeth House, Walpole Loke, Dereham, Norfolk NR19 1EE (“**the Council**”)
- (3) **NORFOLK COUNTY COUNCIL** of County Hall, Martineau Lane, Norwich, NR1 2DH (“**the County Council**”)

The Association is the registered proprietor of part of the land and dwellings, garages and amenity areas known as the Abbey Estate, Thetford (“**the Estate**”).

1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 Following the Association’s engagement and consultation work with their customers and the residents of the Estate, the parties have agreed to work together in a spirit of mutual co-operation and collaboration to create meaningful change and improvements to the Estate.
- 1.2 The parties wish to record the basis on which they will collaborate with each other.

2. KEY OBJECTIVES FOR THE PROJECT

- 2.1 The parties want to create meaningful change and enhance the Estate (including open space) to attempt to achieve the following key objectives:
 - (a) Create places where people want to live.
 - (b) Develop thriving communities.
 - (c) Create safe, inclusive environments.
 - (d) Positively affects the environment to achieve improvements to deprivation indices.
 - (e) Actively promotes Thetford as a destination of choice.
 - (f) Encourages economic investment and growth in Greater Thetford – enhancing opportunities for employment and prosperity;

Collectively the (**Key Objectives**).

3. PRINCIPLES OF COLLABORATION

The parties agree to adopt the following principles when seeking to achieve (**Principles**):

- (a) collaborate and co-operate;

- (b) be accountable. Take on, manage and account to each other for performance of the respective roles and responsibilities as things progress;
- (c) be open. Communicate openly about concerns, issues or opportunities;
- (d) recognise the complexity and external funding requirements of delivery and work collaboratively to identify solutions, mitigate risk and reduce cost;
- (e) act in a timely manner. Recognise the time-constraints and respond accordingly to requests for support;
- (f) manage stakeholders effectively;
- (g) deploy appropriate resources. Ensure sufficient and appropriately qualified resources are available and authorised to fulfil the responsibilities set out in this MoU;
- (h) act in good faith to support achievement of the Key Objectives and compliance with these Principles.

4. PROJECT GOVERNANCE

4.1 The parties have formed a group to try and further the Key Objectives (“Steering Group”). The parties will ensure that their representatives on the Steering Group are committed to the Principles and furthering the Key Objectives.

4.2 The Steering Group will:

- (a) Provide strategic leadership– providing direction, scrutiny and timely intervention across areas of influence;
- (b) Ensure alignment of vision – consolidating views/coordinating activities across organisations/agencies to galvanise a shared vision of the estate, and Greater Thetford;
- (c) Enable progression – aligning projects and ensuring the Abbey is prioritised where possible, to sustain momentum and delivery.

5. INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY

5.1 The parties intend that any intellectual property rights created in the course of developing the Key Objectives shall vest in the party whose employee created them (or in the case of any intellectual property rights created jointly by employees of both parties in the party that is lead party for the part that the intellectual property right relates to).

5.2 Where any intellectual property right vests in either party in accordance with the intention set out in clause 5.1 above, that party shall grant an irrevocable licence to the other party to use that intellectual property for the purposes of the achieving the Key Objectives.

6. PARTIES COMMITMENTS

- 6.1 The Association commits to be generally committed to the delivery of the Key Objectives and to provide its resources in the form of staff, land, money and any other resources as it sees fit to further the Key Objectives. It will be responsible for delivery and ensure there is effective communication and consultation with residents, seeking their input on any plans.
- 6.2 The Council as a key strategic partner of the Association commits to support the Principles and to work collaboratively with both parties to further the Key Objectives providing resources and assistance as it sees fit. The Council is committed to assisting the Association where possible in the delivery of the Key Objectives.
- 6.3 The County Council a key strategic partner of both the Council and the Association and supports the delivery of the Key Objectives. It is committed to supporting the Key Objectives and Principles of collaboration to help jointly deliver the Key Objectives.
- 6.4 The Council and County Council shall use best endeavours to:
- (a) use their respective compulsory purchase powers, should the need arise in order to deliver the Key Objectives;
 - (b) transfer, at nil value, any public land which is required to deliver the Key Objectives;
 - (c) exclude from any planning agreements the requirement to pay any commuted sums, section 106 contributions and/or community infrastructure levy (should this be introduced at a future date) due to the nature of the project and viability challenges;
 - (d) allocate any existing planned Estate capital contributions (roads, paths etc.) to support the project viability; and
 - (e) collectively (with the Association) lobby Homes England and other funding bodies for bespoke regeneration grant to support the viability, and explore additional funding avenues

7. TERM AND TERMINATION

- 7.1 This MoU shall commence on the date of signature by all three parties and shall terminate by the written agreement of all of the parties.

8. VARIATION

This MoU may only be varied by written agreement of all the parties.

9. STATUS

9.1 This MoU is not intended to be legally binding, and no legal obligations or legal rights shall arise between the parties from this MoU. The parties enter into the MoU intending to honour all their obligations.

9.2 Nothing in this MoU is intended to, or shall be deemed to, establish any partnership or joint venture between the parties, constitute any party as the agent of any other party, nor authorise any of the parties to make or enter into any commitments for or on behalf of any other party.

10. GOVERNING LAW AND JURISDICTION

This MoU shall be governed by and construed in accordance with English law and, each party agrees to submit to the exclusive jurisdiction of the courts of England and Wales.

EXECUTED by affixing the common seal of
FLAGSHIP GROUP LIMITED:

In the presence of

Authorised Signatory:

Authorised Signatory:

EXECUTED [or signed] by
BRECKLAND COUNCIL

by:
.....
.....
.....

EXECUTED [or signed] by
NORFOLK COUNTY COUNCIL

by:
.....
.....

Cabinet

Item No: 11

Report Title: Public Health Strategic Plan

Date of Meeting: 6th November 2023

Responsible Cabinet Member: Cllr Bill Borrett Cabinet member for Public Health & Wellbeing

Responsible Director: Debbie Bartlett, Interim Executive Director of Adult Social Services

Is this a Key Decision? Yes

If this is a Key Decision, date added to the Forward Plan of Key Decisions: 5th October 2023

Executive Summary / Introduction from Cabinet Member

The public's health is essential to the overall well-being and prosperity of our community. To help address the unique health challenges of Norfolk, we've developed the Public Health Strategic Plan for Norfolk: Ready to Change, Ready to Act. The plan describes the value, contribution and relevance of Public Health skills and capacity in achieving Norfolk County Council's vision for Norfolk to be the place where everyone can start life well, live well and age well, and where no one is left behind. Our mission is to improve the health and wellbeing of the people of Norfolk. Informed by best practice and evidence, we will lead the system in Norfolk to focus on prevention to improve and sustain good health and wellbeing and help reduce demand in the system.

We have designed our approach with the strategic ambitions of our partners and colleagues in mind. An outward facing strategy will provide a mechanism to engage with and influence system partners with a strategic approach that clearly sets out our ambition as a council.

We have shared the Public Health Strategic Plan with a range of partners at various boards and groups to inform content and agreement on the focus for priority action.

Recommendations:

- 1. To approve the Public Health Strategic Plan**

1. Background and Purpose

- 1.1 Building on the 2016-2020 Public Health Strategy this new Public Health Strategic Plan (**See Appendix A**) sets out our approach to improving the health and wellbeing of Norfolk's residents with a focus on prevention, partnerships and place, children and young people, adults, and older people.
- 1.2 Although health in Norfolk is generally better than the national average there are areas where it could be improved due to intra-county health inequalities. People with pre-existing health conditions, older people, those from some ethnic backgrounds, people with caring responsibilities, those who are disabled or have a learning disability, can be at greater risk of ill health, isolation, and poor wellbeing, a situation highlighted by the pandemic.
- 1.3 As we move forward, we are shifting our focus to some of the wider, indirect health impacts highlighted by Covid-19, for example on mental health, healthy weight, children's health, and engagement with public health services. These areas are not new to Public Health teams, but their nature may have changed as a result of the events of the past two years.
- 1.4 In addition, we are supporting the Council's Climate Strategy. Our Public Health Environment Team is developing an Environmental and Sustainability work programme covering air quality, transport and active travel, flooding and coastal erosion, housing and green spaces and we are working in partnership with others both in and outside the council to ensure public health implications are considered.
- 1.5 We will continue to develop and sustain existing and emerging partnerships at local, county, regional and national levels to support our leadership role in improving health outcomes, access to preventative health care support services and addressing some of the causes of ill health.
- 1.6 Our leadership is supported by health intelligence functions which provides quality data and analytics. We have direct responsibility for spending the Public Health grant and invest over £33m a year on commissioned services including health visiting, drug, and alcohol services, stop smoking and sexual & reproductive health services.
- 1.7 . Ten priority 'asks' for action have been identified.

1	To promote and communicate the Public Health Strategic Plan within their organisations and consider what resources can be provided to support prevention interventions
2	Promote and work with us on stop smoking initiatives.
3	Identify staff groups and individuals within your organisation for behaviour change training to support and advise the people they work with to make a change to improve their health. (i.e., MECC)

4	Promote and work with us on the 5 ways to wellbeing (mental health promotion).
5	Promote the uptake of health checks for staff and service users.
6	Work together to develop ways of promoting best start in life and healthy behaviours for children and young people.
7	Work with us to identify and engage with individuals, groups and communities who would most benefit from prevention interventions.
8	Actively participate and contribute to collaborative opportunities such as Health & Wellbeing Partnerships, the Health Improvement Transformation Group, the Tobacco Control & Vaping Alliance, the Norfolk Drug and Alcohol Partnership, and the Sexual Health Network.
9	Promote the importance of good health and more people actively engaging in thinking about their own health improvement.
10	Work with us to embed the use of data and intelligence in decision making.

1.8 Prevention, partnership, and place

- 1.8.1 Encouraging and supporting people to adopt healthy behaviours is important for health and wellbeing – both physically and mentally. This is an important element of demand reduction and for an affordable NHS and social care system in Norfolk.
- 1.8.2 Public Health is well placed to present clear offers of health and wellbeing to Norfolk residents and enable them to get the support they need. We will continue to develop and deliver a range of preventative services which promote health and wellbeing for all residents, particularly those at highest risk of ill health and premature mortality. This will be done by working with under-served groups and wider communities to understand the impact of a range of factors on their health and how best to address them. We will ensure that when we commission public health services, we target people who are most in need.
- 1.8.3 We have designed our approach with the strategic ambitions of our partners and colleagues in mind. It is our ambition that all Norfolk organisations, whoever they may be, will have an opportunity to play a role.
- 1.8.4 Creating healthy places can positively influence over 50% of the factors that affect a person's health. How we behave is also important and positive results become possible when people change their behaviour. For example, health benefits can be obtained from walking and cycling more, on better designed, safer routes and taking fewer car journeys.

1.9 Adults and Older People

1.9.1 As people live longer, it is important that older people have the best quality of life and health possible (i.e., adding life to years, as well as adding years to life) and are able to thrive into older age. By focusing on the prevention and early help element of the Councils' Promoting Independence Strategy we aim to empower and enable people to live independently for as long as possible through giving people good quality information and advice which supports their wellbeing and stops people becoming isolated and lonely. We will work with our partners to develop and deliver a healthy ageing programme.

1.9.2 We will lead the cross-system strategy on adult healthy lifestyle and behavioural change (primary prevention) to improve both physical and mental health and wellbeing for the local population.

1.10 Children and Young People

1.10.1 Norfolk County Council's Public Health shares the ambition that Norfolk is a place where all children and young people can FLOURISH. Using public health expertise in population health assessment and intelligence, we will support the work of the Children & Young People's Strategic Alliance by promoting evidence base interventions to improve health & well-being outcomes and reduce health inequalities for children and young people in Norfolk.

1.10.2 We work with families and partner agencies to ensure that children and young people are as healthy as possible by ensuring that we have a whole system approach, including Family Hubs, to restore and adapt our children's health services and interventions as we recover from the pandemic.

2. Proposal

2.1 To use this strategy as a mechanism to engage with and influence system partners with a strategic approach that clearly sets out our ambition as a council.

2.2 To align with the emerging NCC Strategic Action Plan for Health

3. Impact of the Proposal

3.1 The public health strategic plan is designed to support and enable the system to focus on prevention as a way of improving and sustaining good health and wellbeing by proactively identifying population health needs and prevention opportunities to accelerate health and social care integration and improve outcomes.

3.2 To use this strategy as a mechanism to engage with and influence system partners with a strategic approach that clearly articulates and sets out our ambition as part of the N&W Integrated Care Partnership.

4. Evidence and Reasons for Decision

4.1 Preventative interventions are shown to be effective as well as more cost effective to provide than later interventions. There is growing evidence that proactive interventions focussed on prevention are both effective and cost effective with good return on investment (RoI) and more affordable than just simply focussing on providing reactive treatment and care. This can be done by promoting healthy living, seeking to minimise the impact of illness through early intervention, and supporting recovery, enablement, and independence.

5. Alternative Options

5.1 Without an outward facing strategic plan we will not have a published framework to deliver and develop our public health interventions & services and influence our partners across the system.

6. Financial Implications

6.1 Norfolk's Public Health Service is funded via a specific ringfenced public health grant, which necessitates investment in purposeful public health activities. In 2023/24 the core public health grant allocation for Norfolk is £43.6m. In addition to our core grant during this financial year, we will receive circa £3.8m of ring-fenced (Section 31) government grants for investment in public healthcare, alongside contributions totalling £920k from Norfolk & Waveney NHS ICB for services we commission on their behalf.

Delivery of public healthcare includes the commissioning of:

- Clinical services – Drug & Alcohol harm reduction, detoxification, and rehabilitation; Sexual & Reproductive Healthcare; and the Norfolk Healthy Child Programme (encompassing pre-birth to 5-years Health visiting, the National Child Measurement Programme, our Family Nurse Partnership & Teenage Parenting Pathway, a School Health Service for 5-19s, and Just One Norfolk).
- Health & Wellbeing services – Tier-2 Weight Management; provision of Healthy Start Vitamins; NHS Health Check Programme; Specialist Bereavement Support (NHS ICB Funded); Suicide Prevention services; and SmokeFree Norfolk, including the ICB funded specialist provision

for people with Serious Mental Ill health and a specialist pathway for pregnant women who smoke.

In addition, we develop and fund an ever-expanding range of primary prevention programmes and campaigns; provide specialist advice to the NHS, for example in population health management; and contribute (23/24) some £5.1m to a range of services commissioned by other NCC directorates that achieve public health outcomes.

Looking to 2024/25, the government announced on 5 October 2023 that Norfolk will receive £1.2m of additional funding to invest in Stop Smoking services; more than doubling our current level of spend.

7. Resource Implications

7.1 Staff: Staffing to support the commissioning or delivery will be funded from within existing budgets.

7.2 Property: N/A

7.3 IT: N/A

8. Other Implications

8.1 Legal Implications: None

8.2 Human Rights Implications: None

8.3 Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) (this must be included):
See Appendix B

8.4 Data Protection Impact Assessments (DPIA): N/A

8.5 Health and Safety implications (where appropriate): N/A

8.6 Sustainability implications (where appropriate):N/A

8.7 Any Other Implications:

9. Risk Implications / Assessment

Risk:	Mitigations
National and local strategies and priorities change the landscape in which we work	<p>We will measure our progress using public health outcomes indicators and feedback from residents, partners and other stakeholders.</p> <p>We will continuously use the national public health framework for quality improvement and Sector Led Improvement methodologies to assure our services and continuously improve them.</p> <p>We plan to review it and publish updates annually.</p>
The public health grant is different from the assumptions detailed in our medium- term financial strategy	We will continue to review our financial strategy to ensure that we meet the statutory duty to achieve best value for money and seek to continuously improve how we commission and deliver our services.

10. Select Committee Comments

10.1 People and Communities Committee endorsed our approach to developing a new Public Health Strategic Plan as a mechanism to engage with and influence partners across the system in Norfolk and endorsed our proposal to focus on prevention partnerships & place, children & young people, adults and older people.

11. Recommendations

1. To approve the Public Health Strategic Plan

12. Background Papers

12.1 None

Officer Contact

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

Officer name: Christopher Butwright

Telephone no.: 01603 638339

Email: christopher.butwright@norfolk.gov.uk



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

ready to
change
your way to better health

Ready to Change... Ready to Act

Public Health Strategic Plan



Foreword

Welcome to the Public Health Strategic Plan. It describes how Public Health specialist staff within the council contribute to achieving Norfolk County Council's vision for Norfolk to be the place where everyone can start life well, live well and age well, and where no one is left behind.

We will lead the system in Norfolk to focus on prevention to improve and sustain good health and wellbeing. Preventative interventions are shown to be effective as well as more cost effective to provide than later interventions. There is growing evidence that proactive interventions focused on prevention are both effective and cost effective with a good return on investment and more affordable than just simply focused on providing reactive treatment and care.

We will identify population health needs, and proactively identify prevention opportunities to accelerate health and social care integration.



Councillor Bill Borrett
Cabinet member for Public Health
and Wellbeing



Stuart Lines
Director of Public Health,
Norfolk

Introduction

This strategic plan describes our vision, mission, and priorities. It outlines how we will deliver a wide range of positive health outcomes for Norfolk residents throughout their lives.

The population of Norfolk is growing. Since 2011, Norfolk's population has increased by an estimated 59,000 people to 918,300 people. The population is forecast to increase by a further 195,500 over the next 20 years. Most of the population increase will be in the older age groups, with those aged 65+ increasing by 77,000.

Although health in Norfolk is generally better than the national average there are areas where it could be improved due to intra-county health inequalities. People with pre-existing health conditions, older people, those from some ethnic backgrounds, people with caring responsibilities, those who are disabled or have a learning disability, can be at greater risk of ill health, isolation, and poor wellbeing, a situation highlighted by the pandemic.

As we move forward, we are shifting our focus to some of the wider, indirect health impacts highlighted by the pandemic, for example on mental health, healthy weight, children's health, and engagement with public health services. These areas are not new to Public Health teams, but their nature may have changed as a result of the events of the past few years.

In addition, we are exploring new ways of working with communities and our partners, to protect and promote good health and inclusion, taking a place-based approach to tackling the causes of poor health outcomes, such as quality of housing, air quality and limited access to green spaces.

We will continue to develop and sustain existing and emerging partnerships at local, county, regional and national levels to support our leadership role in improving health outcomes, access to preventative health care support services and addressing some of the causes of ill health.

Our leadership is supported by health intelligence functions which provide quality data and analytics. We have direct responsibility for spending the Public Health grant and invest over £33m a year on commissioned services including health visiting, drug, and alcohol services, stop smoking and sexual & reproductive health services.

Our Vision

Norfolk to be the place where everyone can start life well, live well and age well, and where no one is left behind.

Our Vision – Better Together for Norfolk 2022

Our Mission

To improve the health and wellbeing of the people of Norfolk and reduce health inequalities. Informed by best practice and evidence, we will lead the system in Norfolk to develop and focus a prevention approach to improve and sustain good health and wellbeing.

We will identify opportunities to accelerate health and social care integration to ensure that people remain healthy and independent for as long as possible.

We will work to improve and protect our population's health by promoting healthy lifestyles, supporting people to make healthy choices, working in partnership, and providing high quality public health service.



Our ambition

Ensure that prevention is at the heart of everything we and our partners do, ensuring that our population understand how to be healthy, and are encouraged and supported to put this into practice.

We want to increase access and take up of Public Health prevention services and support healthier living. We will do this by providing support through a variety of routes including digital platforms and community-based providers.

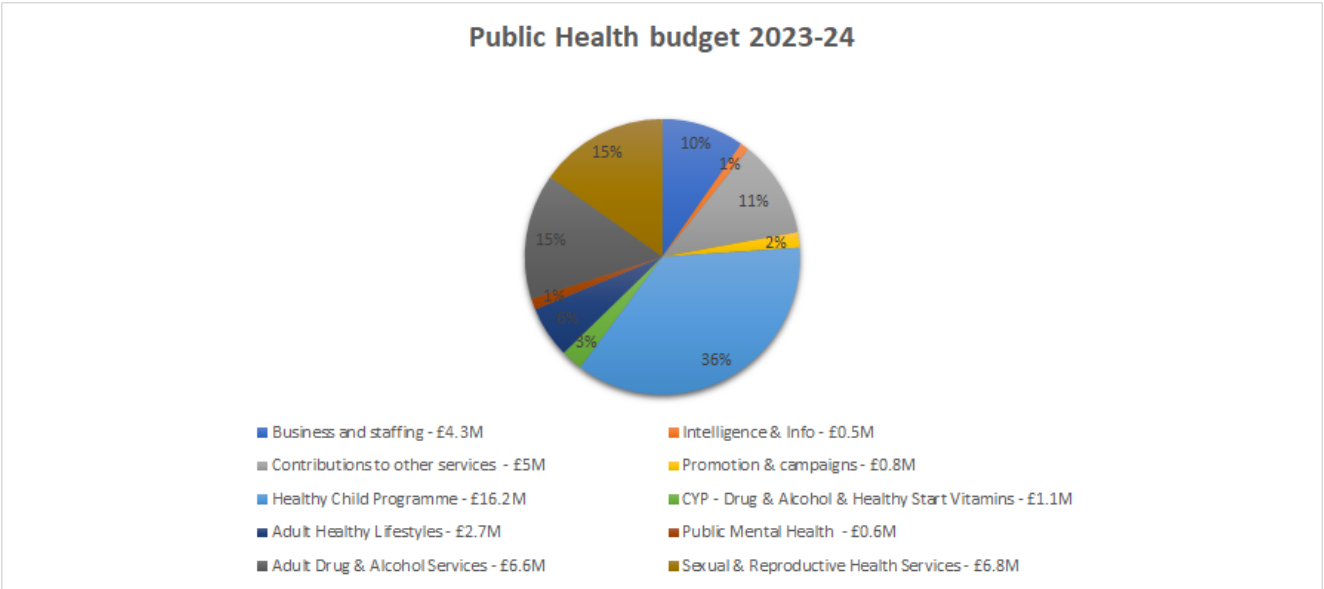
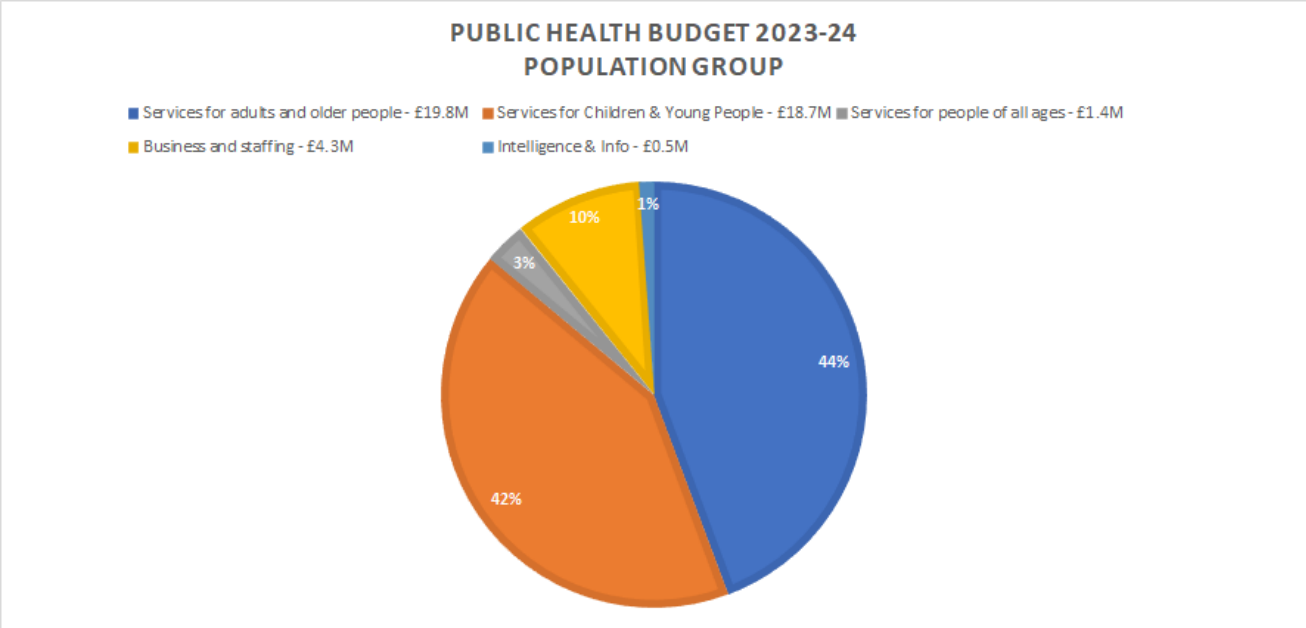


Our Investment

Norfolk’s Public Health Service is funded via a government ring-fenced public health grant, which necessitates investment in purposeful public health activities. In 2023/24 we continued to invest in providing clinical and health & wellbeing services.

We are funding an ever expanding range of primary prevention programmes services and campaigns and provide specialist support to the NHS and contribute to a range of services commissioned by other council services that achieve public health outcomes.

Looking to 2024/25, the government recently announced that Norfolk will receive £1.2m of additional funding to invest in stop smoking services, more than double our current level of spend.



Our approach

Public Health is guided by a number of principles which inform our ideas and guide the planning, delivery and evaluation of our work.

We will:

- ✓ Take a proactive approach to prevention identifying and tackling the issues that have a detrimental impact on poor health outcomes.
- ✓ Provide system leadership as the expert voice on population health, inequalities, and prevention.
- ✓ Provide expert advice on the promotion of healthy lifestyles informed by behaviour change approaches, driven by data and evidence and guided by a holistic view of health and wellbeing.
- ✓ Develop and sustain strong partnerships to improve access to better quality services such as working with districts to improve public health in their communities.
- ✓ Provide targeted support focused on places, communities, and individuals most affected by ill health and premature death.
- ✓ Embrace diversity and inclusion with a focus on reducing health inequalities.
- ✓ Manage our resource and capacity, achieving best value for money and carefully prioritised projects and programmes, based on good practice, sound evidence, and achievable outcomes.



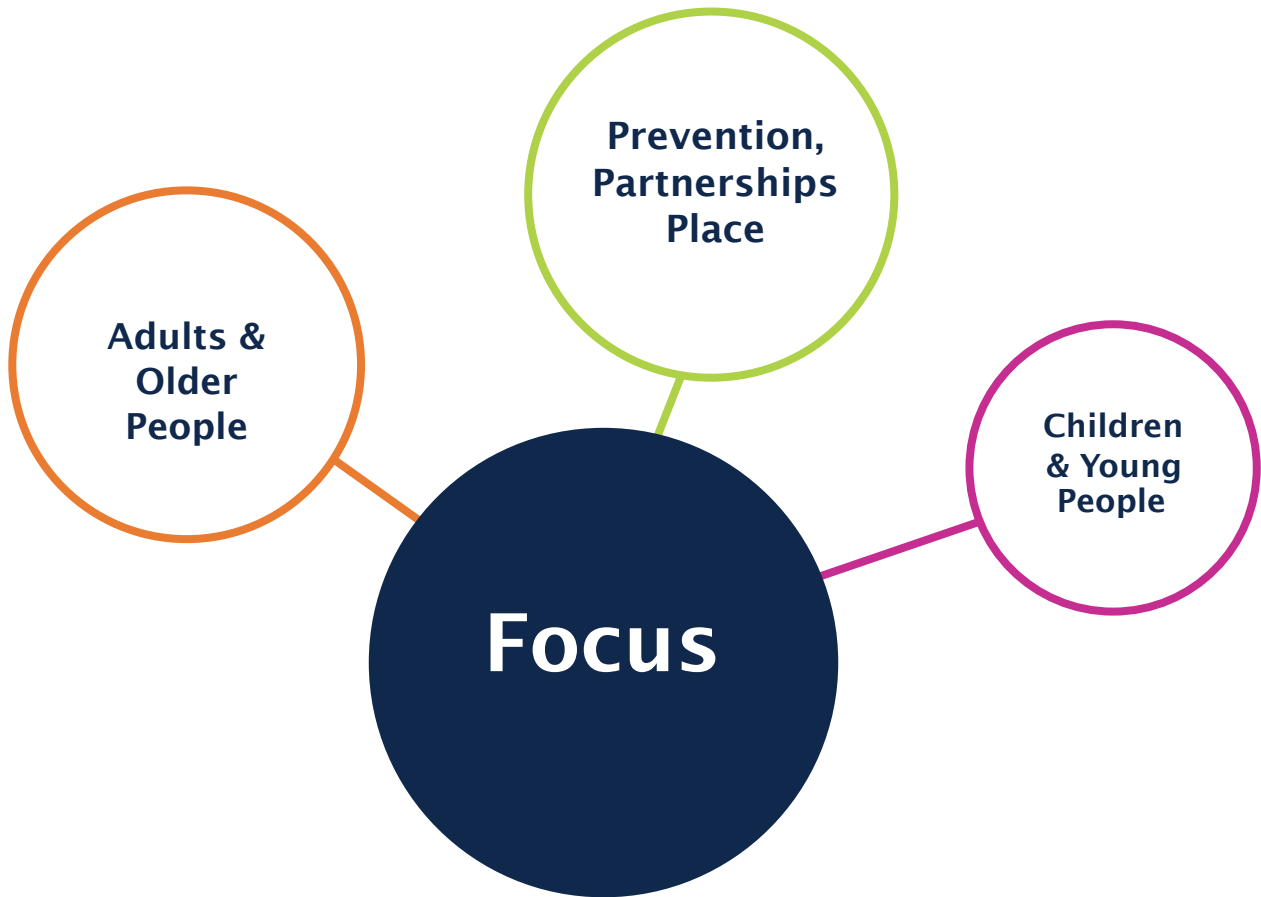
Better Together for Norfolk Strategic Priorities:

We will actively pursue our ambitions through the priority themes in the County Council's corporate plan. This page shows the County Councils' ambitions and priority themes, and the key Public Health contributions to them.



Our Focus

In support of the Norfolk County Council's Better Together for Norfolk plan we have identified the following priorities for Public Health.



1. Focus on Prevention, Partnerships & Place

Prevention

Public Health is well placed to present clear offers of health and wellbeing to Norfolk residents and enable them to get the support they need.

We will continue to develop and deliver a range of preventative services which promote health and wellbeing for all residents, particularly those at highest risk of ill health and premature mortality. This will be done by working with under-served groups and wider communities to understand the impact of a range of factors on their health and how best to address them. We will ensure that when we commission Public Health services we target people who are most in need.

A holistic approach to health and wellbeing

Many factors influence and affect people's health and having access to a range of locally based support can play an important part in helping people to be healthy. We want to offer more opportunities for self-care by improving access to health and wellbeing information and services so that an individual's care is streamlined, co-ordinated and pre-season-centred.

We will take action to improve integration across health and non-health organisations, through the development of referral processes (supported by holistic assessment tools) that make access to services easier and support people with complex or multiple behaviour lifestyle issues.



Places and Partnership

People's health and wellbeing often varies from one place to another and isn't only affected by what people do like eating healthy food and quitting smoking. It can also be affected by the places around us, like living in an area with low levels of crime, safe places to enjoy the outdoors, good jobs and quality housing. That's why it's important to look at what's needed in specific places to help people live longer and healthier lives.

The unequal distribution of the social determinants of health, such as education, housing, and employment, drives inequalities in physical and mental health, and reduces an individual's ability to prevent sickness, or to access treatment when ill health occurs.

While Norfolk's health statistics are mostly favorable when compared with the national picture, we know that there are persistent health inequalities especially in areas of deprivation. The leading causes of death among both men and women in Norfolk are also responsible for the largest gap in life expectancy and impact on the number of years people live in good health. They include cardiovascular disease, respiratory disease, cancer, and diabetes.

The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the impact that these inequalities can have on peoples' health and has led to many more people experiencing those inequalities through changed economic, employment or health circumstances. Throughout the pandemic, we saw communities rise to the challenges we faced. Services and individuals worked together to support each other and the most vulnerable in our communities. We want to keep this going and that is why we will continue to support places and partnerships including the Health and Well Being Partnerships in each local area.

We have designed our approach with the strategic ambitions of our partners and colleagues in mind. It is our ambition that all Norfolk organisations, whoever they may be, will have an opportunity to play a role. They include the NHS, district and borough councils, a wide range of voluntary, community and faith groups, social enterprises, and private sector services.

Public Health is a leading partner within the Norfolk & Waveney Integrated Care System (ICS) and we are working closely with the Integrated Care Partnership on long term action to improve health outcomes.

Our work supports the Health and Wellbeing Strategy created by the Norfolk & Waveney Health and Wellbeing Board where public health work with partners to set and achieve the overarching health and care aims for the county.

We will:

- ✓ Inform and support the ICS by providing expert advice for health improvement, prevention and health inequalities. Lead the Health Improvement Transformation Group subgroup of the ICS with its focus on prevention.
- ✓ Establish the Norfolk Drug and Alcohol Partnership as the strategic substance misuse partnership.
- ✓ Lead the development of the Norfolk Health & Wellbeing Partnerships.
- ✓ Lead the development of the Mental Health Transformation Prevention and Wellbeing Steering Group to improve individual mental wellbeing and resilience of residents.
- ✓ Provide leadership and direction on tobacco control through the Norfolk Tobacco & Vaping Control Alliance.
- ✓ Continue to work with partners on the environmental factors and action towards the Council's net zero and sustainability plans.
- ✓ Work with partners and communities to encourage and enable the development of local action to deliver clean air for all and other outcomes to protect human health with particular attention to understanding the impact on health and mitigating actions for affected communities.
- ✓ Influence planning by advocating and supporting health impact assessments and using our health protocols to design sustainable neighbourhoods which support health and wellbeing.
- ✓ Work with lead agencies and provide data insight and evidence to promote integrated approaches to road & water safety and domestic violence.
- ✓ Improve accessibility to our services for people with learning disabilities, mental health conditions, and people from ethnic minority groups.
- ✓ Support partners with their plans for addressing health inequalities by mapping existing health inequalities work across Norfolk, advise on gaps and duplication and develop a cohesive action plan for ourselves and partners.
- ✓ Promote clear and consistent messaging about health inequalities and how to include health in all policies, both internally and externally with partners.
- ✓ Jointly lead the ICS health inequalities work-stream, providing coordination for health inequalities initiatives and work with other health inequalities groups.

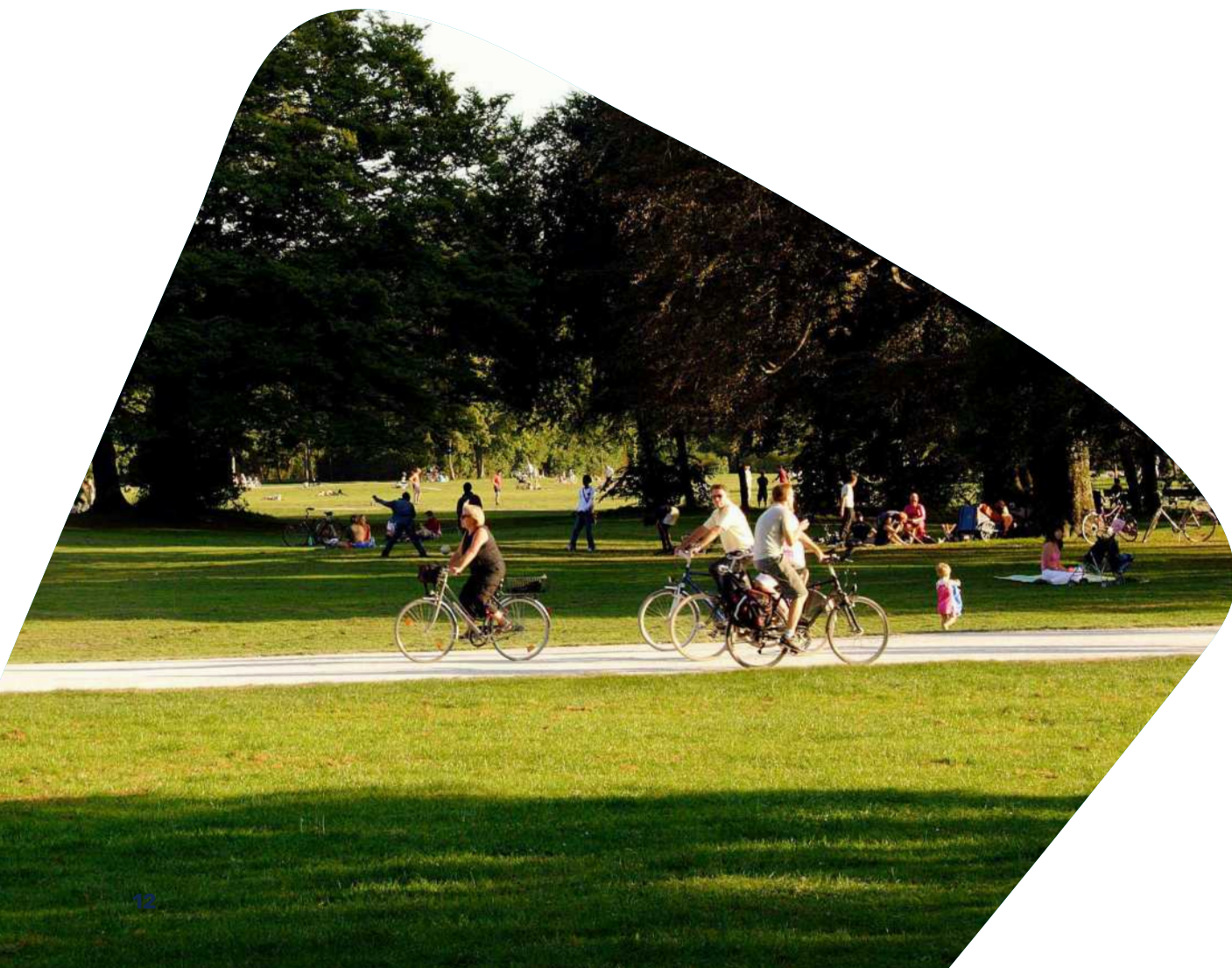
2. A Focus on Adults and Older People

Encouraging and supporting people to adopt healthy behaviours is important for health and wellbeing – both physically and mentally. This is an important element of demand reduction and for an affordable NHS and social care system in Norfolk. Public Health is well placed to inform and promote improved health and wellbeing support to Norfolk residents and enable them to get the support they need to live longer and more independently.

Physical activity and a healthy diet can prevent people from becoming overweight and to avoid or manage health conditions such as cardiovascular disease, cancer, diabetes, arthritis, and depression.

Smoking remains the primary cause of preventable death in Norfolk and some areas of Norfolk have a high rate of smoking in pregnancy.

Mental health and wellbeing is affected by individual, family, social, and environmental factors. Interventions at key periods of change in peoples' lives can prevent mental illness from developing and support recovery.



We will

- ✓ Lead the cross-system strategy on adult healthy lifestyle and behavioural change (primary prevention) to improve both physical and mental health and wellbeing for the local population.
- ✓ Promote the use of the new behaviour change digital platform (Ready to Change) to improve self-care information and access to information on health and wellbeing offers.
- ✓ Extend our Public Health offer to support the wider health and wellbeing workforce in the role of prevention and behaviour change helping them to encourage people to talk about and take action to improve their health.
- ✓ Deliver a new programme of tobacco control and stop smoking initiatives to help people to stop smoking and create smoke free environments.
- ✓ Work with key organisations to develop a county-wide approach to mental health which promotes mental wellbeing and resilience, prevents ill health, and supports recovery.
- ✓ Invest in the delivery of health checks and explore new delivery methods.
- ✓ Enhance our prevention approaches to health improvement, healthy weight and nutrition, and sexual & reproduction health.



Older People – Promoting Independence

As people live longer, it is important that older people have the best quality of life and health possible (i.e. adding life to years, as well as adding years to life) and can thrive into older age.

Supporting older people to stay healthy as long as possible not only improves their own quality of life but adds value to the lives of those around them by the contributions they make to their families and communities.

Residents living into older age, but with complex health and care needs such as frailty and or dementia, need additional support from a range of services and community resources. Proactively identifying these people is the first step to helping them followed by introducing them to local community services to help them enjoy the best possible quality of life and remain safe and well at home.

By focusing on the prevention and early help element of the Councils' Promoting Independence Strategy we aim to empower and enable people to live independently for as long as possible by giving people good quality information and advice which supports their wellbeing and stops them from becoming isolated and lonely.

We will help people stay healthy, active and connected with others in their communities, tapping into help and support already around them – from friends, families, local voluntary and community groups. This will help their health and wellbeing (better mental health, more years free of disease, better mobility, fewer falls and increased companionship) and keep older people safe and well at home for longer. This reduces hospital admission and additional care, which has financial benefits to the NHS and adult care services.

Similarly, we need to ensure that carers receive the support they need to manage their own health. With an increasingly aging population, more people in Norfolk are carers for the elderly.

We will work with our partners to develop and deliver a healthy aging programme.

We will:

- ✓ Ensure older people and carers are supported to have a healthy lifestyle, that they are aware of and have access to appropriate health and wellbeing offers and support.
- ✓ Develop a collaborative approach to physical activity and mobility/strength-based exercise offers as part of maintaining strength and mobility and preventing falls.
- ✓ Ensure services are tailored to older people as appropriate and includes identifying and addressing frailty, dementia and social isolation.
- ✓ Support the development of a broad offer of community-based support and activities, which addresses social isolation and loneliness.
- ✓ Encourage older residents to understand the importance of keeping warm in winter and cool in summer, making sure they eat properly and are physically active. This is particularly important for extreme weather events such as freezing conditions and heat waves which are becoming more frequent.



Addiction

The percentage of people successfully completing drug treatment in Norfolk is below England average levels and there is a disproportionate number of drug related deaths in the Greater Norwich area.

We will:

- ✓ Lead the Norfolk Drug and Alcohol Partnership to increase our ability to respond to drug and alcohol issues by combining prevention, treatment and enforcement.
- ✓ Develop an improvement programme for adult drug & alcohol treatment services drawing on learning from Project Adder, focusing on improving access and the coordination of support across Norfolk.
- ✓ Implement effective local targeted and population level interventions and systems, which are coherently planned by local government, the NHS and criminal justice partners.

3. A Focus on Children & Young People

We work with families and partner agencies to ensure that children and young people are as healthy as possible and Norfolk County Council's Public Health, shares the ambition that Norfolk is a place where all children and young people can FLOURISH.

Using Public Health expertise in population health assessment and intelligence, we will support the work of the Children & Young People's Strategic Alliance by promoting evidence base interventions to improve health & well-being outcomes and reduce health inequalities for children and young people in Norfolk.

Our focus is on children and young people from 0-18 years and up to 25 years for young people who are care leavers or who have special educational needs.

The first years of life and particularly from conception to the age of 2 significantly impact health and wellbeing. During this period the foundations are laid for each child's social, emotional, and physical health development. Where there are concerns about the health of a child or young person, evidence shows that intervening early and/or prevention makes a significant difference to health outcomes.

We are one of the main funders of preventative health interventions for children and we will continue with our programme of work with partners to identify and respond to emerging need, targeting advice, supporting and delivering services to individuals and groups at higher risk of poor health outcomes.



We will:

- ✓ Work with partners to ensure that there is effective and joined up response to early years and emerging need including supporting the implementation of the Family Hub model.
- ✓ Work with our partner organisations to ensure a whole system approach to restoring and adapting our children's health services and interventions as we recover from the pandemic.
- ✓ Continue to invest in and support our Healthy Child Programme helping them to manage workforce risks to the service and develop a new service model.
- ✓ Ensure that addressing health inequalities is central to our work including tackling digital exclusion.
- ✓ Address the emerging mental health needs of children, young people and families by, working with partners to improve community based mental health and wellbeing support services, and work with those who work in schools to improve access to services for anxiety and low-level depression.
- ✓ Ensure that safeguarding of children and young people is paramount in all that we do.
- ✓ Work closely with Children's Services to ensure that the health needs of vulnerable children and young people are addressed, including Looked After Children and young people in the criminal justice system.
- ✓ Ensure that there is a joined-up pathway for tackling excess weight in children and young people.
- ✓ Support the Local Maternity System (LMS) to embed prevention to improve maternal and neonatal outcomes.

Strong Public Health Enablers

Health analytics and intelligence

Our aim is to continue delivering a joined-up evidence and intelligence function which facilitates evidence-based working across decision-makers, commissioners and providers.

The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the importance of a strong Public Health intelligence function for effective system wide strategy-setting and delivery.

We will:

- ✓ Provide the best quality of information that is possible through epidemiology and needs assessments to enable decision makers to focus on prevention.
- ✓ Drive change and improvement by embedding the use of population health analytics throughout Norfolk.
- ✓ Work with partners and a wide range of stakeholders to support public sector and wider partnership transformation through establishing improved data collection and availability, facilitating access to systems and technology to support collaboration, and working to develop analytical skills across the sector.
- ✓ Develop a new Joint Strategic Needs Assessment programme and refresh the website including the addition of a healthcare evaluation section.
- ✓ Develop a new Public Health Outcomes Framework
- ✓ Commission an independent assessment of the impact of COVID on health service activity and health outcomes and analysis to inform ICS priorities.
- ✓ Continue to undertake Public Health analysis of system data to identify prevention priorities and opportunities for system improvement.

Commissioning high quality services

We have direct responsibility for spending the Public Health grant and invest over £33m a year on commissioned services including health visiting, drug, and alcohol services, stop smoking and sexual & reproductive health services. Between March 2023 and September 2024, the majority of Norfolk Public Health's medium to large contracts are due for re-commissioning.

We will

- ✓ Work with our partner organisations to restore and adapt our Public Health services and interventions as we recover from the pandemic.
- ✓ Review and update our commissioning of services to reflect the new Provider Selection Regime which enables new ways of procurement and contracting giving more choice and flexibility on provider selection.
- ✓ Prepare for, and begin where necessary, the process of securing best placed providers to deliver our services in the future, working to local needs and priorities whilst observing national guidance and policy directives.
- ✓ Ensure that addressing health inequalities is central to our work in particular improving accessibility to our services.
- ✓ Actively seek the views of residents, service users, providers and other stakeholders about our current services and using their ideas to develop new services and delivery models.
- ✓ Publish our commissioning intentions.



Health Protection

Health protection seeks to prevent and control infectious diseases and other threats to the health of the population.

The Director of Public Health has a statutory responsibility to provide assurance that adequate arrangements are in place to protect the health of residents.

We will work closely with the Local Resilience Forum and other agencies to prepare for future health protection emergencies with an aim to ensuring that every person, irrespective of their circumstances, is protected from infectious and non-infectious health hazards and, where such hazards occur, to minimise their continued impact on the public's health.



We will:

- ✓ Manage COVID-19 like other respiratory illnesses and have a flexible health protection function that could be activated quickly to respond to any local outbreaks.
- ✓ Strengthen our preparedness for future health protection threats and support health sector preparedness and planning for emergencies.
- ✓ Work with health agencies to improve access and take up of vaccinations and immunisations.
- ✓ Work with resilience partners to identify and prevent exposure to hazards such as flooding, taking timely actions to respond to threats and acting collectively to ensure the best use of human and financial resources and scan for emerging threats and hazards to future bio-security, health and safety.



Achieving best value for money

We will meet the statutory duty to achieve best value for money and seek to continuously improve how we commission and deliver our services.

We will ensure that all the activities commissioned or delivered by Public Health will be underpinned by a commitment to achieving best value for money, working with both private and voluntary and community sector providers.

We will:

- ✓ Ensure that we combine financial information and health economics when looking at new opportunities and interventions.
- ✓ Actively seek the views of potential providers and other stakeholders about our ideas for developing new services and delivery models.
- ✓ Use digital and on-line services to support and achieve our priorities.
- ✓ Continually learn from previous experiences and local and national projects and services including cost comparisons.
- ✓ Develop arrangements for recovering our costs where appropriate.
- ✓ Develop new approaches for distributing funding to local community organisations.
- ✓ Ensure that contracted service providers and suppliers demonstrate how they will contribute to the wider health and care system, and support our sustainability and diversity ambitions and groups.
- ✓ Ensure that we use the national Quality Improvement frameworks for Public Health Services as part of continuing improvement.

Decision-making and review

This strategy will be delivered through a wide range of public health activities, and we will show that we deliver the best possible public health service for the people of Norfolk.

We will:

- ✓ Measure our progress using Public Health outcomes indicators and feedback from residents, partners and other stakeholders.
- ✓ Review our strategy annually.
- ✓ Use the national Public Health outcomes framework to ensure that we are continuously improving.
- ✓ Promote and utilize approaches such as self-evaluation, encouraging peer to peer learning.
- ✓ Use the Association Directors Public Health (ADPH) 'What Good Looks Like' frameworks to assure our working arrangements and continuously improve them.
- ✓ Lead and manage Public Health Sector Led Improvement Programme for the Eastern Region.



Ready to Change ... Ready to Collaborate



Ten priority 'requests' of partners have been identified:

1. Promote and communicate the Public Health Strategic Plan within their organisations and consider what resources can be provided to support prevention.
2. Promote and work with us on stop smoking initiatives.
3. Identify staff groups and individuals within your organisation for behaviour change training to support and advise the people they work with to make a change to improve their health. (i.e. Make Every Contact Count).
4. Promote and work with us on the 5 ways to wellbeing (mental health promotion).
5. Promote the uptake of NHS health checks for staff and service users.
6. Work together to develop ways of promoting best start in life and healthy behaviours for children and young people.
7. Work with us to identify and engage with individuals, groups and communities who would most benefit from prevention interventions.
8. Actively participate and contribute to collaborative partnerships, such as Health & Wellbeing Partnerships, the Health Improvement Transformation Group, the Tobacco Control & Vaping Alliance, the Norfolk Drug and Alcohol Partnership, and the Sexual Health Network.
9. Promote the importance of good health and more people actively engaging in thinking about their own health improvement.
10. Work with us to embed the use of data and intelligence in decision-making.

ready to
change
your way to better health



Norfolk County Council
Public Health

www.norfolk.gov.uk/readytochange

Equality impact assessment (EqIA) template

Tip: You have a ‘duty of inquiry’.

This means you must consider what evidence is required to undertake this assessment and whether further information may be needed. If you do not have relevant evidence, there is a duty to acquire it.

Your assessment must be genuine and objective.

It may be considered inadequate if issues are only partially considered, missed or if relevant evidence is missing from the assessment.

1. Title of EqIA

Norfolk County Council Public Health Strategic Plan: Ready to Change, Ready to Act.

2. What is the aim of the proposal? (max. 250 words)

Tip: Summarise here the aim of your ‘proposal’ in max. 250 words.

Your ‘proposal’ could be anything – a change to a service; an existing or new service, policy, or procedure; a way of working; a project or a funding bid.

Norfolk County Council Public Health Directorate is producing its new strategic plan for Norfolk: Ready to Change, Ready to Act. It sets out how Public Health specialist staff within the council contribute to achieving Norfolk County Council’s vision for Norfolk to be the place where everyone can start life well, live well and age well and where no one is left behind.

The strategic plan describes Public Health’s vision, mission and priorities and outlines how Public Health will deliver a wide range of positive outcomes for Norfolk residents throughout their lives.

3. Context to the proposal

Tip: Summarise any context it is important to be aware of – e.g., the proposal may be required to meet legal requirements or achieve savings.

If this information is available in another document, you can provide a hyperlink to avoid repeating the same information.

The Public Health Strategic Plan replaces the one that expired and is based on recent research and consultation. The document is expected to provide strategic direction and inform Public Health prevention projects, commissioned services, strategic partnerships and other related strategies and programmes. It will inform a wide range of people and organisations about the role of Norfolk County Council's Public Health team.

4. Who will the proposal impact on?

Tip: Please select all groups that may be affected.

- Everyone in Norfolk
- A particular group or cohort of people - please state who they are:
[Click or tap here to enter text.](#)
- Employees
- External organisations
- Other - Please state if anyone else will be affected:
[Those visiting or working in the county.](#)

5. The numbers of people affected

Tip: Please estimate (as accurately as possible) the overall number of residents, service users and/or employees directly affected by your proposal.

[Norfolk's population is estimated as 1,033,000 residents.](#)

6. The demographic profile of the people affected

Tip: Please estimate the protected characteristics of the people affected:

- Age range
- Sex
- Disability
- Ethnicity/race
- Sexual orientation
- Religion/belief
- Gender reassignment
- Members of the armed forces, their families, or veterans.

For example, “The majority of service users affected will be over the age of 65 and include people with a range of disabilities including...”.

The Strategic Plan is relevant to all protected characteristics. Through Public Health’s new ways of working with communities and our partners the team is working to protect and promote good health and inclusion and is taking a place-based approach to tackling the causes of poor health outcomes.

7. Evidence gathering

Tip: This section considers what will happen if the proposal goes ahead.

Please tick all the statements that apply.

If the proposal goes ahead:

- It will help to deliver our [Council vision and strategy](#).

If you cannot tick this, please explain why: [Click or tap here to enter text](#).

- Service users will not experience any reductions in the quality, standards, or level of services or benefits they **currently** receive.

If you cannot tick this, please explain why: [Click or tap here to enter text](#).

- Service users who currently receive a service or benefit will continue to do so. Something will not be taken away from them which they have previously had access to.

If you cannot tick this, please explain why: [Click or tap here to enter text](#).

- No changes are proposed to eligibility criteria for services or benefits.

If you cannot tick this, please explain why: [Click or tap here to enter text](#).

- The proposal will not change how service users experience existing services or benefits – e.g., opening hours or travel arrangements.

If you cannot tick this, please explain why: [Click or tap here to enter text](#).

- The proposal will not lead to new or increased costs for service users or employees.

If you cannot tick this, please explain why: [Click or tap here to enter text](#).

- There will be no changes to staffing structures or staff terms or conditions.

If you cannot tick this, please explain why: [Click or tap here to enter text.](#)

- If we consult on the proposal, this will be accessible for disabled people. We will include people with different protected characteristics.

If you cannot tick this, please explain why: [Click or tap here to enter text.](#)

8. Potential impact for each protected characteristic

Tip: You've considered what will happen if the proposal goes ahead.

You now need to think about how it could impact specifically on people with protected characteristics – for example:

- Whether it presents an opportunity to promote equality for people with protected characteristics.
- Whether it could unintentionally disadvantage people with protected characteristics.

You might find it helpful to remind yourself about the typical barriers that people with protected characteristics face when accessing services and employment. If so, we've included examples in **Annex 1**.

8.1. People of different ages

- Will the proposal unintentionally disadvantage people of different ages – or will it promote equality and ease of access? [Not applicable](#)

8.2. Disabled people

- Will the proposal unintentionally disadvantage disabled people – or will it promote equality and ease of access? [Not applicable](#)

Tip: If you intend to use physical premises, equipment, furniture, physical or digital information or technology to deliver your proposal, please follow the Council's agreed procedures for implementing this, to ensure that access for disabled people is built into the design. For guidance, email accessibility@norfolk.gov.uk

8.3. People from different ethnic groups

- Will the proposal unintentionally disadvantage people from different ethnic groups – or will it promote equality and ease of access? [Not applicable](#)

8.4. People with different sexual orientations

- Will the proposal unintentionally disadvantage people with different sexual orientations – or will it promote equality and ease of access? [Not applicable](#)

8.5. Women and men

- Will the proposal unintentionally disadvantage women or men – or will it promote equality and ease of access? [Not applicable](#)

8.6. Non-binary, gender-fluid and transgender people

- Will the proposal unintentionally disadvantage non-binary, gender fluid or transgender people – or will it promote equality and ease of access? [Not applicable](#)

8.7. People with different religions and beliefs

- Will the proposal unintentionally disadvantage people with different religions and beliefs – or will it promote equality and ease of access? [Not applicable](#)

8.8. People from the armed forces, their families, and veterans

- Will the proposal unintentionally disadvantage people from the armed forces, their families, and veterans, or will it promote equality and ease of access? [Not applicable](#)

9. Additional information

Tip: You can use this section to provide any other relevant information. [Click or tap here to enter text.](#)

10. Mitigating actions / reasonable adjustments

Tip: If your assessment identified that the proposal could disadvantage people with a protected characteristic, you must consider whether it is possible to mitigate this via an action or reasonable adjustment.

If so, you must record this here.

We have included some actions as a suggestion – delete if not appropriate.

No.	Action	Lead	Date (dd/mm/yy)
1.			
2.			

11. Conclusion

This proposal is assessed to have the following impact:

- Positive** impact on people with protected characteristics.
- Detrimental** impact on people with protected characteristics that can be mitigated.
- Detrimental** impact on people with protected characteristics that cannot be fully mitigated.
- Positive and detrimental** impacts on people with protected characteristics.
- No impacts** on people with protected characteristics.

12. Advice for the decision-maker responsible for this proposal

Tip: Before making a final decision on the proposal, the decision-maker must:

- Note their duty to give due regard to the [Public Sector Equality Duty](#).
- Give a 'proper and conscientious focus' to this assessment, 'with rigour and an open mind', before deciding whether the proposal should go ahead.

- This means assessing the extent of any detrimental impact and the ways in which this could be eliminated or mitigated before approving the adoption of the proposal.

The proposal can still go ahead even if there are detrimental impacts. as long as the decision maker has:

- Given due regard to equality and the findings of this assessment.
 - Taken reasonable steps to mitigate detrimental impact.
 - Confirmed that the impact is lawful and a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim.
- **Please explain here** (if applicable) why it may be necessary to go ahead with the proposal, even if it could have a detrimental impact on some people: [Not applicable](#)

13. Evidence used to inform this assessment

Tip: You need to record the evidence you used to inform this assessment.

Select all that apply:

- [Norfolk population data](#) (provide links to any population data you draw upon, e.g. [Norfolk's Story](#)):

JSNA [Norfolk's Joint Strategic Needs Assessment](#)

Norfolk's joint strategic needs assessment looks at the specific health needs of our local population and identifies areas of inequalities. It informs commissioning decisions for public bodies

Specific JSNA documents referenced:

Norfolk & Waveney Population overview (December 2021)

Core20 Summary (February 2022)

Health Inequalities in Norfolk & Waveney (January 2020)

DPH Report (March 2022)

Gypsy, Roma Traveller Health Inequalities Assessment for Norfolk (September 2022)

Life Expectancy in Norfolk & Waveney (March 2022)

Data sources

Fingertips [Public health profiles - OHID](#)

- Data about existing or future service users - please state:

[Click or tap here to enter text.](#)

- Data about the workforce - please state:

[Click or tap here to enter text.](#)

- Legislation - please state:

[Click or tap here to enter text.](#)

- National/local research - please state:

[Click or tap here to enter text.](#)

- Consultation (Tip: Please provide details of any consultation)

Remember - if a proposal constitutes a change to an existing service or benefit or a removal of an existing service or benefit those affected may have a 'legitimate expectation' to be consulted.

[Click or tap here to enter text.](#)

- Consultancy - please state:

[Click or tap here to enter text.](#)

- Advice from in-house/external experts - please state:

[Click or tap here to enter text.](#)

- Other - please state:

[Click or tap here to enter text.](#)

14. Administrative information

Tip: You can update this assessment at any time to inform service planning and commissioning.

Author (name and job title): [Christopher Butwright, Assistant Director Public Health](#)

Decision-maker (e.g., Full Council, a committee, elected member, working group or officer with delegated responsibility): [Cabinet](#)

EqIA start date: [01/01/2023](#)

Contact further information: [Christopher Butwright, Assistant Director Public Health](#)



If you need this document in large print, audio, Braille, alternative format or in a different language please contact please contact 0344 800 8020 or 0344 800 8011 (textphone) and we will do our best to help.ex 1

Examples of common barriers that people with protected characteristics may face when accessing services or employment:

People of different ages

Older and younger people may experience discrimination or negative beliefs that restrict their professional or social opportunities.

Both older and younger people are likely to be on lower incomes.

Older age is associated with lower use of digital technology and an increased likelihood of disability or long-term limiting health conditions.

Disabled people

Disabled people face barriers to physical environments, information, and communication (as sometimes do people with other protected characteristics).

The nature of these barriers varies tremendously depending upon the nature of someone's disability. It is important to carefully consider the barriers faced by people with physical or mobility impairments; people who are blind or D/deaf; people with learning disabilities; people who are neurodiverse; people with mental health issues or people with a combination of impairments or long-term health conditions.

Disabled people are more likely to experience reduced lifelong outcomes compared to non-disabled people in relation to education, employment, health and housing and barriers to social, sport, leisure, and transport opportunities.

Disabled people may be under-represented in some services; public life; the workforce and participation. They may be more likely to be on a lower income, experience discrimination, hate incidents and social isolation.

People from different ethnic groups

People from some ethnic minority groups (which includes Gypsies, Roma, and Travellers) experience reduced lifelong outcomes compared to White British people and they may be less likely to do well in education, employment and health, and experience barriers in housing, sport, and leisure opportunities.

People from some ethnic minority groups may be under-represented in some services; public life; the workforce; participation; or over-represented (e.g., in criminal justice). They may be more likely to be on a lower income, experience hate incidents and cultural stereotyping.

People from some ethnic groups (for example Gypsies and Travellers) may have low literacy skills or may not access public sector websites.

People with different sexual orientations

Consider how you will provide welcoming spaces for people of all sexual orientations.

Some public services assume that heterosexuality is the 'norm'. For example, heterosexual couples are usually presented in marketing materials but rarely lesbian or gay couples.

People with different sexual orientations may experience barriers to some services and workforce opportunities, discrimination and hate incidents.

Women and men

Women and men experience different lifelong outcomes - e.g., they may have different experiences or be treated differently in education, employment, health, housing, social, sport and leisure opportunities.

Women may experience different life stages to men – e.g., pregnancy, maternity, menopause which can impact them in many ways. Women and men may have different experiences of caring or parenting.

Women and men may be under or over-represented in some services; public life; the workforce, consultation, and participation. They may experience sex discrimination or barriers to accessing support services.

Non-binary, gender-fluid and transgender people

Consider how you will provide welcoming spaces that recognise gender diversity (unless you are categorised as a [separate or single-sex service](#)).

Check whether your business systems can record a person's sex if the person does not identify as 'female' or 'male', and whether you can meet the needs of non-binary, gender-fluid and trans people.

People who are non-binary, gender fluid or trans may be under-represented in public life and participation. They may experience barriers to some services and workforce opportunities, discrimination and hate incidents.

Remember that some transgender people do not identify as 'trans' – they may identify as 'female', 'male' or non-binary.

People with different religions and beliefs

Consider how you will provide welcoming spaces for people with different religions and beliefs.

This includes being aware of prayer times, festivals, and cultural practices, where this is appropriate.

“Belief” can refer to an individual’s philosophical beliefs where these are genuinely held and fundamentally shape the way a person chooses to live their life - for example ethical veganism may be a protected belief.

Measures to promote inclusion for people with different beliefs should not impact on the rights of others – e.g., the rights of women or gay people.

People with different religions or beliefs may face barriers to some services; public life; participation and workforce opportunities. They may experience discrimination and hate incidents.

People from the armed forces, their families, and veterans

People from the armed forces, whether serving, their spouse, partner, family, or a veteran, experience a range of barriers to accessing public services – due to the unique obligations and sacrifices of their role.

This includes being regularly posted to different locations; separation; service law and rights; unfamiliarity with civilian life; hours of work and stress.

Cabinet

Decision making report title:	Summary of Annual Report of Norfolk Adoption Service 2022-2023
Date of meeting:	5th October 2023
Responsible Cabinet Member:	Cllr Carpenter - Cabinet Member for Children's Services
Responsible Director:	Sara Tough, Executive Director - Children's Services
Is this a key decision?	Yes

Strategic impact

Every adoption agency has a statutory requirement to publish and regularly update a document which describes the ethos, core aims and objectives, what services it offers along with its management and oversight arrangements.

The following page details the performance of the adoption service and includes the following information.

- Performance in recruiting adopters
- Performance in finding adoptive families for children
- Performance providing post adoption support
- Adopt East

The purpose of the adoption service is to approve prospective adopters, prepare children for adoption, match adopters with children, and to provide appropriate post adoption support. This supports the overarching outcome which is to ensure that children and young people are brought up in secure and permanent homes.

Our key priorities are:

- To provide a service responsive to the needs of children, who require a permanent family placement.
- Recruiting sufficient and diverse adopters to meet the needs of children.
- For adopted children and young people to be happy members of a family, confident and achieving to their very best potential.
- Seek to achieve a successful outcome for each child placed with a new family, minimising the number of placement disruptions.
- To provide a comprehensive adoption support service to adopted children and their families, as well as providing support to birth families.
- To value adopters, providing them with a high standard of support and guidance via their social worker, support groups and training, to ensure they are well prepared for the task of becoming adoptive parents.
- To work in partnership with all those affected by adoption and provide information and advice on all adoption matters to the general public and other professionals.
- To provide an adoptive family committed to maintaining contact arrangements in line with the child's needs.
- To employ an innovative range of family finding techniques including the use of Link Maker, events and projects with Adopt East and a range of adopter-led matching activities.
- To ensure all information/records will be treated confidentially and held securely.

We are aware, however, that there continue to be court delays, both locally and nationally, in meeting the Family Justice review's 26-week timetable for care proceedings which has had an impact on timeliness for permanence planning for children. We continue to work with Norfolk Judiciary and the local stakeholder group to consider timescales and improve upon these.

Executive summary

This paper reports to Members on the performance of and outcomes achieved by Norfolk's Adoption Service, and a summary of the Adoption Annual Report, which encompasses the Statement of Purpose amended by the previous years' data.

Norfolk County Council also continues to be part of Adopt East, an alliance of Adoption Services (partners) and Voluntary Adoption Agencies (Norfolk, Essex, Suffolk, Southend, Luton, Hertfordshire, Bedford Borough, Thurrock, AdoptionPlus and Barnardo's).

The priorities of the Alliance are: -

- Decisions about placements are always made in the child's best interests
- Service delivery has at its heart innovation and practice excellence
- Social Workers are highly skilled professionals who make high quality evidence-based decisions and do not tolerate damaging delay for children in their care
- Matches are made without unnecessary delay
- Adopt East are committed to supporting early permanence placements
- Every adoptive family has access to an ongoing package of appropriate support with a high-quality specialist assessment of need
- The voice of adopters and their children is at the heart of national and local policy making and delivery of services

The key performance outcomes achieved for the service over 2022-2023 are:

- The making of early permanence placements, of which there were 18 in 2022/23, compared to 13 the year prior.
- We have been innovative, recognising the static position of looking at contact post-adoption. We now offer a contact consultation service which has seen the number of direct contacts between adoptive and birth families increase to 25 cases in 2022/23. This is an increase from 2021/22 when it was 16 cases.
- In 2022/23 45 children were matched with adopters, this is an increase from 42 children in 2021/22.
- In 2022/23 the ADM approved 73 plans of adoption which is an increase from 58 in 2021/22.
- Placement Orders made in 2022/23 was 58 which is an increase from the previous year (44).
- The number of adopters approved in 2022/23 was 24 which is lower than in 2021/22 when it was 33 and in line with the regional and national trend.
- There was a decline in children placed for adoption in 2021/22 with 42 children as opposed to 57 the year prior, again similar to the picture regionally and nationally. Court delays locally have impacted on these figures, and we are very focused on

working with the judiciary and CAF/CASS to address and providing relevant support to ensure placement success.

- With our Adopt East colleagues we share best practice and work collaboratively across the region.
- Prospective adopters' assessments are of a good standard.
- Family finding profiles are thoughtful and well written.
- We continue to make transitions bespoke to each child via the moving to adoption model.
- Adopt East have recognised the excellent work Norfolk offers both pre and post adoption and have therefore asked Norfolk to lead on the adoption support practice stream across the local authorities.
- Post adoption support packages are comprehensive and individualised, and the team now offer training in therapeutic parenting, Theraplay, non-violence resistance, nurturing attachments, all of which have been positively received.
- We continue to work with our colleagues in Adopt East for a potential Ofsted inspection between October and December 2023.

Recommendations:

Cabinet is invited to accept the Annual Report, as well as endorse the Statement of Purpose for Norfolk Adoption Service 2022/23.



Norfolk Adoption Agency

in alliance with



Annual Report 2022-2023



Contents

Overview	3
Regionalisation - National Context and Regional Adoption	4
Service Structure and Individual Team Functions	4
Commissioned Services.....	15
Participation	15
Performance	16
Disruptions	21
Complaints, Feedback and Compliments.....	21
Key Priorities 2023-2024	22

Overview

This report details the performance of the Norfolk County Council Adoption Service in line with National Minimum Standards and Statutory Guidance looking at activity from 1st April 2022 until 31st March 2023 and focussing on plans for development for 2023-2024.

The Adoption Service sits within Norfolk Children's Services and is overseen by the Assistant Director of Corporate Parenting. The Service is governed by the Adoption and Children Act 2002 and associated regulations and guidance.

Norfolk's Adoption Service continues to be Outstanding and in the recent Ofsted inspection, it was noted that Norfolk has continued to provide strong adoption and support services and prospective adopters and adopters feel well supported.

Norfolk Adoption Service is part of Adopt East and in preparation for a Regional Adoption Alliance Ofsted inspection, members of Adopt East dip sampled work in the Adoption Support Team and the feedback was overwhelmingly positive and noted that Norfolk was leading the way in this part of the service.

Purpose and Objectives of Norfolk County Council Adoption Service

Our key purpose is to achieve permanence for Children Looked After in Norfolk, ensuring children who cannot live with their birth families can be brought up within loving stable families and have the best chances in life.

The Adoption Service provide the following core services in accordance with statutory requirements:

- Recruitment and assessment of prospective adoptive parents
- Matching of children for adoption
- Management of the Agency Decision Maker (ADM) functions and adoption panel for both children's adoption plans and matching of children to adoptive parents
- Adoption support services both pre-and post-adoption
- Financial support for adoptive families and special guardianship and child arrangement order applications where appropriate
- Inter-country adoption services through the Intercountry Adoption Centre (IAC)
- Assessment, supervision, and family court reporting for non-agency adoptive parents (stepparents, parents who already have the child in their care)

Regionalisation - National Context and Regional Adoption

Agencies (RAA)

Norfolk Children's Services is part of a Regional Adoption Alliance (rather than agency) known as Adopt East which went live on the 16th October 2020.

Adopt East is made up of Local Authority partners - Bedford, Essex, Hertfordshire, Luton, Norfolk, Southend-on-Sea, Suffolk and Thurrock, as well as Voluntary Adoption Agencies Adoption Plus and Barnardo's. Adoption UK represent the adopter voice.

Since discussions around Adopt East started in 2015 Norfolk has remained fully engaged in the change agenda for adoption and sought to respond robustly to the challenge by central government to increase the effectiveness of adoption services as set out in; 'An Action Plan for Adoption: Tackling Delay' (March 2012), 'Further Action on Adoption: Finding More Loving Homes' in January 2013, and the adoption regionalisation agenda 'A Vision for Change' in March 2016.

The partners of Adopt East offer a wealth of specialist skills at all stages of the adoption journey and the alliance allows them to bring this together to provide a strong central support for all families going through the adoption process. The scale of the organisation means that adopters have access to a larger number of children waiting for adoption and this will help partners to match children with the right family for them, at the earliest opportunity. Adopt East is committed to providing good quality adoption support services to support all families with their adoption journey.

From October 2023, Ofsted will begin inspecting RAA's and given the size of Adopt East and it being an alliance rather than an agency, it is considered likely that we will be part of the first cohort. However, we are confident in our adoption practice, both locally and regionally and are looking forward to showcasing this.

Service Structure and Individual Team Functions

The Adoption Service has 5 teams:

- 1 Recruitment Team
- 1 Family Finding Team
- 1 Adoption and Kinship Support Team
- 1 Kinship Assessment Team
- 1 team of Adoption Panel Advisers

The service is overseen by a Head of Adoption and Kinship Services who also acts in an advisory role to the Agency Decision Maker (ADM) regarding children's plans for adoption. The ADM is a statutory function and required to be a senior manager who endorses all panel recommendations either in favour of or against a plan of adoption for a child.

Norfolk County Council operates a two-stage adoption recruitment process in line with statutory regulations. Stage One involves initial checks and registration, and is adopter led. Stage Two is the

training and assessment stage which is completed within four months. The recruitment team manage the Pre-stage Enquiry and the Stage One Process, and the adoption assessment teams are responsible for Stage Two.

Our Adoption Recruitment Team

Adoption recruitment activity is undertaken by a specialist Recruitment Team who undertake all the recruitment for adoption in Norfolk.

During 2022-2023 the Recruitment Team managed 614 adoption enquiries, compared to 657 the previous year.

The Recruitment Team run a monthly Adoption Information Evening for prospective applicants to find out more about adoption.

During 2022-2023 all the Adoption Information Evenings had been held over Microsoft Teams due to the ongoing COVID-29 pandemic. However, they are now run face to face.

Adoption Recruitment Campaigns

As there continued to be a steady flow of applicants for adoption in 2022-2023, our campaigns have been centred on national and regional awareness weeks rather than on proactive targeted campaigns.

We are aware that there is a national shortage of prospective adopters and hence, across Adopt East, we have recruited a communications officer to work with each comms department in every local authority to ensure that adoption remains visible.

Recruitment Collaboration with Adopt East our Regional Adoption Alliance

As a member we have actively been involved developing Adopt East's Marketing and Communications Strategy, attending workshops to agree branding, messaging and direction, including sessions on the design of the website and associated wording.

We have worked with Adopt East partners to ensure a joined-up approach to our alliance, and to facilitate generation of new ideas regarding branding and marketing. It has been important to co-develop a new service that fits the needs of all counties involved. This work is ongoing as the creation of Adopt East continues.

We are looking forward to our joint campaigns that will be running in 2022-2023.

Adoption Recruitment Team

Our Adoption Recruitment Team progress applicants through Stage Two of the adoption process which involves undertaking a detailed home-study with them and presenting them along with their

completed assessments to the Adoption Panel to consider a recommendation for approval and possibly dual approval as adopters. Final approval is then agreed by the ADM outside of the panel.

During 2022-2023 the assessment teams completed 43 Stage Two assessments.

These included:

- 36 first time approvals (prospective adopters who are adopting for the first time)
- 6 second time approvals (prospective adopter who have adopted previously)
- 5 dual approvals (approved both as early permanence foster carers and prospective adopters)

The Adoption Recruitment Team are responsible for supporting prospective adopters whilst waiting for a match post approval, throughout the family finding and matching process and then once they have a child placed up until the child is made subject to an Adoption Order. The adoption assessment social workers often have to work across the country as Norfolk approved adoptive parents may have children placed from anywhere across the United Kingdom. Over 2022-2023 there has been an increase in the need for support for prospective adopters prior to placement and once a child is placed. This appears to be as a direct result of the covid pandemic and the need to support children and adoptive families adapting and managing to parent during a pandemic and as we emerge out of the pandemic.

Adoption recruitment social workers act as supervising social workers for early permanence placements. Early permanence is the term used for prospective adopters who are initially approved as foster carers and take children into their care as early as possible, before they are approved as adopters. We have seen a slight increase in the number of early permanence placements over 2022-2023 which has increased the level of statutory work being undertaken by the adoption assessment teams.

The Adoption Recruitment Team provide a statutory service for birth parents who wish to voluntarily relinquish babies for adoption. These assessments require intensive support by social workers. Numbers of relinquished babies remain low each year. During 2022-2023, no relinquished babies were placed for adoption.

Adoption Recruitment Team facilitate Adoption Preparation Training (APT) every two months. These courses are co-facilitated by an experienced adoptive parent and an experienced adoption social worker.

Network Evening events or Supporting Adopters Waiting Groups operate across the Adopt East region. These provide an opportunity for those in Stage 2 or awaiting a match to hear experiences directly from adoptive parents and adoptees and have continued to take place virtually on a quarterly basis. It is also an opportunity to meet with other prospective adopters from Adopt East.

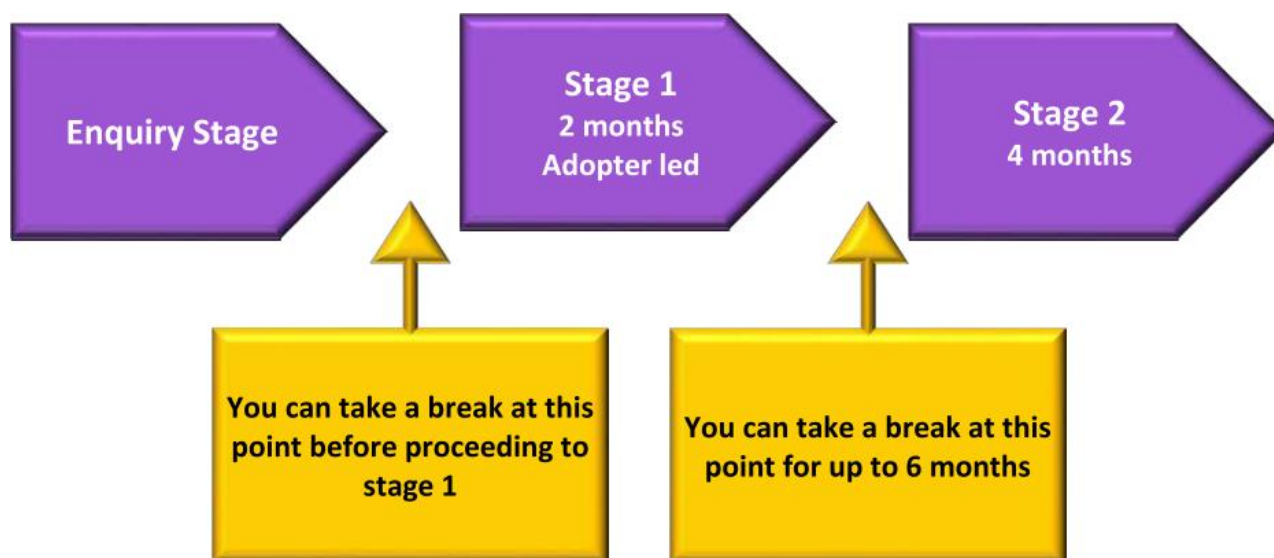
Our Family Finding Team

Each child with a plan for adoption receives a Family Finding Service and this may be from the Adoption Recruitment Team. However, the Family Finding Team (FFT) work to ensure that all children with complex needs, and/or if there are no local appropriate adopters, are placed for adoption without delay. Each child has a bespoke family finding arrangement which is regularly reviewed. The team works with the children's allocated social worker to establish the child's precise needs and identify potential adoptive families.

Family Finding social workers work closely with other adoption agencies within the Adopt East region as well as across the United Kingdom, to find the best match for each child.

Two Stage Process

The final stage in recruitment of adopters is the Adoption Panel and the Agency Decision Maker (ADM) process. Our Panel Team supports the panel and the ADM process for children's plans, coordinating the work of the Adoption Panel and ensuring that statutory timescales regarding the production of reports and minutes of Panel Meetings are met.



The Adoption Teams are located at Norfolk County Hall, however over the past three years all adoption staff have adapted to a hybrid way of working.

Matching Events

The Team Manager of the FFT supports the timely matching of children and ensures planning takes place as early as possible, attending all Legal Planning Meetings for children with a potential plan of adoption and supporting colleagues with planning.

Over 2022-2023 there has been a programme of regional Adopt East matching events. Two regional profiling sessions and seven Craft & Play events took place. Adopt East also attended four National Exchange Days to profile children.

3 single children and 3 sibling pairs have attended the Craft & Play sessions with 1 single child attending 3 events and 1 sibling pair attending 2. 1 sibling pair is being linked following this.

During 2022-2023, the Adoption Service continued to welcome 4 applications from foster carers wishing to adopt children already in their care with a court agreed plan for adoption.

Ethnicity Match of Children

In Norfolk we are mindful to recruit and match families who can support and promote a child's ethnic and cultural heritage. We have access to eight Adopt East adoption agencies, some of whom cover diverse communities. If there are no suitable families in Adopt East for any child, a referral is swiftly made to the Linkmaker nationwide system to identify families as quickly as possible.

We continue to work within statutory guidance regarding the placement of black and minority ethnic children, which states that it is unacceptable for a child to be denied loving adoptive parents solely on the grounds that the child and prospective adopters do not share the same ethnic background. However, we are clear that a child's cultural and racial identity remains part of their matching needs.

During 2022-2023, the Adoption Service worked effectively to ensure that children from black and minority ethnic backgrounds did not experience any undue delay in matching due to their ethnicity, or any other protected characteristics. **Two of the children we placed for adoption during this period were from black or minority ethnic backgrounds.**



Transitions and Siblings Assessments

Family finding social workers have expertise in working with children in transition (children moving from their fostering to their adoptive placements), preparing children and adoptive parents to make successful attachments and relationships.

Over 2022-2023, alongside our partners in Adopt East, we have continued to follow the University of East Anglia (UEA) *Moving to Adoption Model*, a practice framework supporting children's moves from foster care to adoption.

Early Permanence (Fostering to Adopt)

Early Permanence, also known as fostering to adopt, is the process by which those who wish to adopt can be approved as both foster carers and prospective adopters. Children can then be placed with them before the decision has been made by the court that their permanency plan is adoption. This enables children to have stability and continuity care at the earliest opportunity. An Early Permanence placement will only be considered if there is strong evidence that there is very little likelihood that birth parents will be in a position to care for their child and where there are no other family members within the extended birth family who are able to provide long term care.

The Adoption Service works closely with the frontline social work teams to ensure that as many children as possible are considered for an Early Permanence placement at the start of permanence planning. This is particularly relevant children whose mothers have been subject to repeat proceedings.

The Adoption Service supported 5 children placed in Early Permanence Placements over 2022-2023. None of the children were placed for adoption with the consent of their birth parents and both children progressed to being matched and placed with the Early Permanence carers under Adoption Regulations.

Prospective adopters are encouraged to attend an additional specialist training session on Early Permanence/fostering to adopt. This course is a day and a half in length and is co-facilitated by an experienced early permanence carer and an experienced adoption social worker.

Fostering to Adopt involves placing children with local authority carers who have been dually approved for both fostering and adoption. These are carers intending to adopt who are willing to commence caring for a child as their foster carers with a plan to adopt the child, enabling the child to settle as early as possible and providing the best continuity of care for that child.

A *foster to adopt* placement will only be made where there is clear evidence to the local authority that there is limited likelihood that the birth parents can resume caring for their child and where

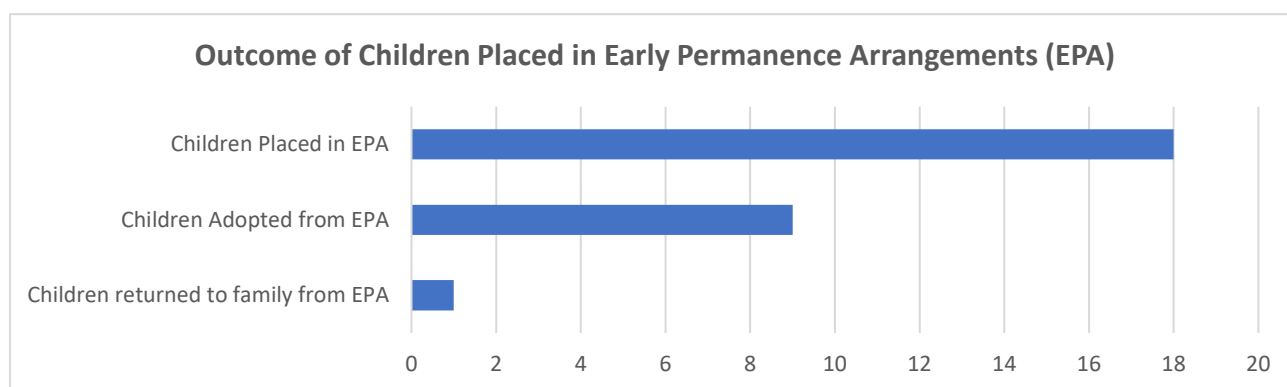


there are no other family members within the extended birth family who are able to care for the child.

The Adoption Service works closely with Children's Services colleagues to ensure that as many children as possible are considered at the start of permanence planning for the option of an early permanence placement. Children being placed for adoption with consent of birth family are always considered for such arrangements.

The Adoption Service supported 18 children placed in Early Permanence Placements over 2022-2023. Of all these children placed under early permanence 1 children returned to the care of birth family and 0 children experienced a move from their early permanence carers.

Prospective adopters are encouraged to attend an additional specialist training session on early permanence/fostering to adopt and dual approval.



Specialist Training

The Adoption Service continued to provide specialist training to:

- Foster carers during children's transition to adoption.
- Approved adopters in the process of being matched with a child.
- Children's Social Workers, in particular upskilling them in completion of sibling assessments.
- Specialist training is also provided across Adopt East by ourselves and our partner agencies.

The Adoption and Kinship Support Team

The Adoption Support Team provide a range of adoption support services in accordance with Section 3(1) of the *Children and Families Act 2014*, *The Adoption Support Regulations 2005 (ASR)* and the *Adoption Support (Amendment) Regulations 2014*.

The team provide a range of adoption support services to adoptive parents, adopted children, adult adoptees and birth relatives of children and adults who have been adopted which include:

- Peer support and group work
- Financial support
- Therapeutic services
- Adult records search and reunion
- Counselling, advice and information
- Letter box and post adoption contact service
- Access to the Adoption Support Fund (ASF)
- Support in complex family situations
- Services to support adoptive families and adoptive placements
- Assistance in relation to arrangements for contact with birth families
- Expert advice and facility for discussion about all matters relating to adoption
- Match funding for complex packages of interventions (including sensory attachment therapy, therapeutic life story, 'Thera Play')



The demand for adoption support has continued to increase steadily over the year. During 2022-2023 106 requests for adoption support assessments were requested. There was an increase in the number of applications made to the Adoption Support Fund for therapeutic input from the previous year.

During 2022-2023 the Adoption Support Team continued to adapt their core offer for adoptive families with a blend of virtual and face to face courses and groups. Over 2022-2023 the following courses and groups have taken place:

- 'Adoptees', - specialist programme for adopted young people
- Life story work training for adoptive parents
- Therapeutic parenting courses – both virtual and face to face
- Working in partnership with our Virtual School to provide a telephone helpline for education related queries

The Adoption Support Team manage and support direct post adoption keeping in touch (contact) with children and their birth families. This is an area where the demand continues to increase. A children's practitioner is responsible for overseeing all direct contacts. This continues to be an area of growth as part of our modernising adoption agenda.

A continued and significant area of demand has been within the Letter Box Contact Service. This is a complex area of work, with approximately 1200 individual active arrangements of letter box contact (contact only via letter) taking place each year and an average of 5 new requests for a service each month. A dedicated children's practitioner manages this service.

The team also support 25 direct contacts between adopted children and their birth families during 2022-2023.

Adopted Adults

The Adoption Support Team are responsible for all requests for Access to Adoption records as well as requests from Intermediary Agencies. Over 2022-2023 the service accepted 91 referrals for Access to Records and requests from Intermediary Agencies.

In addition the service received an average of 7-8 enquiries per week from adopted adults and birth relatives of adopted adults.

The Adoption Support Fund (ASF)

Demand continues to grow year on year for therapeutic services for adoptive families due to the adopted children's increasing complexity of need. These services are critical in supporting families who are experiencing challenges in meeting the needs of adopted children. Most children requiring therapeutic support show behaviour linked to attachment and developmental trauma because of traumatic experiences within their birth families.

The introduction of the Adoption Support Fund (ASF) in March 2015 has enabled Norfolk County Council to expand the range of therapeutic provision for adoptive families with much support being accessed through this fund.

During the year ending March 2023, 343 applications were made to the Adoption Support Fund, with a total of 287 being received for a range of specialist therapeutic provision and assessment, including Dyadic Developmental Psychotherapy (DDP), Sensory Integration Therapy and Play Therapy.

This included group applications for therapeutic support made to the ASF to support multiple families within therapeutic group interventions. Group applications have also been made as collectively for Adopt East for therapeutic group interventions, such as nurturing attachments.

This is a significant increase on 24 drawn from the fund over 2021-2022 and on the 319 applicants made in 2020-2021.

Changes to the administration of the fund have now required Norfolk County Council to match fund any support over £2,500 for specialist assessments and up to £5,000 for therapy per child. Over 2022-2023, £859,368 was spent on external providers, providing support for 298 families.

The ASF will continue until March 2025, after which time it is due to be reviewed again by central government.

Adoption Together Community Hubs

Adopt East Alliance has developed and launched six Adoption Hubs since March 2022, offering support to new adoptive parents and their children from an experienced adopter acting as a Hub Lead Carer. The aim of the Hub was to create a community of support to new adoptive families.

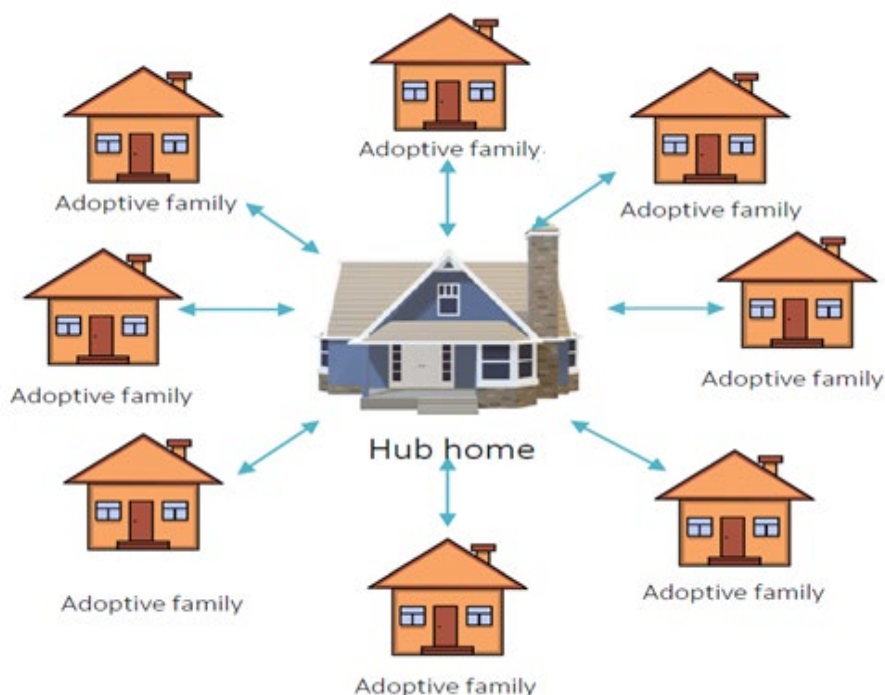
The Adoption Hub is based on similar principles to the Mockingbird Family Model which has been successfully developed by Hertfordshire Adoption and their Fostering Services.

Key is the recruitment of the Hub Home Lead Carer who, in close liaison with the Adoption Service, offers practical and emotional support to the adoptive families connected as part of the Hub.

In 2022-2023 Adopt East Adopters Together Community Hub has been launched has continued to go from strength to strength. 6 adoptive families have been supported by the Hub at any one time. The Hub provides the following services:

- A readily available support from a dedicated Hub carer
- The fun of a monthly get together
- Regular support meetings including coffee mornings/evenings
- Increased emotional and practical support network for adopters and children in their care

The diagram below shows the Hub concept with one central Hub Home coordinating support for the other families and households who are part of the Hub.



The Adoption Panel

Norfolk County Council has an independently chaired Adoption Panel which considers the following:

- Assessments of prospective adoptive parents for approval
- The assessment of dually approved carers (early permanence/foster for adoption)
- The matching of children to be placed for adoption with approved prospective adopters
- De-registration of approved adoptive parents who no longer wish to progress or are assessed as being unable to have an ongoing approval

In 2022-2023 the Adoption Panel heard 72 adoption cases in total. Of these there were:

- 48 matches
- 24 approvals
- 0 deregistration
- No approvals were deferred.

The Adoption Panel is organised and administered by a Panel Team which supports both the Fostering and Adoption Panels. The Panel and the Fostering and Adoption management teams meet three times per year to discuss service developments and best practice. A 6 monthly report is provided by the Adoption Panel Chair regarding quality of the panel business. Any improvements required are incorporated into the Annual Adoption Service Plan.

The most recent report, is due to be published shortly. However, the document from September 2021-April 2022, says the following:

Panel Chair's comments - "The Panel have continued to conduct their business in a consistently child focused way and the feedback from all sources is extremely complimentary and positive about their panel experience. Panel members are extremely experienced, hard working and committed and all members without exception are able to contribute fully to the process. They are not only welcoming, friendly and supportive but are also able to skilfully ask the more challenging areas sensitively and appropriately. Panel very rarely deviate from the recommendation of the NAS which demonstrates clearly the trust in the assessments and paperwork presented to the panel. The paperwork from NAS is consistently excellent. The younger members of the team coming through are also producing excellent work and the panel often comment on such. The quality of the CPRs, are variable but improvement is beginning to be seen more often. The ADM follows the recommendation of the panel in her decision making both in terms of the recommendation and its reasons for recommendation again further evidencing the strength of the NAS and the Panel process. Rarely does the ADM come to a different decision from the panel recommendation."

Non-Agency Adoption

Non-Agency Adoption is managed by the Adoption Service and refers to adoption assessments which involve families whose children are not in the care of the local authority such as an adoption undertaken by a stepparent.



As with agency adoption assessments, a two-stage process is followed and robust monitoring through supervision and tracking meetings takes place to ensure a timely service is delivered. 54 initial queries for non-agency adoptions, of the 54, 28 people returned their consent forms. 20 Non-Agency Adoption applications were progressed by the Adoption Service during 2022-2023.

Commissioned Services

Inter-Country Adoption

A Service Level Agreement is in place with the Intercountry Adoption Centre (IAC) to facilitate assessment for all people in Norfolk wishing to adopt a child from overseas as an 'Inter-Country Adoption'.

Monitoring meetings are held to ensure that this service is effectively meeting the needs of Norfolk service users.

We jointly commission the Inter-Country Adoption Centre (IAC) together with our partners in Adopt East and continue to provide this service.

Independent Support to Birth Relatives

Since April 2020 we have commissioned Barnardo's for LINK Counselling, a voluntary adoption agency to provide independent counselling support for birth relatives where a child has a plan of adoption and to adopted adults who have contacted Norfolk County Council for support accessing their records where they would benefit from counselling.

Participation

The Adoption Service actively promotes participation and engagement with adoptive adopted children and their parents.

All training continues to be co-facilitated by an Adoption Social Worker together with an experienced adoptive parent. This ensures the adopter's voice and adopters' experienced input is present throughout a prospective adopter's journey to adoption.

There remains a very active community of adopters in Norfolk County Council who have continued to provide informal support to local adoptive families virtually where possible over the past year. There are social group co-ordinators identified in each geographical area who co-ordinate informal support and link with the Adoption Service.

A number of regional support groups are also available for adoptive families. These groups are usually facilitated by an adoption social worker and an adoptive parent. There is a dedicated group for solo adopters, a virtual group for early permanence carers and a group for LGBTQ+ adopters. We also have a regional support group for adopted teenagers called *Say It Like It Is*.

The voices and participation of our adopted children and young people are key in influencing and shaping our Adoption Service.

Performance

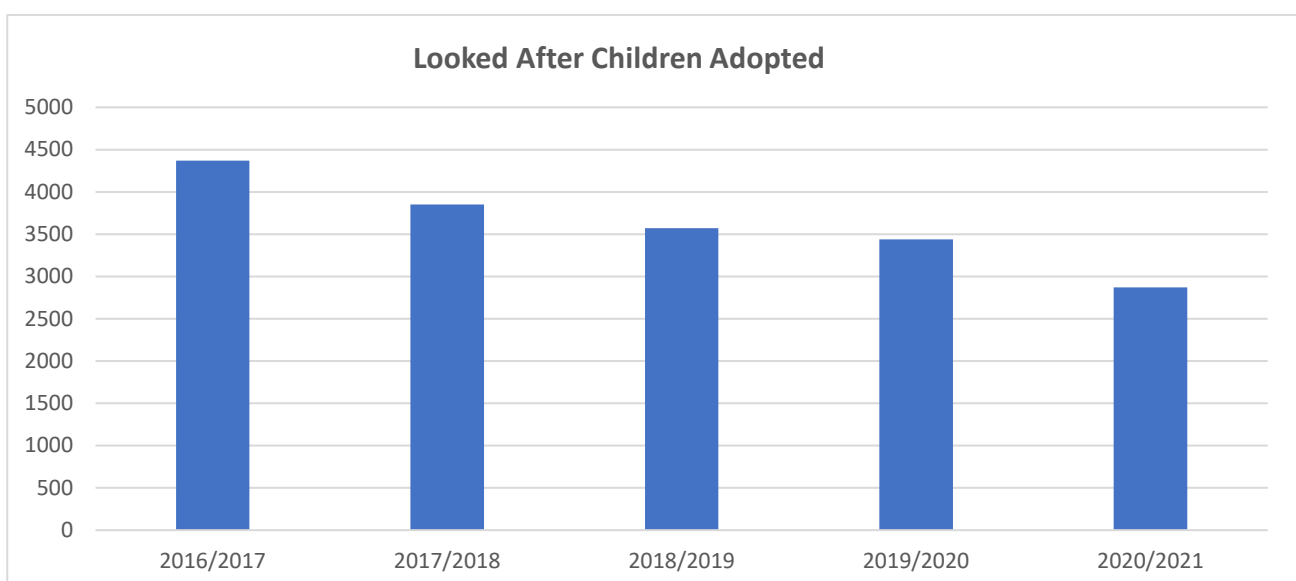
Whilst Local Authorities are required to develop permanence plans for children and place them in alternative family arrangements with minimal delay, courts are increasingly reluctant to make a Placement Order to achieve permanency through adoption, where an alternative and satisfactory arrangement is identified with a family member or a friend. Consequently there continues to be a steady rise in the use of Special Guardianship Orders granted to family members or close family friends, as an alternative route to achieve permanency. The National Adoption and Special Guardianship Leadership Board continues to report a decline in local authority decision making regarding adoption, and a reduction in the number of children with a court approved plan for adoption (Placement Orders).

In addition, there have been significant delays, both locally and nationally, in meeting the Family Justice review's 26-week timescale for care proceedings which has had an impact on timeliness for permanence planning for children. We continue to work with Norfolk Judiciary to consider timescales and improve upon these.

Nationally there has been a decline in adoptions since 2015. Between 2020-2021 there were 2870 looked after children who were adopted nationally. This is an 18% decrease from the previous year as in 2019-2020 there were 3440 looked after children who were adopted nationally and contrasted with previous years:

- In 2018-2019 there were 3570 adoptions
- In 2017-18 there were 3,850 adoptions
- In 2016-17 there were 4,370 adoptions.

The graph below reflects this decline in the number of adoptions nationally



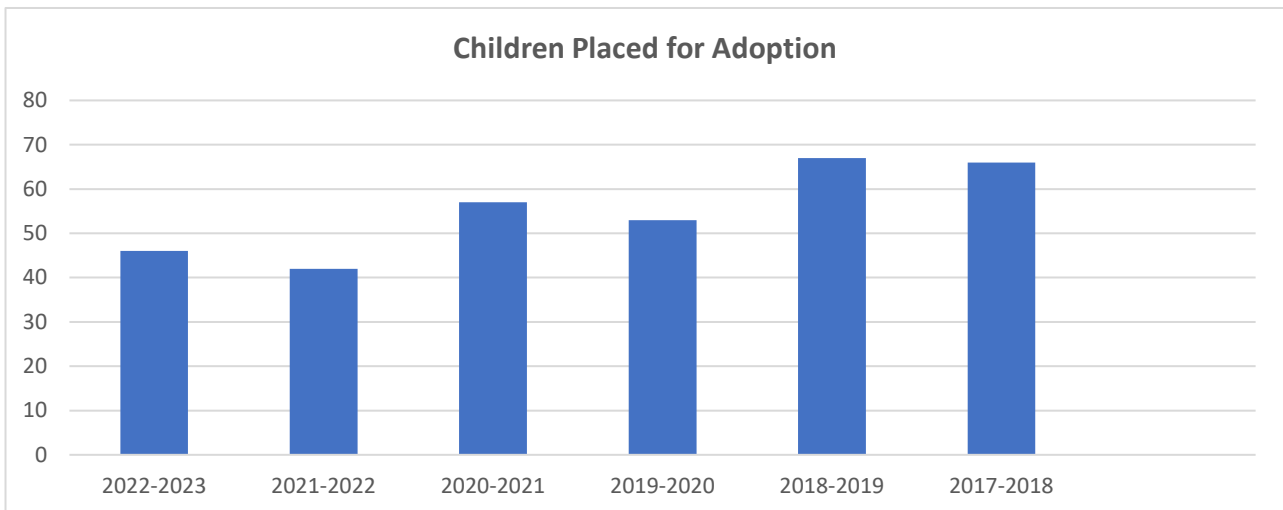
Norfolk Children placed for Adoption

During 2022-2023, 46 children were placed for adoption.

This is an increase compared to 2021-2022 when 42 children were placed for adoption and previously:

- Over 2021-2022 42 children were placed for adoption
- Over 2020-2021 57 children were placed for adoption
- Over 2019-2020, 53 children were placed for adoption
- Over 2018-2019, 67 children were placed for adoption
- Over 2017-2018, 66 children were placed for adoption

The following graph shows the numbers of Norfolk children successfully placed for Adoption each year from 2017-2023.

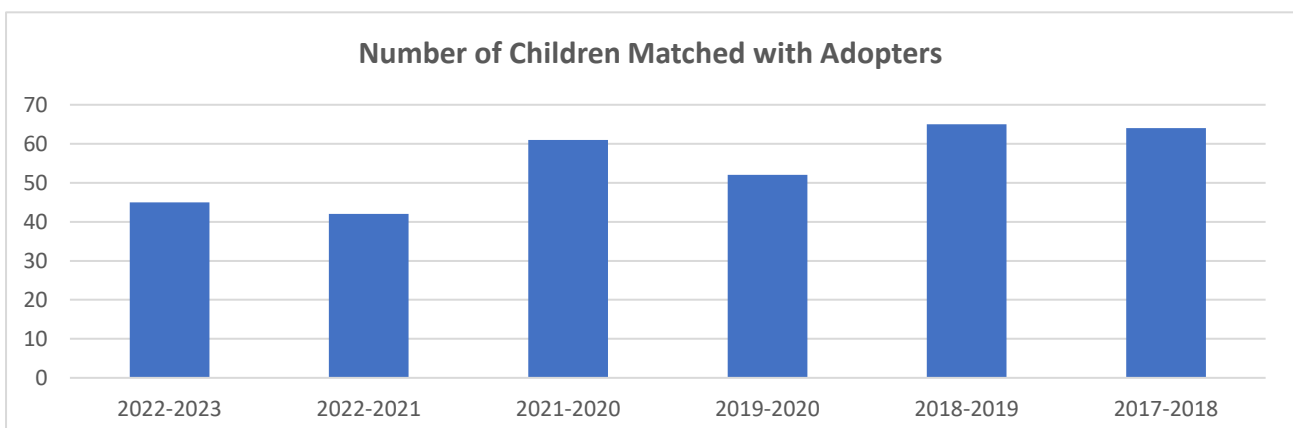


Norfolk Children matched with Adopters

45 children were matched with adopters during 2022-2023

This is higher than the previous year 2021-2022 when 42 children were matched.

The following graph shows the numbers of Norfolk children successfully matched with their adoptive families each year from 2017-2023.

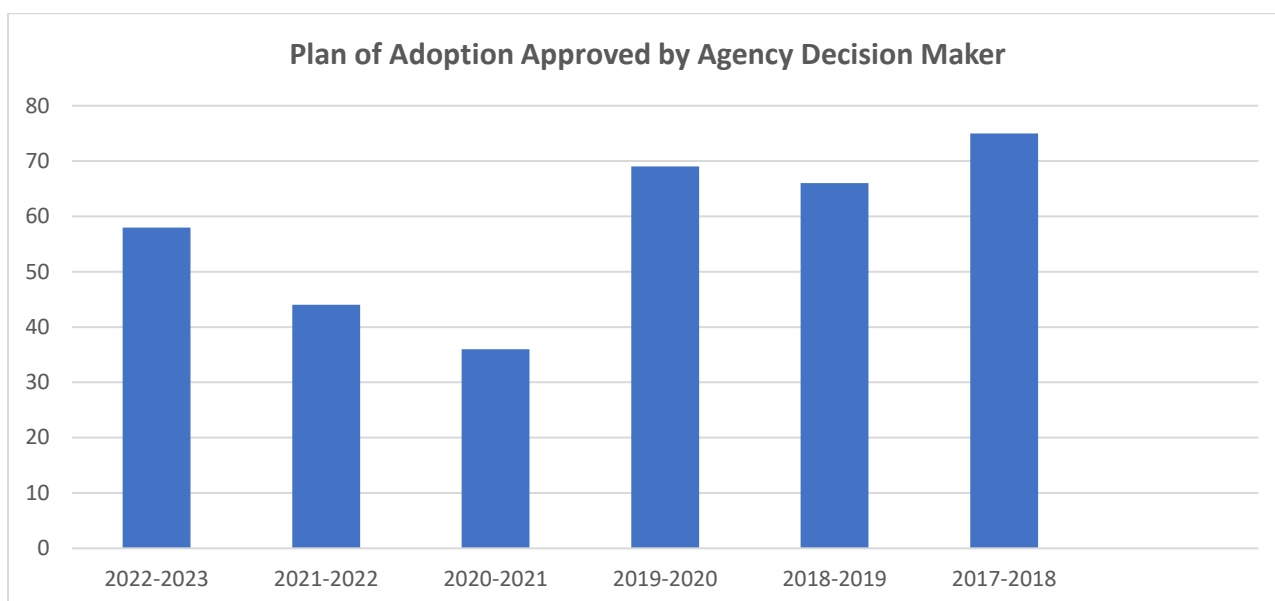


Adoption Plans Approved

During 2022-2023, 73 Adoption Plans were approved by the Agency Decision Maker (ADM).

- 58 Adoption Plans were approved in 2021-2022
- 52 Adoption Plans were approved in 2020-2021
- 79 Adoption Plans were approved in 2019-2020
- 75 Adoption Plans were approved in 2018-2019
- 73 Adoption Plans were approved in 2017-2018

The following graph shows the numbers of Norfolk Adoption Plans which were approved by ADM each year from 2017-2023.

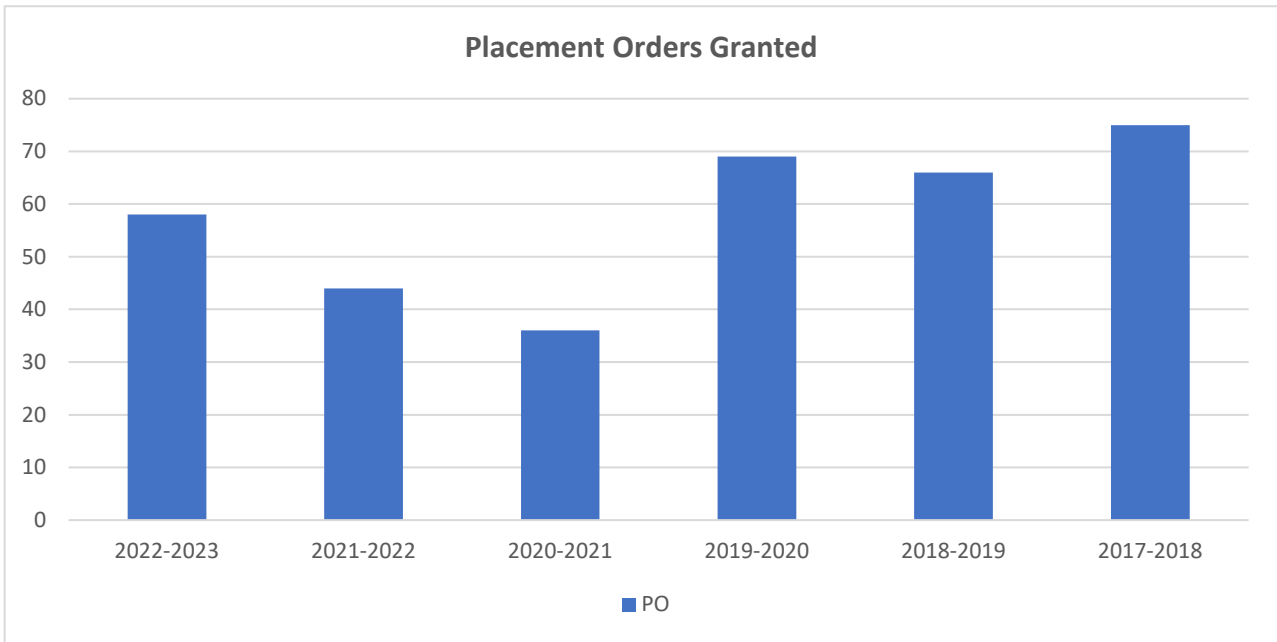


Placement Orders

During 2022-2023, 58 children received a court approved Plan for Adoption (Placement Order).

- Over 2021-2022, 44 Placement Orders were granted
- Over 2020-2021, 36 Placement Orders were granted
- Over 2019-2020, 69 Placement Orders were granted
- Over 2018-2019, 66 Placement Orders were granted
- Over 2017-2018, 64 Placement Orders were granted

The following graph shows the numbers of Norfolk Placement Orders which were granted each year from 2017-2023.

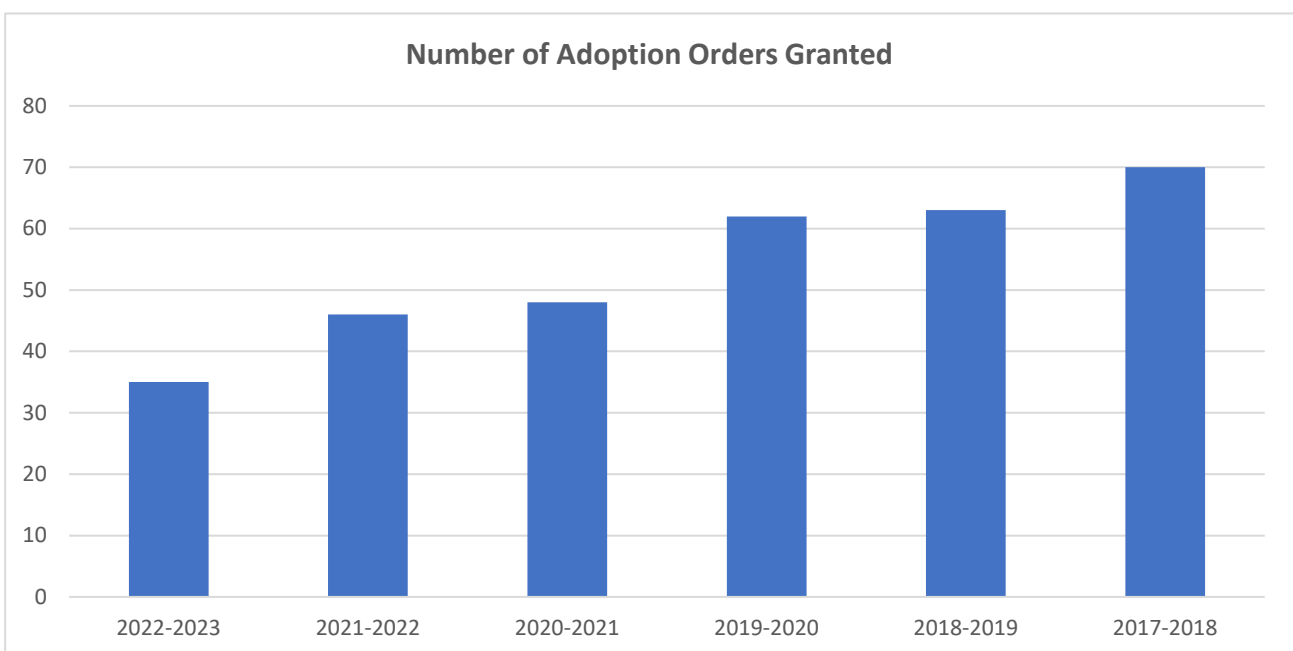


Adoption Orders

35 Adoption Orders were granted during 2022-2023 which is a decrease from 2022-2021 when 46 Adoption Orders were granted.

- 48 Adoption orders granted during 2020-2021
- 62 Adoption Orders were granted during 2019-2020
- 63 Adoption Orders were granted over 2018-2019
- 70 Adoption Orders were granted over 2017-2018

The following graph shows the numbers of Adoption Orders being granted each year since 2017-2023, we think this year's data may have been affected by delays in the Family Courts, particularly during the early part of the pandemic.



Our Adopters and Enquiries

During 2022-2023 we received 614 enquiries from people interested in adopting a child.

This is an increase in the number of enquiries received in 2021-2022 when we received 609

The service received:

- 657 adoption enquires during 2020-2021
- 658 adoption enquires between 2019-2020

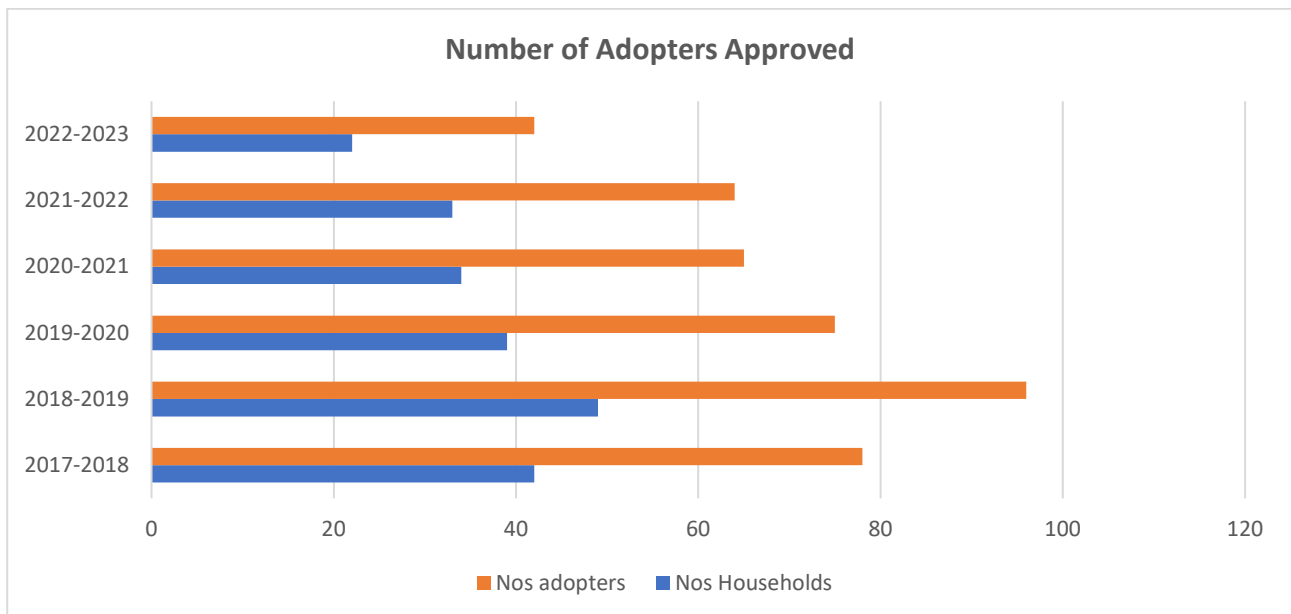
During 2022-2023, 95 Stage One Adoption Assessments were completed, this is more than the previous year 2021-2022 when 65 Stage One Assessments were completed.

During 2022-2023, 43 Stage Two Adoption Assessments were completed, this is a decrease than the previous year 2021-2022 when 64 Stage Two assessments were completed .

Approvals

22 adoptive households were approved by Norfolk during 2022-2023 which consisted of 42 individual adopters.

The following table contrasts the number of adopters approved over the past 5 years between April 2018 and March 2023.



Adoptive households waiting

On the 31st March 2023 there were 2 approved adoptive households waiting more than one year from the date of their approval to be matched with a child.

A further 2 approved adoptive households waiting more than two years from their date of their approval to be matched with a child. For both household their circumstances have changed and in both cases there is a review of their approval to consider whether they continue to be recommended for approval.

The Regional Adoption Alliance (RAA) Scorecard

The Regional Adoption Agency (RAA) Scorecard (previously known as the Adoption Scorecard) was first introduced in November 2011, to measure local authority performance across local authorities in relation to achieving permanence for children looked after. It is measured over a 3-year average and published 12 months after the reporting period has ended, our current RAA Score Card has data from the period ending March 2023.

In Norfolk over 2010-2023:

- ✚ The average time between a child entering care and moving to adoptive family was 458 days, 97 days faster than the time averaged in England of 555 days.
- ✚ The average time between a child entering care and the local authority receiving court authority to place a child for adoption in Norfolk was 378 days, 2 days faster than the England Average of 380 days.

Disruptions

Disruption is the term used for the breakdown of an adoptive placement prior to an Adoption Order being granted. Norfolk has historically had low disruption rates. This has been attributed to the quality our assessments, the way we prepare prospective adopters and our post adoption support services.

- During 2022-2023 there were 3 disruptions
- During 2021-2022 there were 2 disruptions
- During 2020-2021 there was 1 disruption
- Over 2019-2020 there were 0 disruptions

Disruption meetings are used to scrutinise cases and learn from a disruption as a group of multi agency professionals.

Following any disruptions, a conference meeting is held to consider the circumstances and any learning shared across the agency, with the Adoption Panel and across Adopt East.

Complaints, Feedback and Compliments

Compliments are received from adopters, children's social workers and multi-agency colleagues and are always very welcome.

During 2022-2023, 0 compliments in relation to the adoption service were formally logged with the Complaints Team.

The Adoption Service received 9 formal complaint at stage 1 during 2022-2023, which was responded to and resolved.

The Adoption Service had 0 LGO decision during 2022-2023.

Key Priorities 2023-2024

- Continue to work with Adopt East partners to develop practice across the alliance to ensure the best possible outcome for children requiring adoption and adoptive families.
- Preparation for the RAA Ofsted inspection of Adopt East.
- Continue to focus on the planning activity that delivers timely matching for all children with a plan for adoption. This is twofold, firstly in utilising early permanency arrangements wherever possible and secondly increasing the number of children placed within the Adopt East region as opposed to nationally.
- To continue to review and develop the current services in line with modernising adoption. This is twofold, firstly to ensure children are able to understand their identity and maintain connections with their birth family and secondly adapting services in line with digitisation and social media.
- Roll out of the Safe and Meaningful Contact assessment tool to ensure that all Keeping in Touch (Contact) arrangements are assessment and supported where necessary.
- Work towards creating the most equitable support offer for children placed for permanence across adoption, special guardianship and long term foster care through the process of modernising permanence.



Cabinet

Item No: 13

Report Title: Annual Report 2022-2023 Norfolk Fostering Service

Date of Meeting: 6 November 2023

Responsible Cabinet Member: Cllr Penny Carpenter (Cabinet Member for Children's Services)

Executive Director: Sara Tough, Children's Services

Is this a Key Decision? Yes

If this is a Key Decision, date added to the Forward Plan of Key Decisions: 5/10/2023

Executive Summary / Introduction from Cabinet Member

The purpose of the Annual Report is to report on the activity of the Fostering Service fulfilling obligations required by the Fostering Services Regulations (2011) to review and improve the quality of care, and National Minimum Standards (2011) to report to the executive side of the local authority. It will cover performance and developments in Norfolk's delivery of fostering services; how the council is compliant with key national minimum standards; and the service offered to those seeking to foster and those children in care who are fostered. The report outlines the service's activities between April 2022- March 2023, including performance indicators, service development and key priorities.

Norfolk Fostering Service had undergone significant transformation, offering foster carers increased access to a range of additional support and expertise.

Progress achieved in this period and key points of note include:

- Increased placement utilisation and improved overall performance.
- A now fully embedded Supporting Resilience team.
- A new training offer in place, Nurturing Resilience, embraced by and tailored to foster carers' needs.
- Acquisition of Virtual Reality headsets as an innovative way to train and support foster carers.

- Over 95% of foster carer reviews are in timescale.
- At 31st of March 2023, the service was supporting 249 mainstream inhouse fostering households (excluding early permanence and family and friends' placements). This is a similar position to last year.
- As at March 2023, 67% of the looked after children's population were living within a fostering household. This is a similar position to last year.
- In relation to foster carers leaving the system, this has remained consistent, ranging from 36-55 households/year for the last 3 years. This is predominately as a result of carers ageing out and retiring.
- As such, the demographics indicate we need to focus on recruiting more foster carers within the 30-50 age bracket or younger.
- Positively, current foster carer occupancy levels have significantly increased, but meaning the need for focus on the recruitment of new carers is ever greater with need for an increased pool of fostering households to optimise matching potential and strengthened stability of placements, avoiding disruptions and further moves for children.
- The recruitment and retention of fostering carers is now a corporate priority and overseen by a board.
- Norfolk has very recently been selected, with funding from the Department for Education, to be an Eastern Region lead for the Fostering Recruitment and Retention Pathfinder Programme.

Recommendations:

1. That members note the performance data within the report.
2. That members endorse next steps in relation to priorities to increase and retain the pool of registered foster carers.

1. Background and Purpose

1.1 Purpose

1.2 To inform members of key performance data and outcomes for children cared for by Norfolk Fostering Service.

1.3 To inform members of service developments and improvements of the fostering service.

1.4 Background

When a child enters care, it is one of the most important and significant changes in their life and it is crucial that the families who look after these most vulnerable children through foster care provision are the best they can be. Norfolk Fostering Service wants every child to flourish, grow up in a safe, stable and loving home. For those children who cannot remain with or return safely to their birth families, good quality foster care offers the best opportunity for them to experience a warm and loving family environment while the most appropriate plans are made for their future. The Fostering Service is a service for children in care. It is committed to supporting stable placements for children and young people where foster care is the identified plan. The service is a key element in the council's drive to place more children and young people in family-based care. It is a fundamental part of our sufficiency strategy to develop placements with the range and capacity to meet the needs of Norfolk's children who cannot live at home for whatever reason.

The aim of the Fostering Service is to provide high-quality care for children and young people in safe, secure and nurturing families. We aim to develop highly skilled foster carers, supported by reflective, challenging and enabling social workers and fostering practitioners. Our overarching aim is to give children and young people the best possible childhood, to help them become valued members of society and to maximise their life opportunities.

National context:

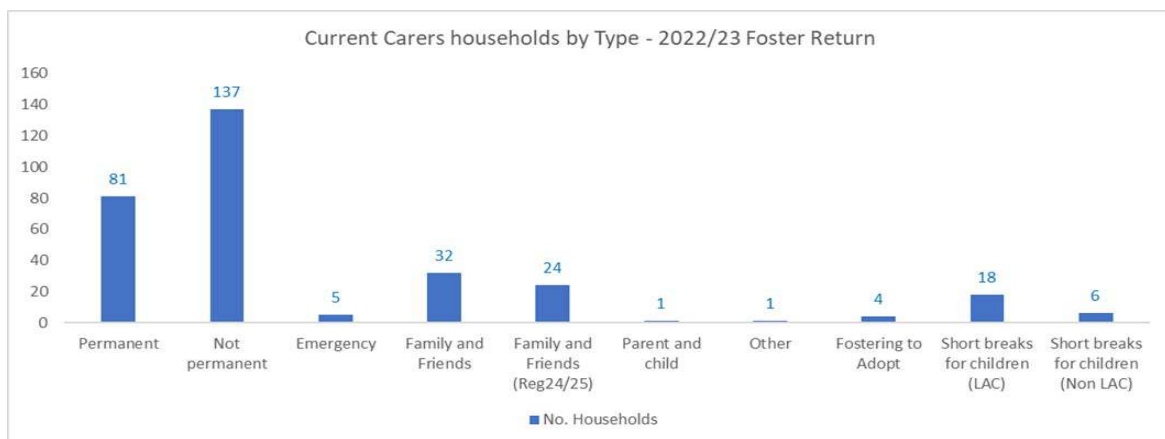
Nationally, since 2018, the number of approved mainstream fostering households has decreased by 4% and the number of approved mainstream fostering places has decreased by 5%. There has also been a downward trend in the number of applications for mainstream fostering. In both sectors a relatively large number of enquiries are not translating into applications. The number of mainstream fostering applications has fallen from 10,520 in 2018 to 8,280 in 2022. May 2022. The Independent Review of Social Care is calling upon government to immediately launch a new national foster carer recruitment programme, to approve 9,000 new foster carers over three years so that children in care can live in family environments. In Feb 2023, the Government published its strategy and consultation on children's social care, *Stable Homes, Built on Love*, wanting to deliver a number of fostering recruitment and retention programmes across the country, so foster care is available for more children who need it. The programme aims to boost fostering capacity and build an evidence base on how to effectively recruit and retain foster carers. Over the next two years the government has pledged to deliver a fostering recruitment and retention programme, so foster care is available for more children who need it.

Local landscape:

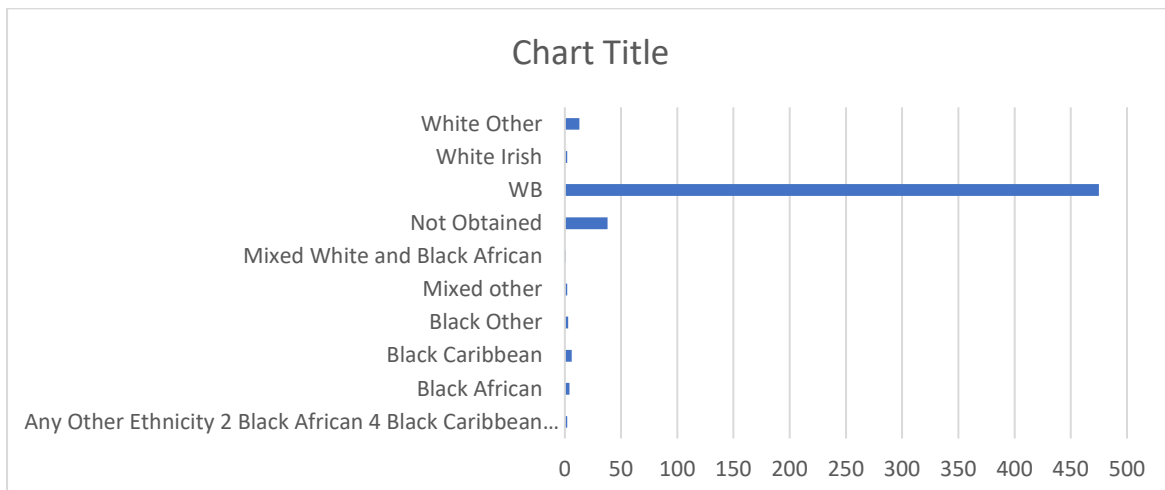
Whilst the numbers of children in the care system regionally and nationally is rising, with the exception of a slight uptick since the start of 2023, Norfolk had seen a steady reduction since 2019, and a plateauing in more recent times. Whilst the numbers are higher primarily due to our agreed intake of UASC funded by central government, and with some challenges on exiting children from the care system as soon as we would like and are addressing, for the period covered in this report, we saw a reduction in number of children aged 5-17 in care, with Norfolk being 2nd in the highly performing Eastern Region for the lowest percentage of children and young people aged 10-15 in care (36.1%) versus regional average of 38%.

At 31st March 2023, Norfolk Fostering Service had 305 fostering households comprised of 249 mainstream fostering households and 56 kinship care arrangements. Although this is a slight reduction from previous years, we are maintaining the level of offer overall as opposed to the declining picture reflected in the national data as highlighted above.

Number of fostering households at 31st March 23 by type of fostering:



The ethnicity profile of our foster carers is broken down as follows:

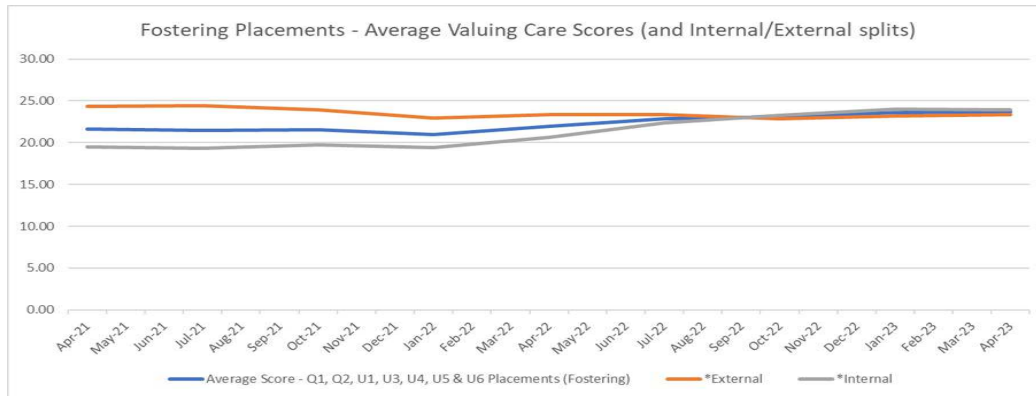


In respect of percentage of children living in a fostering household, Norfolk has managed to place 67% of its children in a foster family which is above the regional average and is stronger performance when comparing specific age groups 1-9 years and 12-15 years. This percentage increases to 74%, when we do not consider UASC who tend to be placed in semi-independent accommodation more suitable to their needs.

2. Performance and Progress

- 2.1 The average length and stability of placements in for children looked after aged 14+ in foster care has significantly improved at 1,564 days, compared to 1,052 days the previous year and 1,013 the year before that. This has been achieved by offering resilience work and practical support through linking carers with other foster carers who can provide overnight stays. Early identification of additional help has meant a reduction in placement disruption.
- 2.2 There has been a 14% increase in the utilisation of in-house foster carers, and a 30% increase in foster carer capacity.
- 2.3 With the assistance of DfE pathfinder funding the service is embarking on elevating the level of support wrapped around foster carers by creating and embedding the Mockingbird model, which will further strengthen resilience and support to drive up the number of new approvals and retention.
- 2.4 The service remains relentless in finding innovative ways around identifying applicants and increasing the numbers of newly approved foster carers. This is being achieved through engagement across Norfolk County Council and partners alongside adapting and streamlining processes to enable a smoother and more positive assessment experience for applicants. We are already seeing early signs of increased numbers of applications coming through and we remain tenacious, and strengths based in progressing the applicants' journey to approval.
- 2.5 Like all fostering services nationally, Norfolk's has been impacted by the combined effect of the pandemic and the rising costs of living which has led to foster carers reevaluating their fostering roles or intentions to foster. As a consequence, the rate of de-registrations has been increasing and we have seen a reduction in in the number of applicants putting themselves forward for the role overtime. Hence, we have embarked at a council wide and regional leadership level on a programme to improve the recruitment and retention of foster carers.
- 2.6 Despite this, foster carers have remained committed to Norfolk children and we have seen an increase of occupancy rates for mainstream full-time placements.
- 2.7 We have also seen an increased willingness from our foster carers and placements of children and young people with more challenging needs, including those requiring PACE (placed at the request of the police) and emergency provision.

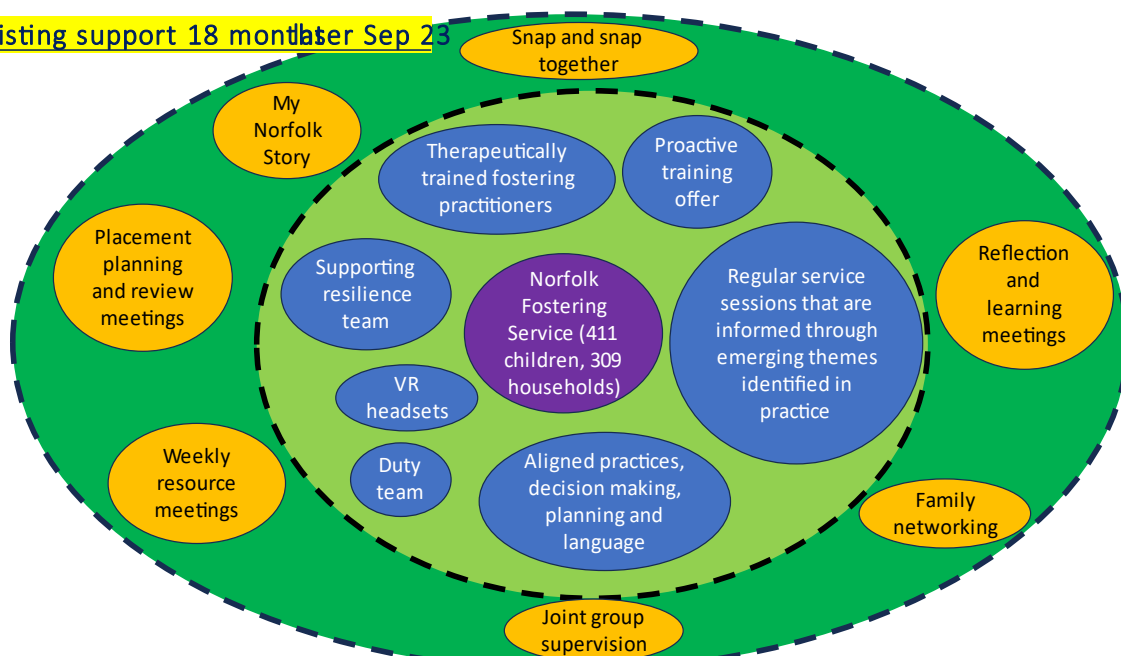
2.8 In looking at Valuing Care scores for children we place (which is a way of measuring the complexity of their needs), this has risen from 19.52 in 2021 to 23.91 in 2023.



3. Placement Support

3.1 In keeping with FLOURISH principles, the service has continued to build the collective scaffolding of the community of practice around children and foster carers:

Existing support 18 months later Sep 23



- 3.2 A high proportion of children are in stable long term foster placements and are provided with a high level of support.
- 3.3 Norfolk foster carers provide high quality care and receive good support from a range of professionals and a comprehensive training programme.
- 3.4 Each Supervising Social Worker has a mixed caseload ranging from 18-22 fostering households for a full-time role.
- 3.5 There is a 0.7 Social Worker dedicated to offering additional support to placements stepped down from residential care.
- 3.6 Foster carers are being supervised 4 weekly within their first year and 6-8 weekly thereafter or more often, dependent on need.
- 3.7 Each foster care household is reviewed and renewed annually.
- 3.8 Foster carers have access to a wide range of learning and development offers.
- 3.9 The newly formed Supporting Resilience team started its identity in April 2022. The aim of the team is 'building resilience to enable positive and meaningful interaction'. The team's work focuses on supporting foster carers build strong supportive relationships with the children they care for. We know that higher parental reflective functioning and mentalizing is associated with caregiving and attachment security. Listening and allowing me time to talk. Offering suggestions for alternative approaches that might help our foster child. Reading materials. Being available at times that suited me. Face to face or phone calls, taking time to discuss my concerns and our needs before meeting the children, Ensuring the birth children felt you were here for them, Going at a pace suitable for each child, Showing empathy, Encouraging play-based, child-led discussions to build trust and respect, Show a level of understanding based on past experiences of fostering.
- 3.10 Between its members, the team shares a multitude of diverse skills, knowledge and therapeutic expertise and their ability to share is evident in their interventions with foster carers. Notably, the additional support and the reflective space offered to our fostering households has meant that more foster carers came forward to offer placements and they used their relationships with the Resilience Practitioners to strengthen their own resilience. The team has also combined the individual approach to group support by setting up a variety of group-based activities which aimed at supporting carers to offer each other peer support as well as fun-based activities for their families and own children. During this financial year, the team supported over 140 families, had facilitated 19 support groups attended by 186 foster carers. Each holiday had a fostering fun day activity which ranged from Eaton Park, High Lodge, Dotty Pottery, Beach clean (Gorleston), Roller skating, Wroxham Barn, Whitlingham Country Park. The summer picnic held at the Gressenhall museum saw over 300 carers and children in attendance. Foster carers have been attending Listening circles and engage in Recruitment events: i.e. Norwich Pride. Each newly approved foster carer is contacted and visited by the Supporting Resilience team.

4. Fostering Panel

- 4.1 The panel is legally required to “oversee the conduct of assessments” and “to give advice and make recommendations on such matters or cases as the fostering service provider may refer to it under Regulation 25(4). Furthermore, the NMS 14.2 requires that panels provide quality assurance feedback to the fostering service provider on the quality of reports being presented to the panel. The panel monitors the quality of reports and work undertaken by the fostering service. Inadequate or poor reports are actively challenged and deferred from being presented to panel for better quality information and assessments to be provided. Biannual meetings are held between the Panel Chairs, the panel Advisors, managers in the fostering service and the Agency decision maker to address any issues in the work of the panel and wider matters regarding quality assurance.
- 4.2 A total of 136 cases have been presented to Panel.
- 4.3 Panel continues to be paperless, and this has been supported and taken on board by all panel members. Panel is operating using a hybrid model (1 face to face a month).
- 4.4 Panel has been able to continue to recruit panel members to the central list who have come from different backgrounds to ensure different views are being represented at panel.
- 4.5 Alongside the consistent ways of working in Norfolk, high support to placements needs to be seen with high challenge where needed. This has increasingly been seen in some of the work coming to fostering panel and has seen some challenging and complex cases being presented to panel.
- 4.6 Recruitment of new carers is a priority and growing current carers is also a focus for the service.
- 4.7 Training plan- Panel Advisors are also keen to ensure that all panel members are able to access training online through My Oracle, such as GDPR and Safeguarding.
- 4.8 Parent and Child policy, training and assessment process which will include new or existing foster carers and will be a bespoke offer for Norfolk.
- 4.9 Panel Advisors meet monthly with the ADM and the Head of Service in order to maintain clear communication and relationships.

5. Progress and next steps

- 5.1 The service has embarked on a truly ambitious programme of work – with ideas and resource coming from across NCC and the county. The themes will explore:
- **Community Engagement and Reach** – e.g.maximising presence and opportunities whenever the Council engages with the community
 - **Working with our partners** in the public and private sectors – use our relationships to get all key public and private organisations to become 'foster friendly' and to actively seek to identify carers.

- **Communications** – use the FLOURISH brand to really achieve a huge communications presence.
- **Policy** – make NCC the most fostering friendly organisation in the Country.
- **Reward** – in the context of cost-of-living challenges and wider recruitment and retention challenges locally, regionally and nationally look again and regularly review the level of reward and incentives for carers.
- **Retention** – what can we do support existing carers, what else can we wrap around them to allow them to sustain caring – especially for children with the most complex needs e.g. Mockingbird
- **Recruitment** – to the clinical support role and continue offering enhanced support to temporarily approved kinship carers by creating a dedicated Resilience Practitioner
- **Leadership** – across the Eastern Region as cluster lead for developing and hosting a fostering recruitment hub, pooling resources and expertise to enhance numbers becoming and staying as foster carers.

6. Impact

6.1 Retention of existing foster carers

6.2 Increase the number of newly approved foster carers

6.3 Greater numbers of children in care in family based placements

7. Evidence and Reasons for Decision

8. Alternative Options

9. Financial Implications

9.1 Department for Education will provide funding to establish a regional recruitment hub, as well as establish the Mockingbird model in each constituent Local Authority. Exact levels of funding yet tbc.

9.2 Ensuring that more children when we need to bring them into care are placed in family-based placements with the Council's own foster carers, locally and at improved quality will ensure improved outcomes and reduced cost.

9.3 The service needs to ensure that foster carers are fairly and equitably and will keep fees, terms and conditions under regular review.

10. Resource Implications

- 10.1 **IT:** Current work is being undertaken around understanding if further automation is required in monitoring the enquiries and journey to approval of foster carers.

11. Other Implications

- 11.1 Legal Implications: not applicable
11.2 Human Rights Implications: not applicable
11.3 Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) (this must be included): n/a
11.4 Data Protection Impact Assessments (DPIA): not applicable
11.5 Health and Safety implications (where appropriate): not applicable
11.6 Sustainability implications (where appropriate): not applicable
11.7 Any Other Implications: not applicable

12. Risk Implications / Assessment

12.1 not applicable

Officer Contact

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

Officer name: Michelle Brady

Telephone no.:

Email: michelle.brady@norfolk.gov.uk



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

Report to Cabinet

Item No. 14

Report Title: Finance Monitoring Report 2023-24 P6: September 2023

Date of Meeting: 6 November 2023

Responsible Cabinet Member: Cllr Andrew Jamieson (Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance)

Responsible Director: Harvey Bullen (Director of Strategic Finance)

Is this a Key Decision? Yes

If this is a Key Decision, date added to the Forward Plan of Key Decisions: 02/03/2023

Introduction from Cabinet Member

This report gives a summary of the forecast financial position for the 2023-24 Revenue and Capital Budgets, General Balances, and the Council's Reserves at 31 March 2024, together with related financial information.

Executive Summary

Financial monitoring position

Subject to mitigating actions, on a net budget of £493.707m, the forecast revenue outturn for 2023-24 at the end of period 6 (September) is **a £4.363m overspend (0.88% of net budget)**.

General Balances are forecast to be **£25.410m** at 31 March 2024 following transfers of £1m planned contribution from the revenue budget at the end of 2023-24. Service reserves and provisions are forecast to total **£146.336m**.

All significant cost pressures are taken into account in the forecasts in this report. Details of these pressures and progress on achieving savings are addressed in detail in this report.

Recommendations:

1. To note the increase of **£5.233m** to the capital programme to address capital funding requirements funded mostly from various external sources as set out in detail in capital Appendix 3, paragraph 1.4 as follows:
 - £3.4m increase to the Great Yarmouth O&M Campus following full Council approval received in September 2023 comprising £2.9m NCC Borrowing and £0.5m contribution from external funding
 - £0.799m increase in the Disabled Facilities Grant funding from central government
 - £1.488m increase in S106 Developer contributions and other external grants to Children's Services across multiple development sites including £0.914m for Bradwell
 - £0.140m additional Department of Transport funding allocated to various Highways schemes and £1.050m increase in NCC Borrowing funding the NCC contribution to the West Winch Bypass approved by full Council in September 2023

- (£1.461m) reduction in NCC Borrowing budget for ICT comprising of a £1.2m reduction in the schools ICT refresh programme following a full review of kit life cycles and a release of £0.261m for Woodside One Community Hub ICT network following the decision to dispose of Woodside One. This release in ICT budgets will allow for the funding of the Norfolk Fire and Rescue Services Command and Control system of £1.287m, the proposed virement approval is going to full Council in December 2023.
 - (£0.183m) net reduction in various other schemes
2. To note the revised current and future 2023-28 capital programme as set out in Appendix 3 including the significant reprofiling undertaken to date.
 3. To delegate to the Director of Procurement and the Director of Property to undertake the necessary procurement and tender processes to deliver this revised capital programme in accordance with the delegated authority awarded on 6 March 2023 in the Authority to enact Capital Programme paper - [Document.ashx \(cmis.uk.com\)](#).
 4. To recognise the period 6 general fund revenue forecast of a **£4.363m overspend (0.88% of net budget)**, noting also that Executive Directors will take measures to reduce or eliminate potential over-spends where these occur within services;
 5. To recognise the period 6 forecast of 97% savings delivery in 2023-24, noting also that Executive Directors will continue to take measures to mitigate potential savings shortfalls through alternative savings or underspends;
 6. To note the forecast General Balances at 31 March 2024 of **£25.410m**.

1. Background and Purpose

- 1.1. This report and associated annexes summarise the forecast financial outturn position for 2023-24, to assist members to maintain an overview of the overall financial position of the Council.

2. Proposals

- 2.1. Having set revenue and capital budgets at the start of the financial year, the Council needs to ensure service delivery within allocated and available resources, which in turn underpins the financial stability of the Council. Consequently, progress is regularly monitored, and corrective action taken when required.

3. Impact of the Proposal

- 3.1. The impact of this report is primarily to demonstrate where the Council is anticipating financial pressures not forecast at the time of budget setting, including the implications of the cost-of-living crisis, inflation and rising interest rates, together with a number of other key financial measures.
- 3.2. The additional proposals cover a range of financial matters which will support good governance and robust financial management.

4. Evidence and Reasons for Decision

- 4.1. Three appendices are attached to this report giving details of the forecast revenue and capital financial outturn positions and the background information concerning the other recommendations included in this report:

Appendix 1 summarises the revenue outturn position, including:

- Forecast over and under spends
- Changes to the approved budget
- Reserves
- Savings

Appendix 2 summarises the key working capital position, including:

- Treasury management
- Payment performance and debt recovery.

Appendix 3 summarises the capital outturn position, and includes:

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

- 4.2. Additional capital funds will enable services to invest in assets and infrastructure as described in Appendix 3 section 4.

5. Alternative Options

- 5.1. To deliver a balanced budget, no viable alternative options have been identified to the recommendations in this report. In terms of financing the proposed capital expenditure, no further grant or revenue funding has been identified to fund the expenditure, apart from the funding noted in Appendix 3.

6. Financial Implications

- 6.1. As stated above, the forecast revenue outturn for 2023-24 at the end of P6 is a **£4.363m overspend** linked to a forecast 97% savings delivery. Forecast outturn for service reserves and provisions is **£144.564m**, and the general balances forecast is **£25.410m**.
- 6.2. Where possible service pressures have been offset by underspends or the use of reserves. A narrative by service is given in Appendix 1.
- 6.3. The Council's capital programme is based on schemes approved by County Council in February 2023, including previously approved schemes brought forward and new schemes subsequently approved.
- 6.4. Other specific financial implications are set out throughout the report.

7. Resource Implications

- 7.1. None, apart from financial information set out in these papers.

8. Other Implications

- 8.1. **Legal Implications**

In order to fulfil obligations placed on chief finance officers by section 114 of the Local Government Finance Act 1988, the Director of Strategic Finance continually monitors financial forecasts and outcomes to ensure resources (including sums borrowed) are available to meet annual expenditure.

8.2. **Human Rights implications**

None identified.

8.3. **Equality Impact Assessment**

In setting the 2023-24 budget, the council has undertaken public consultation and produced equality and rural impact assessments in relation to the 2023-24 Budget. An overall summary Equality and rural impact assessment report is included on page 341 of the Tuesday 21 February 2023 Norfolk County Council agenda. [CMIS > Meetings](#)

The Council's net revenue budget is unchanged at this point in the financial year and there are no additional equality and diversity implications arising out of this report.

8.4. **Data Protection Impact Assessments (DPIA)**

DPIA is not required as the data reported in this paper does not drill down to the personal data level.

9. **Risk Implications/Assessment**

9.1. Corporate risks continue to be assessed and reported on a quarterly basis to both Cabinet and the Audit Committee. The Council's key financial based corporate risk (RM002 - The potential risk of failure to manage significant reductions in local and national income streams) has been reviewed and refreshed in February 2023 to incorporate the 2023/24 budget and Medium-Term Financial Strategy 2023 - 2027 being set. Key risk mitigations include amongst others regular (monthly) financial reporting to Cabinet, working to the Medium-Term Financial Strategy and setting robust budgets within available resources.

9.2. Unlike many other parts of the public sector such as the NHS, local authorities are required by law to set a balanced budget. As part of their duties, the Director of Strategic Finance has a responsibility to report to members if it appears to him that the authority will not have sufficient resources to finance its expenditure for the financial year. At this stage the Director of Strategic Finance considers that mitigating actions for the currently forecast overspend, over the remainder of the year, will enable a balanced budget to be achieved in 2023-24.

10. **Select Committee comments**

10.1. None

11. **Recommendation**

11.1. Recommendations are set out in the introduction to this report.

12. **Background Papers**

12.1. Summary Equality and rural impact assessment [CMIS > Meetings](#) page 341

Officer Contact

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

Officer name: Joanne Fernandez Graham **Tel No.:** 01603 223330

Email address: j.fernandezgraham@norfolk.gov.uk



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

Appendix 1: 2023-24 Revenue Finance Monitoring Report Month 6

Report by the Director of Strategic Finance

1 Introduction

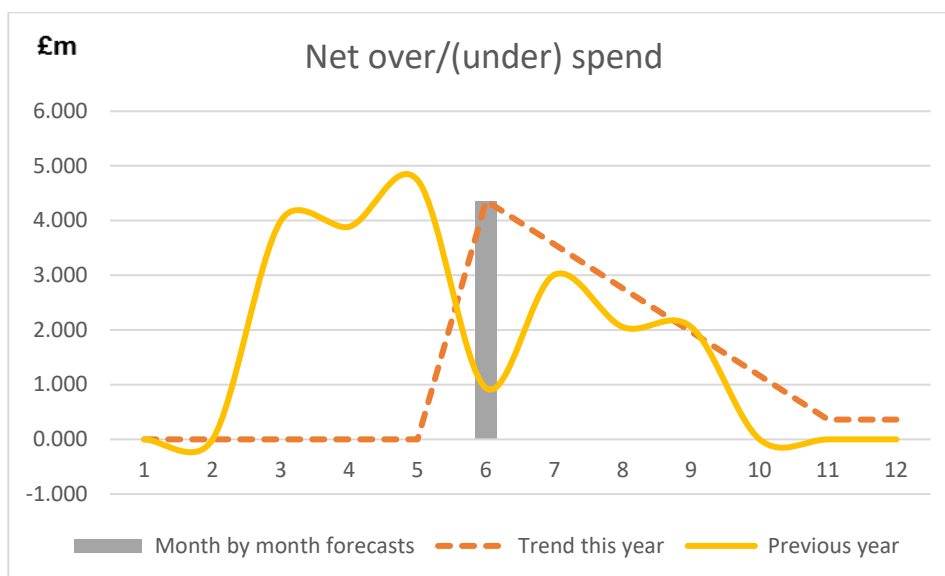
1.1 This report gives details of:

- the P6 monitoring position for the 2023-24 Revenue Budget
- additional financial information relating one-off funding, cost pressures and delivery of savings initiatives
- forecast General Balances and Reserves as at 31 March 2024 and
- other key information relating to the overall financial position of the Council.

2 Revenue outturn – over/(under)spends

2.1 **At the end of September 2023**, an overspend of £4.363m is forecast against a net budget of £493.707m.

Chart 1: forecast /actual revenue outturn 2023-24, month by month trend:



2.2 Executive Directors have responsibility for managing their budgets within the amounts approved by County Council. They have been charged with reviewing all their cost centres to ensure that, where an overspend is identified, action is taken to ensure that a balanced budget will be achieved over the course of the year.

2.3 Details of all under and overspends for each service are shown in detail in Revenue Annex 1 to this report, and are summarised in the following table:

Table 1: 2023-24 forecast (under)/overspends by service

Service	Revised Budget	Cost Pressures	(Under spends/ Savings)	Earmarked Reserves & Provisions Utilised	Net (under)/ overspend	%	R A G
	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m		
Adult Social Care	247.761	10.380	-9.880	-0.500	0.000	0.0%	G
Children's Services	232.038	9.800	0.000	-1.000	8.800	3.8%	R
Community and Environmental Services	189.758	2.604	-2.604	0.000	0.000	0.0%	G
Strategy and Transformation	26.693	3.980	-2.554	-1.426	0.000	0.0%	G
Chief Executive's Office	4.039	0.031	-0.300	0.269	0.000	0.0%	
Finance	-206.582	0.279	-4.716	0.000	(4.437)	2.1%	G
Total	493.707	27.074	-20.054	(2.657)	4.363	0.9%	A

Notes:

- 1) the RAG ratings are subjective and account for the risk and both the relative (%) and absolute (£m) impact of overspends.
- 2) Planned use of Earmarked reserves and provisions set aside in 2022-23 in order to meet and fund additional pressures in 2023-24 are built into the revised budget. The table above highlights the use of reserves over and above the plan.

2.4 **Children's Services:** The service has previously reported that pressures have been building within the social care placements and support budget, but the forecast outturn had remained a balanced position as it had been anticipated that these pressures were at a level that could be managed within the budgeted resources available to the department, although this would need to be kept under close review.

2.5 Since this position was reported, the department has seen further significant increases in these pressures and, in addition, the department has received the first full forecast of the year for Home to School Transport, following the start of the academic year. As a result of both factors, the forecast as at Period 6 (end of September 2023) is a £9.8m overspend, partially mitigated by (£1m) use of earmarked reserves.

2.6 The forecast overspend for social care placements and support is c. £6m, primarily due to the significant increase in the average unit cost for external residential and external supported accommodation, the demand continuing to be high for social care services (as seen and reported nationally), additional costs of supporting a small number of children and young people with very complex needs, as well as a significant increase in the demand for community short-break provision. These potential pressures had previously been seen at a lower level in earlier months' forecasts, and the department was seeking ways of mitigating them and reviewing whether patterns continued, but the previous pressures have now both crystallised and increased.

2.7 The increase in the average cost of some placement types has gone significantly above the price when budget was set and beyond the amount anticipated through

budgeted growth. For example, a 34% increase in the average cost of external residential care and an 8% increase in the cost of external supported accommodation. These, alone, have a full year impact of over £7m based upon the current volumes. This increase in the average cost reflects a proportional increase in those placements exceeding £6k per week (for the most complex needs).

- 2.8 The number of children being looked after has remained relatively stable since the start of this financial year, following a small increase in the latter quarter of last financial year that has only had a relatively small impact upon our placement costs. This is counter to the experience of many other local authorities and an outcome of the significant transformation in recent years from the front door and community & partnership teams, through family support and into social work teams. These overall numbers include that the number of children and young people placed in external residential care has seen a significant reduction since the budget was set, but there has been a corresponding increase in the number placed in external supported accommodation.
- 2.9 Our in-house residential services have been supporting some young people with very complex needs and additional costs have had to be incurred to meet these needs and to support staff to undertake their roles safely. Initially, some of these costs had been forecast to be for a time-limited period, but it is now anticipated that they will continue for the remainder of the year and the forecast has been adjusted accordingly.
- 2.10 The other key pressure is due to a significant increase in the demand for short breaks, c. £1m. The demand has grown for community short-breaks provision, particularly in recent years, and this increase appears to have escalated, potentially due to the cost-of-living pressures facing families as well as, potentially, carer burn-out following the pandemic and service disruption. In addition, the short breaks service supports some children and young people with highly complex needs and there has been an increase in demand for external residential short-break provision to enable families to remain together. Potentially, the alternative would be an increase in children looked after, which is not a good outcome for the child and family and would incur additional costs.
- 2.11 Norfolk is not alone in continuing to see cost pressures despite significant investment in the Children's Services budget in recent years. Nationally, many local authorities are reporting very significant overspends for their Children's Services, and it is due to the level of growth budget resources available to the department to meet pressures for 2023-24 that the overspend position has not materialised until this point in the year and at a lower level than many others are facing. Nationally, areas of cost pressures are the same as for Norfolk; key demand-led budgets for social care placements and support along with home to school transport. The longer-term impact of Covid-19 and lockdowns upon children and families, the cost-of-living crisis, high levels of inflation, and challenging market forces continue to exist outside of the control of local authorities, including Norfolk.
- 2.12 The first full Home to School Transport forecast for the year is a £4.8m overspend despite the additional budgeted resources provided for 2023-24. The persistent inflationary increases for fuel and the cost of vehicles, along with the rises in National Living Wage, has seen increases in the cost of tenders awarded for transport routes. The budget included assumptions regarded expected inflationary increases, but the initial forecast indicates that these were under-estimated when the budget was set for 2023-24.

- 2.13 It is clear that the primary cause of the pressures are these supply-side factors, i.e. the inflationary pressures highlighted above leading to higher costs, alongside insufficient supply and competition. This is supported by the data available for the transport routes in place for the new academic year which shows that the total numbers of children being transported has not materially increased, and the distances travelled have either plateaued (SEND and mainstream) or reduced (mainstream and SEND post 16). However, the average cost of transport per child has significantly increased, with this percentage increase being similar for both SEND and mainstream cohorts, and clear evidence of higher costs being charged by the market for existing routes. On the demand-side we can see some specific trends linked to areas of school admissions pressures.
- 2.14 Action is under way to positively impact both the demand-side and the supply-side factors. On the supply-side, there is a piece of focussed work underway in conjunction with officers from across the council to look at the transport provision market and any additional levers that could be developed to have a beneficial effect. Much demand-side activity is already delivering benefits and is continuing to be pursued and expanded, including a focus on supporting young people to be travel independent (such as the TITAN Travel Training programme) and the initial impacts of Local First Inclusion in reducing the distances that have to be travelled for those attending new provisions.
- 2.15 Children's Services continues to undertake a substantial transformation programme to both improve outcomes for children and young people as well as delivering financial savings. These aim to mitigate risks and pressures that emerge and accompanies management action within the department that continues to be taken to reduce these risks and cost pressures wherever possible.
- 2.16 **Adult Social Services:** The forecast outturn as at Period 6 (end of September 2023) is a balanced position. With Adult Social Care (ASC) being a demand led service, the budget to provide it always operates under a degree of uncertainty. The ASC service has a significant savings and transformation agenda it is seeking to deliver this financial year. In addition, within its recovery programme there is a significant emphasis on reducing the backlogs that had developed during the pandemic. We are pleased to have seen reductions in a number of these areas, with particular success in reducing our interim care list from 700 to 100 people in the last 12 months. A critical element of the financial position for the department will be the continued effective management of this work and the financial outcomes that ensue.
- 2.17 As over 70% of the ASC budget is spent with independent providers, it is only right to acknowledge the continued financial risk the current economic conditions place on these care markets. Whilst the Council was able to invest £30m into the market as part of its 2023/24 fee uplift, the continued economic uncertainty may well have a destabilising impact on individual providers. We are now experiencing upward pressure on price, in particular, those care packages supporting people with a Learning Disability in Residential Care. We continue to work with our care providers and the Care Association to understand the steps required to provide sustainability and quality improvement, including our work on both the Market Position Statement and the Market Sustainability Plan. Our Operations and Commissioning teams, especially those supporting the Learning Disabilities market, are actively working with a number of providers to determine viability and future market intentions. Our ability to find alternative placements for those care providers exiting the market is becoming limited and therefore replacement services are coming at a price premium.

- 2.18 The department continues to work with its partners in the Integrated Care System (ICS) to manage system pressures around hospital discharge both from acute hospital and the wider Transforming Care Programme (TCP). Whilst supporting discharges under TCP is required, it does create an additional financial pressure for the Council with care packages in the community often exceeding £4,000 per person, per week. We work robustly with the ICB to ensure we collectively support these discharges into cost effective placements and only pay the fair share of our costs. The ICS itself continues to operate in a challenging financial environment, with the Integrated Care Board (ICB) itself having to undertake a significant reduction in operating costs.
- 2.19 Both internally to the department, and within the wider care sector, availability of staff continues to be a challenge. Internally we have had more success recently in recruiting and retaining certain types of roles. Equally, a number of vacancies have been removed via the Strategic Review and therefore it is unlikely that the department will see the level of staff underspends that it has had in previous years. However, there are certain qualified roles that remain hard to fill at scale and therefore it is important we deliver on our longer term workforce plan.
- 2.20 Whilst recognising the uncertainties described above, the level of ASC departmental reserves to manage the majority of these risks in the short term remain strong. However, any additional deployment of reserves to mitigate in year risks will undermine the department's ability to deliver on its 2024/25 reserve commitments. Longer term, the landscape of Social Care remains uncertain with elements of its reform delayed until at least October 2025, a newly introduced inspection/assurance regime, and no long term funding settlement.
- 2.21 **CES:** The forecast outturn as at Period 6 (end of September 2023) is a balanced position.
- 2.22 There are pressures currently being faced within Corporate Property primarily related to utilities, the forecast overspend for the service stands at £0.891m. Whilst significant inflationary uplifts were applied to the budgets for 2023-24 these were insufficient given the sustained price increases in both electricity and gas.
- 2.23 Culture and Heritage are also forecasting an overspend position (£0.751m) driven by Norfolk Museums Service as early indications show that the main income streams are showing signs of improvement compared to last year, however, are still falling short of target given the sustained reduced offer at Norwich Castle whilst the renovations are completed.
- 2.24 These forecast overspends are being offset primarily by Highways and Waste. Waste volumes at Recycling Centres and kerbside collections have been highly volatile over the last two years. The current forecast for Waste is a £1.336m underspend driven by residual waste with the latest available data on volumes and unit costs.
- 2.25 For Highways, the reported underspend position (£1.268m) at this stage is primarily driven by the reduced insurance premium, higher street works income and increased level of staff recharges.
- 2.26 The other services within CES continue to be challenged by the level of inflation which places greater risk on achieving the budget across all services but particularly utilities and maintenance costs. These services combined are reporting a net overspend of £0.962m. We will continue to monitor this closely throughout the year and report the impacts once they become clearer.

- 2.27 **Corporate services:** The Strategy and Transformation directorate is forecasting a balanced position making use of reserves. The Chief Executive Office is also reporting a balanced position, meeting extra costs of by-elections with use of brought forward reserves.
- 2.28 **Finance:** Finance forecast for P6 is an underspend of £4.437m. Forecast underspends are due to interest payable costs being £0.417m less than budgeted due to the timing of borrowing and sustained low interest rates on borrowing undertaken in 2022-23. The same higher interest rates and cash holdings has contributed to an increased interest receivable forecasted of £3.373m over budget for both treasury and non-treasury investments held. In addition, the Minimum Revenue Provision for 2023-24 is £0.926m lower planned due to Capital Programme slippage from 2022-23. This is offset by £0.279m of miscellaneous cost pressures.
- 2.29 Further details are given in Appendix 1: Revenue Annex 1.

3 Approved budget, changes and variations

- 3.1 The 2023-24 budget was agreed by Council on 21 February 2023 and is summarised by service in the Council's Budget Book 2023-24 (page 19) as follows:

Table 2: 2023-24 original and revised net budget by service

Service	Approved net base budget	Revised budget P6
	£m	£m
Adult Social Care	249.526	247.761
Children's Services	232.593	232.038
Community and Environmental Services	191.754	189.758
Strategy and Transformation	22.941	26.693
Chief Executive's Office		4.039
Finance	(203.107)	-206.582
Total	493.707	493.707

Note: this table may contain rounding differences.

- 3.2 The P6 Budget now fully reflects the main elements of the Strategic Review restructure including the creation of the Chief Executive's Office which comprises the Governance (Legal Services) and Democratic and Regulatory Service.
- 3.3 It should be noted that there may be further small budget changes as a result of the continued implementation of the Strategic Review and these will be completed as in-year 2023-24 budget adjustments as the implementation progresses. These adjustments will not change the overall County Council Budget for 2023-24 of £493.707m.

4 General balances and reserves

General balances

- 4.1 At its meeting on 21 February 2023, the County Council agreed a minimum level of general balances of £25.340m in 2023-24. The balance at 1 April 2023 was **£24.410m** following transfers of £0.570m from a contribution to General Balances and Finance General underspends at the end of 2022-23. The forecast for 31 March 2024 is **£25.410m**, assuming the overspend reported is mitigated and a balanced budget is

achieved in 2023-24 and a £1m contribution to general balances provided for in the 2023-24 budget.

Reserves and provisions 2023-24

- 4.2 The use of reserves anticipated at the time of budget setting was based on reserves balances anticipated in January 2023. Actual balances at the end of March 2023 were higher than planned, mainly as a result of grants being carried forward, including Safety Valve and COVID-19 grants and reserves use being deferred.
- 4.3 The 2023-24 budget was approved based on closing reserves and provisions (excluding DSG reserves) of £162.995m as at 31 March 2023. This, and the latest forecasts are as follows.

Table 3: Reserves budgets and forecast reserves and provisions (excluding LMS/DSG)

Reserves and provisions by service	Actual balances 1 April 2023	Increase in March 2023 balances after budget setting	2023-24 Budget book forecast 1 April 2023	Latest forecast balances 31 March 2024
	£m	£m	£m	£m
Adult Social Services	56.058	10.860	45.198	24.414
Children's Services (inc schools, excl LMS/DSG)	13.951	7.533	6.418	9.584
Community and Environmental Services	65.691	13.179	52.512	50.799
Strategy and Transformation	5.669	0.204	5.465	10.465
Chief Executive's Office				2.435
Finance	44.235	11.460	32.775	39.537
Schools LMS balances	16.078	-4.549	20.627	9.102
Reserves and Provisions including LMS	201.682	38.687	162.995	146.336
DSG Reserve (negative)	(45.877)	27.736	(73.613)	(66.361)

- 4.4 Covid grants and other grants and contributions brought forward at 31 March 2023 resulted in reserves and provisions being £38.687m higher than had been assumed at the time of budget setting. The majority of these reserves will be used to address planned service provision during 2023-24. The latest forecast net total for reserves and provisions at 31 March 2024 has decreased by £55.346m when compared with the opening balance at 1 April 2023, down to £146.336m. The bulk of the forecasted movement in reserves relates to the planned use of reserves to mitigate cost pressures in service areas. This forecast will adjust further through the year as services undertake mitigating actions and savings plans, bringing the forecast closer to the Budget Book forecast for 31 March 2024 of £119.518m.
- 4.5 **Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG):** The latest forecast DSG Reserve is based on the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) Recovery Plan combined with the latest information available. This includes amendments for the timing of opening of new provision as school organisation processes have progressed, along with revised costings as a result of teacher and support staff pay increases and inflationary pressures for HNB funded

provision and increasing levels of support to enable mainstream schools to effectively meet need and to reduce escalation to specialist provision.

- 4.6 An in-year deficit of c. £31.984m is forecast, which is £6.836m above the budgeted deficit of £25.149m, which is partially offset by contributions from NCC and DfE in line with the Safety Valve agreement of (£5.5m) and (£6m) respectively. This will increase the DSG Reserve to £66.361m by 31 March 2024, much of which is due to the invest to save element of the plan that will deliver significant savings (and subsequently a balanced in-year budget) in future years.
- 4.7 In recent years, the HNB has seen a significant increase in demand for support into mainstream schools to enable them to meet need; increasing the number of children and young people with SEND to be supported to remain in mainstream provision is a key part of Local First Inclusion and this funding is required to support this. A key intention of the strategic DSG recovery plan is to make additional resources and funding available to mainstream schools to help them meet needs without the need for a referral to specialist settings. As such, the model incorporates an additional strategic investment in funding for mainstream schools for this purpose. Schools are engaging well with this intention more quickly than anticipated when the model was developed and, as a result, we are adjusting the model to reflect greater deployment of this resource which supports positive outcomes for children and remains considerably more cost-effective than specialist provision. It is also promising from the viewpoint of mitigating needs from escalating in future years. The cost pressure in 2023-24 is c. £4.3m.
- 4.8 Specialist Resource Bases are fully funded HNB provision. Although these are run by mainstream schools, they require NCC to ensure that the resources required are funded so that there is no detrimental impact on their school budget. Recent years have seen increases in costs due to pay rises and inflationary pressures and the funding has been reviewed for some bases to ensure that they can continue to operate, resulting in an increase in costs leading to a projected overspend of £0.7m.
- 4.9 Compared to the budgeted deficit, there is a relatively small level of pressure within the independent school placements budget due to the unit cost of provision significantly increasing (in line with cost of living pressures and inflationary pressures seen across many services) along with some small amendments in terms of expected placement numbers compared to the recovery plan now that the timelines for new provision are moving from estimates through to the school organisation process.
- 4.10 Post-16 provision saw a significant increase in the number of pupils supported by the end of the 2022-23 academic year, exceeding that previously expected, leading to a projected overspend of £0.745m. As did provision for children and young people who are unable to access school provision for a variety of reasons including medical needs. This area has seen a significant increase since the covid-19 pandemic disruption to learning with many young people struggling to access mainstream provision as a result, with impacts being felt across the country. These areas bring in-year cost pressures that were not anticipated when the plan was finalised.
- 4.11 All elements of the DSG budget will continue to be kept under close review given the demand-led nature of these budgets. In addition, further work is underway to seek additional mitigations in year to minimise the additional pressures above the budgeted deficit.
- 4.12 Officers have also raised concerns about the imbalance in the market with representatives of the DfE and requested support regarding regulation, to better

support the control of costs and improving the outcomes for children and young people within these placements. However, this is not an approach that the DfE wish to take at this stage.

4.13 Significant work continues to take place between NCC, Norfolk Schools Forum, groups of school leaders and the wider system to reshape the system in Norfolk to ensure that the right specialist provision is in the right place to meet needs (i.e. the capital investment), whilst also progressing work to transform how the whole system supports additional needs within mainstream provision.

4.14 NCC reports the forecast position each term to the Norfolk Schools Forum, in line with DfE expectations and feedback from the Forum continues to be sought. In addition, NCC will report tri-annually to the DfE in relation to progress with the Local First Inclusion programme, with the second report having been submitted in September 2023.

4.15 Provisions included in the table above

The table above includes forecast provisions of £32.144m comprising:

- £11.708m insurance provision,
- £12.818m landfill provision (this provision is not cash backed),
- £5.840m provisions for bad debts,
- £1.639m business rates appeals provision, and
- £0.139m - a small number of payroll related provisions.

5 New/Confirmed Funding

5.1 **Supported Accommodation Reforms:** On 28 April 2023 the government introduced new requirements for providers of supported accommodation for looked after children and care leavers aged 16 and 17. This new legislation will require all providers of supported accommodation to be registered and regulated by OFSTED from 28 October 2023. The Minister of State for Education announced an extra £14.550m funding to support local authorities in delivering these new requirements. Norfolk County Council's share of this funding is £0.787m, to be received in 4 quarterly instalments of £0.196m.

5.2 **Sustainability and Improvement Fund:** On 28 July 2023 the Minister of State for Care announced the [allocation for the Market Sustainability and Improvement Fund](#) which provides additional support to local authorities to make tangible improvements to Adult Social Care to increase the social care capacity and retention of workforce to reduce waiting times and increase fee rates paid to social care providers. Norfolk County Council's share of this funding is £6.355m. Additional funding is also anticipated for 2024-25 and will be reflected in the budget process. Recommendations about the deployment of this funding in 2023-24 will be presented to a future meeting of Cabinet, once proposals have been fully developed.

5.3 **Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG):** On 7 September 2023, DLUHC announced £102m additional funding for the DFG split across 2023-24 (£50m) and 2024-25 (£52m). This capital funding is aimed at providing home adaptations to help eligible older and disabled people to live independently and as safely as possible in their homes. With the express agreements of the district councils, this funding can also be used for wider social care capital projects. In accordance with the Better Care Fund policy, Norfolk's

share of this funding is £0.799m, and it will be passed on to the District Councils to deliver the small scale adaptations required.

6 Budget savings 2023-24 summary

- 6.1 In setting its 2023-24 Budget, the County Council agreed net savings of £59.703m. Details of all budgeted savings can be found in the 2023-24 Budget Book. A summary of the total savings forecast to be delivered is provided in this section.
- 6.2 The latest monitoring reflects total forecast savings delivery of £57.858m at year end.
- 6.3 The forecast savings delivery is anticipated as shown in the table below:

Table 4: Analysis of 2023-24 savings forecast

	Adult Social Services	Children's Services	Community and Environmental Services	Strategy and Transformation	Finance	Total
	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m
Budget savings	28.040	12.517	10.904	2.542	5.700	59.703
Period 6 forecast savings	26.540	12.462	10.614	2.542	5.700	57.858
Savings shortfall (net)	1.500	0.055	0.290	0.000	0.000	1.845

Commentary on savings risk areas

- 6.4 The forecast savings for 2023-24 as at September 2023 is £57.858m against a budgeted savings target of £59.703m. A shortfall of £1.500m has been reported in Adult Social Services, £0.055m in Children's Services and £0.290m in Community and Environmental Services. Some saving programmes have highlighted risk areas which will need to be kept under review. Any updates to the forecast delivery of savings will be included in future monitoring to Cabinet.

Adult Social Services

- 6.5 Adult Social Services has a significant £28.040m savings target in 2023/24 comprising additional benefits from existing savings initiatives such as the Connecting Communities Programme (ASS030), delivering market utilisation efficiencies through contract performance management (ASS031), continued implementation of the Learning Disabilities transformation programme (ASS032), ongoing benefits from use of Assistive Technology and substantial further use of reserves.
- 6.5 Our major departmental transformation Programme "Connecting Communities" continues to work at pace to embed the new ways of working across the service and to ensure that the benefits are sustainable.
- 6.7 As flagged in previous monitoring reports, it is now necessary to identify an element of forecast non delivery within the Adults Savings Programme relating to prior year

savings targets. The non-delivery of these savings directly impacts the revenue forecast but is not included in Table 4.

Norse Care

Our Norse Care contract has had a multi-year savings target to deliver a wholesale transformation of the offer and ensure it is fit for the future types of demand we expect to face. Due to significant delay to the transformation programme it won't be possible for recurrent savings to be achieved this year. The service is working towards one off partial mitigations but a £1m shortfall in savings delivery is now being forecast for 23/24 relating to a prior year savings target.

Physical Disability Service

It is also now very unlikely that the £1.5m savings associated with the Physical Disability service are to be achieved this year. This is in part due to the delay of the creation of an 18-65 operational service which would have provided increased resource in this area. At the same time, we have seen an adverse underlying movement in cost due to increased numbers of people requiring our support and increased unit costs of care packages. A recovery plan is being put in place in order to try to bring down the overspend as much as possible.

As Adults is still declaring a break-even position overall at P6, these shortfalls have been able to be mitigated at present by other means within the Adults budget.

Children's Services

- 6.10 It is currently anticipated that all 2023-24 budgeted savings within Children's Services will be delivered in 2023-24 except for S2324CS035 Post 16 transport: remove option to pay a daily fare (currently only available on local buses which charge fares) £0.055m saving which will no longer be delivered.
- 6.11 Additionally, there is a saving that was partially delayed from 2022-23 (CHS014 £0.1m) that was expected to be delivered within 2023-24 but is now not expected to be delivered until 2024-25. This saving relates to the development of a joint initiative with Norfolk ICB and NSFT, including capital development, co-location of services and additional service offer for young people on the edge of Tier 4 mental health provision. Feasibility work is ongoing for the capital works, funded by NHS England, and the work is complex. All partners are committed to delivering the project and the work will continue.
- 6.12 The forecast assumes that remainder of the savings will be delivered during the remainder of the financial year; significant deviation from these plans could result in an overspend forecast. Therefore, expected delivery of savings will continue to be kept under close review.

Community and Environmental Services

- 6.13 At this stage it is anticipated, unless stated separately, all budgeted savings within Community and Environmental Services will be delivered in 2023-24. One of the savings (S2324FCS021) relates to further income from commercialisation of property assets including County Hall. Given the new tenants were not utilising the space from 1 April there will be an estimated shortfall against the saving in 2023-24 of £0.190m due to rent not being charged for the full year.

- 6.14 An increased income target had been applied to Adult Learning over the past two years linked to the development of a creative hub at the Wensum Lodge site. This project is not progressing as it is no longer viable, and as the service will also be withdrawing from the site, the 2023-24 saving of £0.100m is no longer achievable (S2021CES001).

2024-25 to 2026-27 savings

- 6.15 Budget setting in 2023-24 saw the approval of further investment in essential services through both the removal of previously planned savings and the recognition of cost pressures. As such, the savings plan assumes an increase in budget of £6.197m for 2024-25 followed by savings of £0.669m for 2025-26 and £2.285m savings in 2026-27. The deliverability of these savings, including any 2023-24 savings that are permanently undeliverable, will be considered as part of the budget setting process for 2024-28.

Revenue Annex 1

Forecast revenue outturn

Revenue outturn by service

The forecast net balanced budget is a result of a range of underlying forecast over and underspends which are listed below.

Revenue budget outturn by service – detail

	Revised Budget	Overspend	Under spend	Forecast net spend
		£m	£m	
Adult Social Services				
Purchase of Care		7.728		
Director of Commissioning		1.016		
Director of Community Health & Social Care		1.091		
Director of Community Social Work		0.545		
Director of Strategy & Transformation			(0.002)	
Public Health		0		
Management, Finance & HR			(9.878)	
Use of Reserves			(0.500)	
Net total	247.761	10.380	(10.380)	247.761
Children's Services				
Sufficiency, Planning & Education Strategy (including Home to School Transport)		4.800		
Family Help & High Needs (including Client Placements)		4.000		
Partnership, Inclusion & Practice		1.000		
Use of Reserves			(1.000)	
Net total	232.038	9.800	(1.000)	240.838
Community and Environmental Services				
Cultural and Heritage cost pressures		0.751		
Highways underspends and additional income			(1.268)	
Waste underspends and additional income			(1.336)	
Corporate Property Utilities inflation cost pressure		0.891		
Other CES cost pressures		0.962		
Net total	189.758	2.604	(2.604)	189.758
Strategy and Transformation				
I&A overspends		0.100		
Communications overspends		0.142		
HR cost pressures		0.180		
IMT Digital Services overspends		0.138		
Growth and Investment		0.866		
Use of reserves			(1.426)	
Net Total	26.693	1.426	(1.426)	26.693

Chief Executive's Office				
Elections			(0.269)	
Use of reserves		0.269		
Net Total	4.039	0.269	(0.269)	4.039
Finance				
Interest Payable – savings secured on borrowing undertaken in 22-23 at lower interest rates			(0.417)	
Minimum Revenue Provision – 22-23 capital slippage			(0.926)	
Interest Receivable			(3.373)	
Miscellaneous cost pressures and underspends		0.279		
Net total	(206.582)	0.279	(4.716)	(211.019)
TOTAL	493.707			498.070

Revenue Annex 2 – Dedicated Schools Grant Reserve

<i>Dedicated schools grant</i>	Reserve as at 31 Mar 23	Budgeted Reserve as at 31 Mar 23	Forecast Spend (B)	Forecast Reserve as at 31 Mar 24
High Needs Block			31.984	
DfE Safety Valve funding			-6.000	
NCC Safety Valve contribution			-5.500	
Increase in net deficit to be carried forward			20.484	
Forecast (over) / under spend				
Net deficit (DSG Reserve)*	(45.877)	(73.613)		(66.361)

*The Budget Reserve of (£73.613m) was set before the Safety Valve Agreement was confirmed and therefore does not include the £28m received from the Department for Education in March 2023.

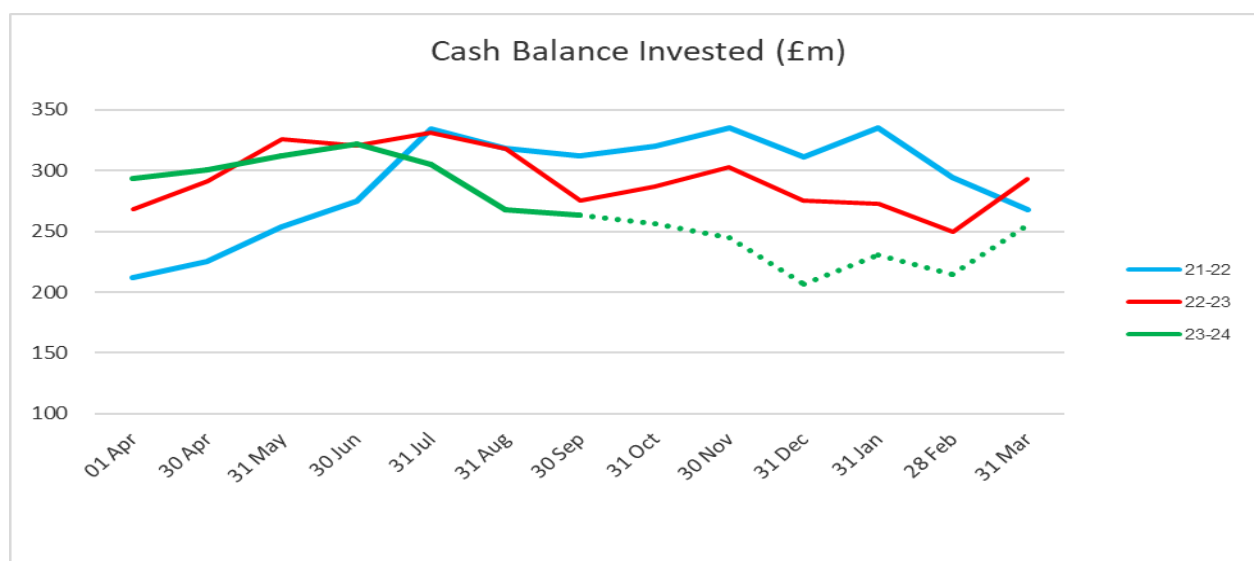
Appendix 2: 2023-24 Balance Sheet Finance Monitoring Report Month 6

Report by the Director of Strategic Finance

1 Treasury management summary

- 1.1 The corporate treasury management function ensures the efficient management of all the authority's cash balances. The graph below shows the level of cash balances over the last two financial years to 31st March, and projections to March 2024.

Chart 2: Treasury Cash Balances



- 1.2 The Council's Treasury Strategy assumes that £65m may be borrowed in 2023-24 to fund capital expenditure in year. The forecast cash flow above assumes that this amount will be borrowed over the course of the financial year, resulting in a closing cash balance of approximately £256m. If, in order to minimise the cost of carrying unnecessary borrowing, no borrowing were to take place before 31 March 2024, then the projected year-end cash balances will be approximately £180m.
- 1.3 The Council has healthy cash balances for the immediate future with cash balances of £263.858m as at the end of September 2023. The P6 forecast of Interest receivable from treasury investments held by the Council is £4.000m; which is a £2.803m saving against the revenue budget. The interest receivable from non-treasury investments and capital loans is forecast at £2.355m which is a £0.570m saving.
- 1.4 PWLB and commercial borrowing for capital purposes was £828.111m at the end of September 2023. The associated annual interest payable on existing borrowing is £30.458m.
- 1.5 The forecast interest payable for 2023-24 for P6 is for a £0.417m saving against budget assuming the £65m planned borrowing takes place during Q3-Q4 in 2023-24.

- 1.6 In accordance with the guidance set out in the Prudential Code 2021 (139) and the Treasury Management Code 2021(1.6), the Council sets out its current and full year forecast Prudential and Treasury Management Indicators in Table 1 below.

Table 1: CFR and Net Borrowing Indicators

Prudential and treasury indicators	30.09.23 Actual – YTD £m	2023/24 TM Strategy £m	31.3.24 Forecast £m
Capital expenditure	102.987	251.054	255.885
Capital Financing Requirement:	992.132	1,029.268	1,021.253
Gross borrowing	872.397	975.118	935.999
External debt	828.111	935.045	895.045
Investments	269.781	218.203	263.115
Net borrowing	602.616	756.915	672.884

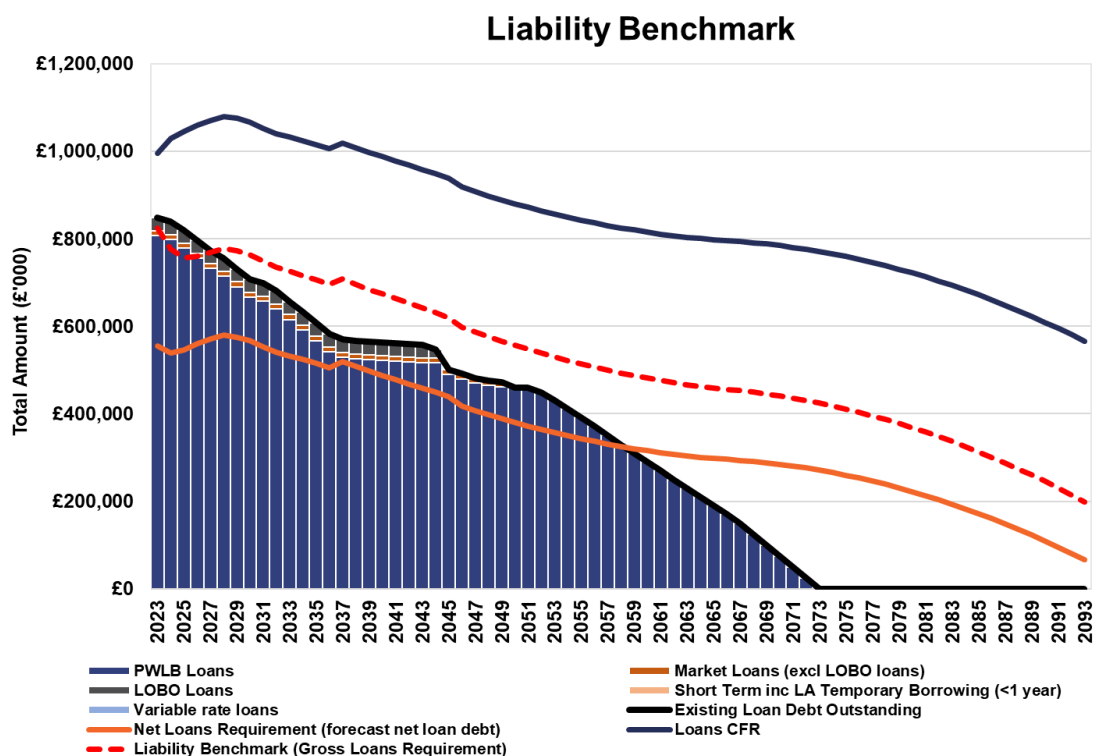
- 1.7 To date the Council has not increased its PWLB borrowing and has repaid £6.461m of its external debt. As such the P4 Gross Borrowing and External Debt balances are below the 23-24 TM strategy estimates set out in Table 2:

TABLE 2

Prudential Indicator 2023/24	P6 2023-24 £m	2023-24 Strategy £m	Forecast 2023-24 £m
Authorised Limit		1082.735	
Maximum Gross Borrowing position during the year	889.548	934.618	940.343
Operational Boundary		1029.268	1,021.253
Average Gross Borrowing position	843.848	891.835	855.501
Financing Costs as a proportion of net revenue stream (£788.209)		9.12%	8.14%
Capital Financing Requirement		1,029.268	1,021.253

- 1.8 The forecast Prudential Indicators in Table 2 takes into account the P5 Capital Programme including the £15.233m additional borrowing required for 2023-24, the forecast assumes that reprofiling existing projects in line with historical Capital Programme trends will bring the borrowing requirement down to the £65m borrowing limit set out in the Treasury Management Strategy. Service Managers are actively working on rephasing their capital projects out to the future years 2024-2028 to close this gap and stay within the Operational Boundary Limit of £1,029.268m.
- 1.9 The Liability Benchmark (LB) as set out in Chart 3 is a new prudential indicator for 2023/24. As noted in the Treasury Management Strategy for 2023-24, this prudential indicator will be reported to Cabinet at the end of each quarter.
- 1.10 The Authority is required to estimate and measure the LB for the forthcoming financial year and the following two financial years, as a minimum. The LB below remains consistent with the TM strategy as the Prudential Indicators Forecast in Table 2 remains below the TM limits.

Chart 3: Liability Benchmark



1.11 There are four components to the LB: -

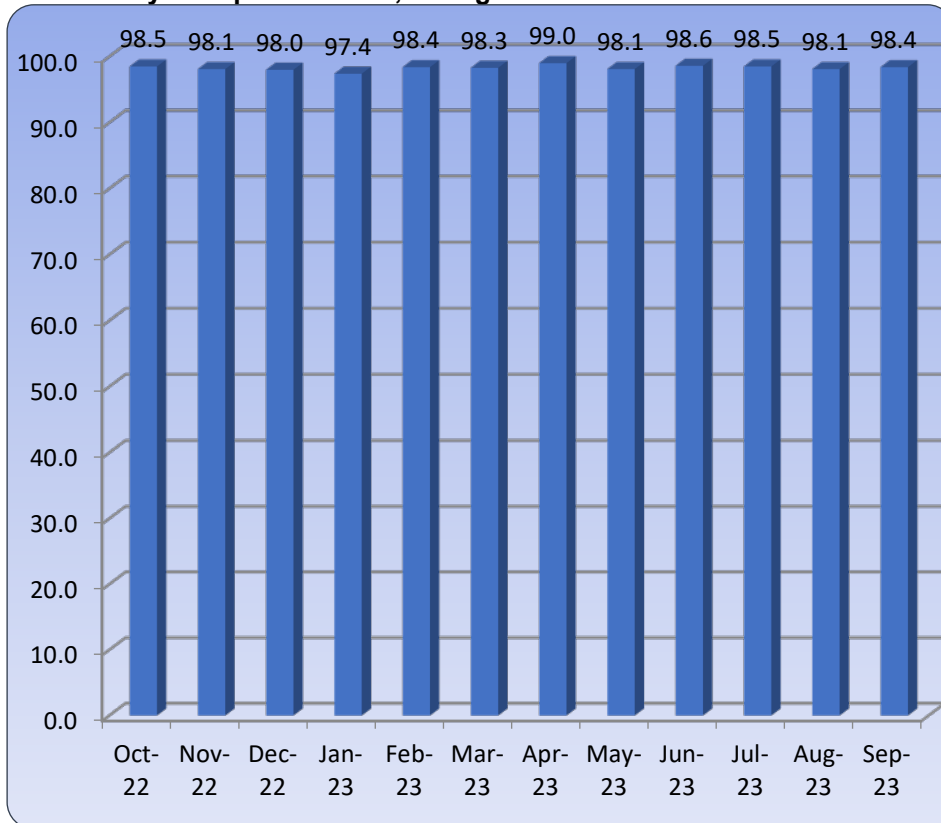
- Existing loan debt outstanding: the Authority's existing loans that are still outstanding in future years.
- Loans CFR: this is calculated in accordance with the loans CFR definition in the Prudential Code and projected into the future based on approved prudential borrowing and planned MRP.
- Net loans requirement: this will show the Authority's gross loan debt less treasury management investments at the last financial year-end, projected into the future and based on its approved prudential borrowing, planned MRP and any other major cash flows forecast.

- Liability benchmark (or gross loans requirement): this equals net loans requirement plus short-term liquidity allowance.

2 Payment performance

2.1 This chart shows the percentage of invoices that were paid by the authority within 30 days of such invoices being received. Some 470,000 invoices are paid annually. 98.4% were paid on time in September 2023 against a target of 98%. The percentage has returned to above the target of 98% since February 2023.

Chart 4: Payment performance, rolling 12 months



Note: The figures include an allowance for disputes/exclusions.

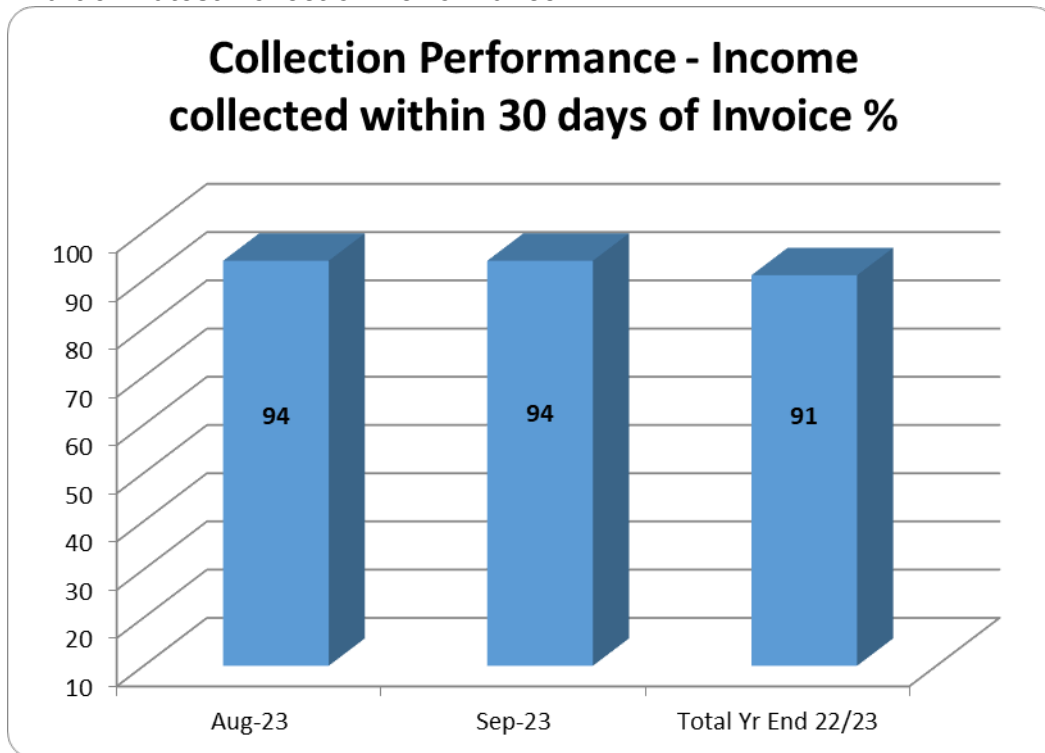
3 Debt recovery

3.1 **Introduction:** In 2022-23 the County Council raised over 126,935 invoices for statutory and non-statutory services. These invoices totalled in excess of £1.197bn. Through 2022-23 91.2% of all invoiced income was collected within 30 days of issuing an invoice, with 98% collected within 180 days.

Debt collection performance measures – latest available data

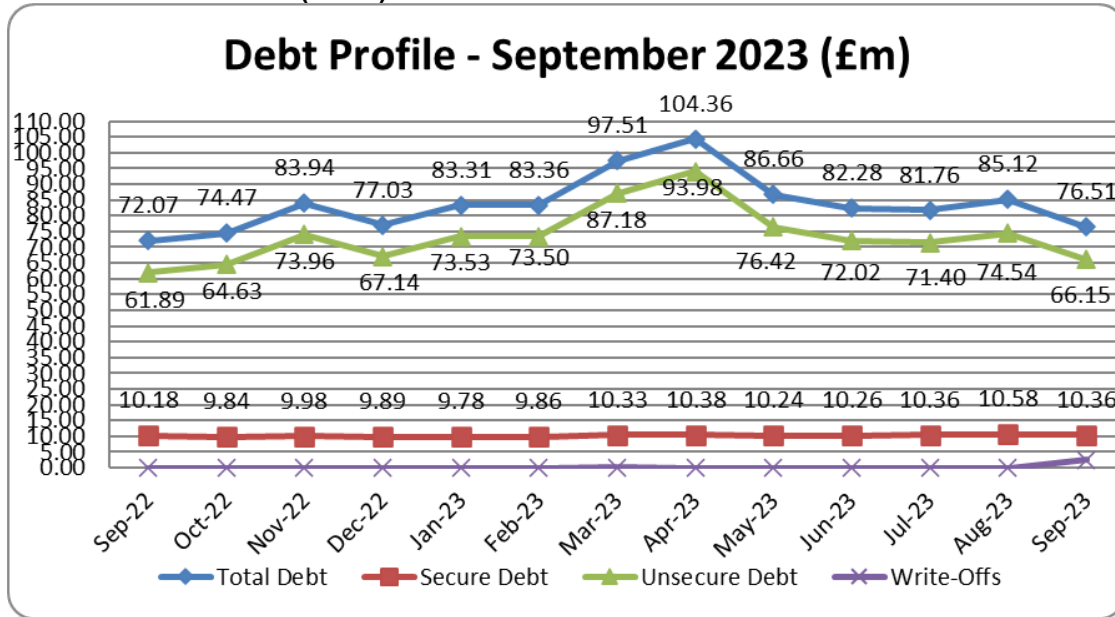
3.2 The proportion of invoiced income collected within 30 days for invoices raised in the previous month – measured by value – was 94% in September 23.

Chart 5 : Latest Collection Performance



3.3 The value of outstanding debt is continuously monitored, and recovery procedures are in place to ensure that action is taken to recover all money due to Norfolk County Council. The level of debt is shown in the following graph:

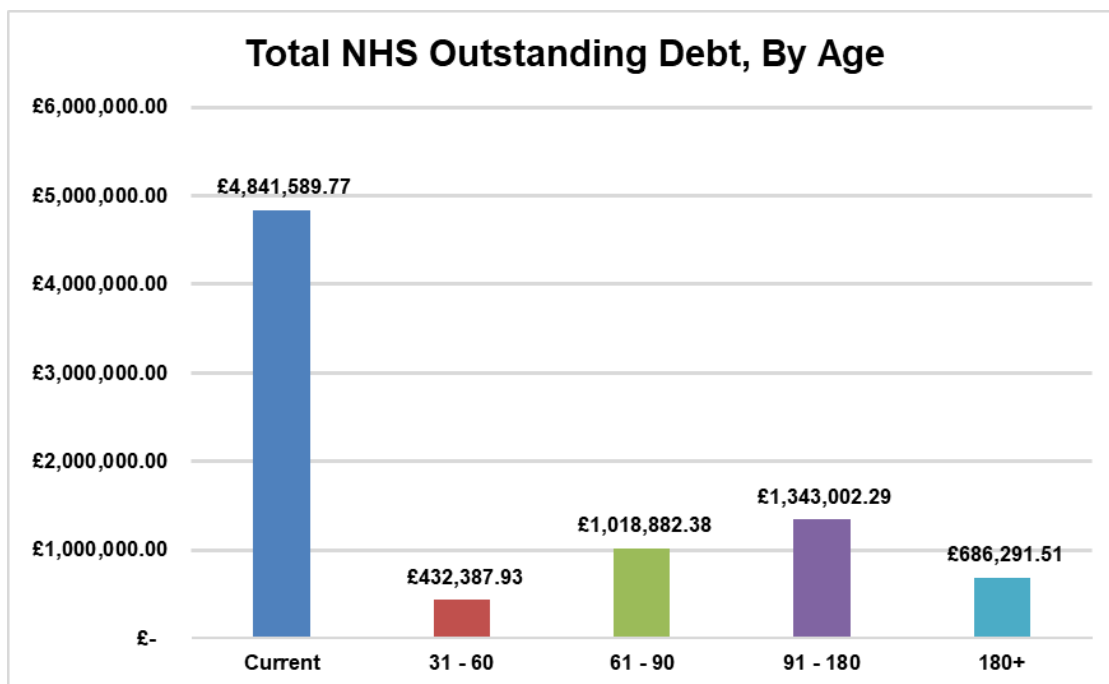
Chart 6: Debt Profile (Total)



3.4 The overall level of unsecure debt decreased by £8.39m in September 2023. Of the £66.15m unsecure debt at the end of September 23; £14.91m is under 30 days, £1.8m has been referred to NPLaw, £1.26m is being paid off by regular instalments and £12.35m is awaiting estate finalisation.

3.5 The largest area of unsecure debt relates to charges for social care, £49.57m, of which £7.68m is under 30 days and £8.32m is debt with the Norfolk and Waveney ICB (formerly Norfolk CCG's) for shared care, Better Care Pooled Fund, continuing care and free nursing care. The overall debt with the ICB has decreased by £9.47m in September 2023 as the ICB settled a significant proportion of its oldest debts as part of the debt resolution agreement with the Council.

3.6 Chart 7 below shows the debt aging profile of the remaining ICB debt at 30 September 2023



- 3.7 Secured debts amount to £10.36m at 30 September 2023. Within this total £3.44m relates to estate finalisation where the client has died, and the estate is in the hands of the executors.
- 3.8 **Debt write-offs:** In accordance with Financial Regulations and Financial Procedures, Cabinet is required to approve the write-off of debts over £10,000. The Director of Strategic Finance approves the write-off of all debts up to £10,000.
- 3.9 Service departments are responsible for funding their debt write-offs. Before writing off any debt all appropriate credit control procedures are followed.
- 3.10 For the period 1 April 2023 to 30th September 2023, 163 debts less than £10,000 were approved to be written off following approval from the Director of Strategic Finance. These debts totalled £12,673.90.
- 3.11 Following the agreement reached between Norfolk County Council and NHS Norfolk and Waveney ICB, the Council approved the write off of £2.4m ICB debt.

Norfolk County Council Finance Monitoring Report 2023-24

Appendix 3: 2023-24 Capital Finance Monitoring Report

Report by the Director of Strategic Finance

1 Capital Programme 2023-27+

- 1.1 On 21 February 2023, the County Council agreed a 2023-24 capital programme of £351.054m with a further £605.917m allocated to future years', giving a total of £956.971m. This was based on a forecast outturn for 2022-23 of £283.583m
- 1.2 The Capital Programme was increased by £62.938m in March 2023 following the receipt of various sources of external funding. The bulk of this additional funding was reprofiled into 2023-24 leaving a Capital Outturn of £217.273m for 2022-23 as reported to Cabinet on 5 June 2023.
- 1.3 £125.940m was moved from 2022-23 into 2023-24 and future years resulting in an overall capital programme at 1 April 2023 of £1,085.104m. This prompted a review of the capital programme – Review Round 1, to address the viability of delivering a £462.690m capital programme in 2023-24. Further in-year adjustments have resulted in the capital programme shown below:

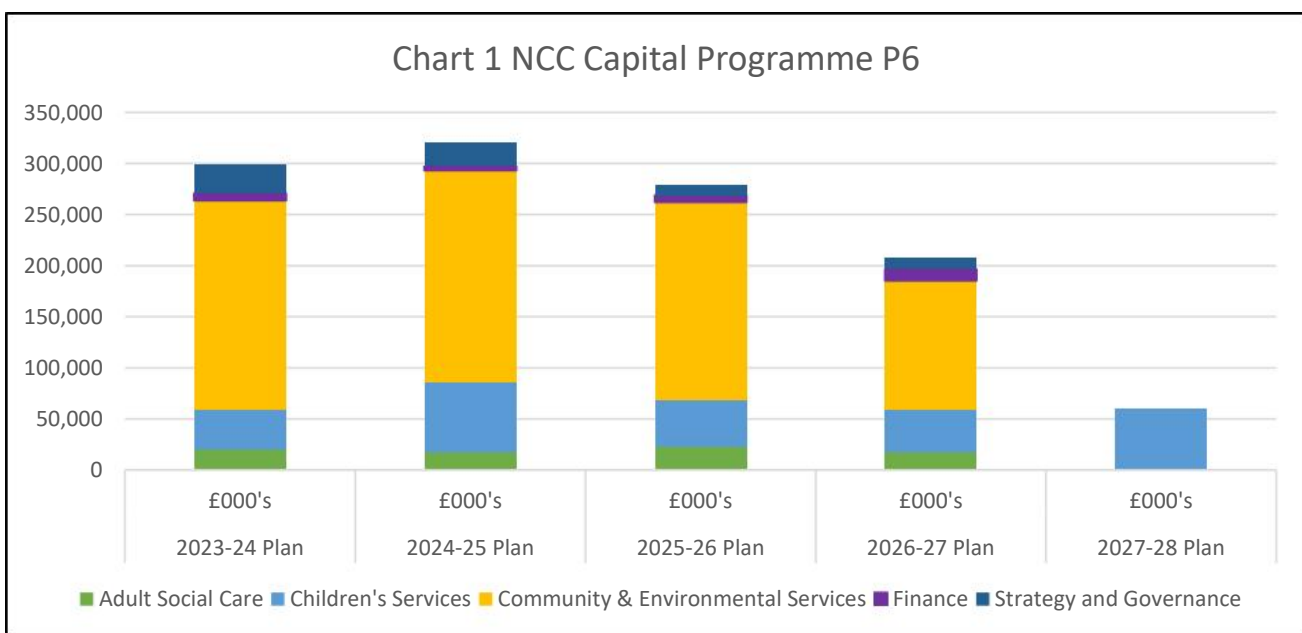
Table 1: Capital Programme budget

	2023-24 budget	Future years
	£m	£m
Uplifts to existing schemes approved in February 2023	1.219	4.548
New schemes approved in February 2023	13.685	20.737
Previously approved schemes brought forward	336.150	580.632
Totals in 2022-27+ Budget Book (total £956.971m)	351.054	605.917
Schemes re-profiled after budget setting (£125.940m)	109.443	16.497
New schemes approved after budget setting including new grants received	2.193	
Revised opening capital programme (total £1,085.104m)	462.690	622.414
Net Re-profiling since start of year	-189.114	189.114
Other movements including new grants and approved schemes	24.782	56.583
Total capital programme budgets (total £1,166.469m)	298.357	868.111

Note: this table and the tables below contain rounding differences

- 1.4 The P6 review of capital schemes takes into account the progress to date and as a result, £5.778m has been reprofiled out to future years from 2023-24, resulting in a net reprofiling total from 2023-24 into future years of £189.114m. The review also adjusted for changes in NCC borrowing required and updates for grant funded projects resulting in a net increase of £5.233m, made up of the following changes:

- £3.4m increase to the Great Yarmouth O&M Campus following full Council approval received in September 2023 comprising £2.9m NCC Borrowing and £0.5m contribution from external funding
- £0.799m increase in the Disabled Facilities Grant funding from central government
- £1.488m increase in S106 Developer contributions and other external grants to Children's Services across multiple development sites including £0.914m for Bradwell
- £0.140m additional Department of Transport funding allocated to various Highways schemes and £1.050m increase in NCC Borrowing funding the NCC contribution to the West Winch Bypass approved by full Council in September 2023
- (£1.461m) reduction in NCC Borrowing budget for ICT comprising of a £1.2m reduction in the schools ICT refresh programme following a full review of kit life cycles and a release of £0.261m for Woodside One Community Hub ICT network following the decision to dispose of Woodside One. This release in ICT budgets will allow for the funding of the Norfolk Fire and Rescue Services Command and Control system, the proposed virement approval is going to full Council in December 2023.
- (£0.183m) net reduction in various other schemes



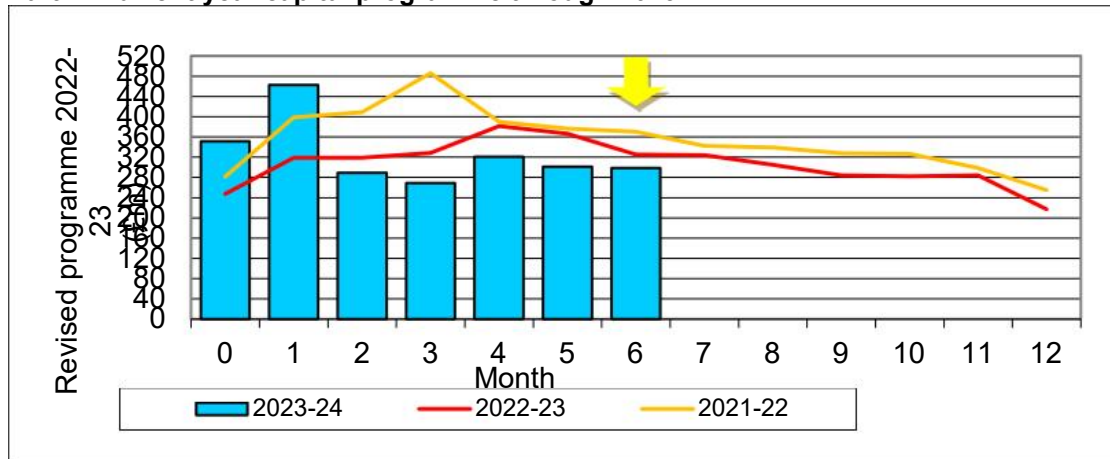
- 1.5 Chart 1 shows that reprofiling efforts Capital Review Rounds 1 and 2 to address the “spike” in 2024-25 budgets bringing it closer to the average run-rate of the Council’s annual capital programme. There is further reprofiling required to bring the 2023-24 and 2024-25 capital programmes down to a sustainable run rate of around £260m per annum. Following the close of quarter 2, further reductions and reprofiling of the budget will be reported in the P7 Finance Monitoring Report in December 2023.
- 1.6 The Capital Programme will also be updated for notifications of capital grant funding. The Council will adjust the profile of capital expenditure funded from NCC borrowing accordingly to accommodate the grant funded projects in the current year.
- 1.7 The full impact of Capital Review Board’s scrutiny of schemes in the capital programme will be reflected in Capital Monthly Reporting to cabinet in future months.

Changes to the Capital Programme

- 1.8 The following chart shows changes to the 2023-24 capital programme through the year. The current year capital programme is following the same trend of building up in the first half of the year as the Council receives notification of central government capital grants

and then gradually settles down to a sustainable delivery level as projects are profiled and reprofiled as schemes develop.

Chart 2: Current year capital programme through 2023-24



- 1.9 Month “0” shows the 2023-24 capital programme at the time of budget approval, with schemes reprofiled from the prior year after budget setting shown in month 1, followed by the most up to date programme. The current year programme will change as additional funding is secured, and when schemes are re-profiled to future years as timing becomes more certain.
- 1.10 The P6 Capital Programme of £298.357m is approximately £50m higher than the capital programme delivered in the last two years (£217.0m – 22-23 and £254.87m – 21-22). Therefore, we can expect a similar trend of reprofiling to occur in 2023-24.
- 1.11 In P6 the Council departments continued their review to identify any reprofiling due and to release any budgets that are no longer deemed to be economically viable given the current climate of rising interest rates. This resulted in £5.778m being released from 2023-24 reprofiled into future years.
- 1.12 Following the Strategic Review restructure of services, the capital projects have been moved into their new service areas. The opening programme has been restated to reflect the new structure. The current year’s capital budget is as follows:

Table 2: Service capital budgets and movements 2023-24

Service	Previous reported Current Year Budget	Reprofiling since previous report	Other Changes since previous report	2023-24 latest Capital Budget
	£m	£m	£m	£m
Adult Social Care	18.803	0.304	0.840	19.947
Children's Services	39.175	-2.049	1.452	38.578
Community & Environmental Services	206.946	-2.983	1.174	205.137
Finance	7.092	0.000	0.000	7.092
Strategy & Transformation	29.215	-1.050	-0.562	27.603
Total	301.232	-5.778	2.904	298.357

Note: this table may contain rounding differences.

1.13 The revised programme for future years (2023-24 to 2026-27) is as follows:

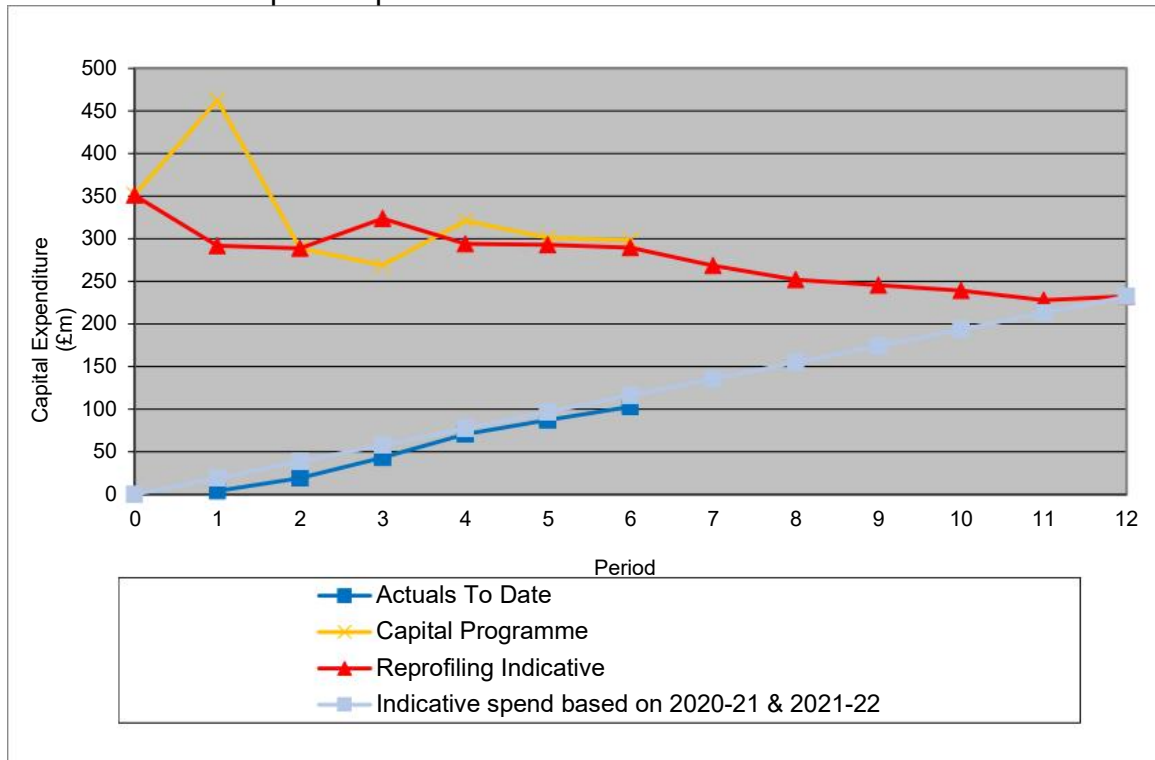
Table 3: Capital programme future years 2022+

Service	Previously reported future programme	Reprofiling since previous report	Other Changes since previous report	2022+ Future Capital Budget
	£m	£m	£m	£m
Adult Social Care	56.177	-0.304	0.000	55.873
Children's Services	215.049	2.049	-0.171	216.928
Community & Environmental Services	521.169	2.983	3.400	527.551
Finance	22.543	0.000	0.000	22.543
Strategy & Transformation	45.068	1.050	-0.900	45.217
Total	860.005	5.778	2.329	868.111

Note: this table contains rounding differences

1.14 Chart 3 below shows the movement on the current year capital budget and year to date capital expenditure:

Chart 3: Actual Capital Expenditure to date



1.15 The graph shows that actual year to date capital spend is ahead of the opening forecast, which was based on the opening capital programme and an indicative calculation based on previous years' expenditure. It also shows that expected reprofiling of budgets to future years as the progress on projects becomes clearer. As a result, capital expenditure 23-24 forecast at P6 is £232.271m.

1.16 Whilst the forecast takes into account the historical tendencies for capital slippage, it does not reflect recent inflationary cost pressures in the costs of construction. We are also currently seeing high levels of inflation on the cost of construction schemes, particularly in the Castle Keep refurbishment project and the major Highways projects. The Council will continue to monitor this risk and review the potential pressures on the capital programme. The impact of cost pressures on the capital programme forecast will be picked up as part of the regular capital monitoring process.

2 Financing the capital programme

2.1 Funding for the capital programme comes primarily from grants and contributions provided by central government and prudential borrowing. These are supplemented by capital receipts, developer contributions, and contributions from revenue budgets and reserves.

Table 4: Financing of the capital programme

Funding stream	2023-24 Programme	Future Years Forecast
	£m	£m
Prudential Borrowing	92.363	381.014
Use of Capital Receipts (see note 2.2)	22.250	0.000
Revenue & Reserves	1.251	0.000
<i>Grants and Contributions:</i>		0.000
DfE	25.638	72.639
DfT	116.570	370.549
DoH	9.977	0.190
DLUHC	0.000	0.000
DCMS	0.000	0.000
DEFRA	0.139	0.000
Developer Contributions	10.631	26.641
Other Local Authorities	2.895	0.788
Local Enterprise Partnership	1.374	0.000
Community Infrastructure Levy	2.476	1.654
National Lottery	3.039	0.000
Academies	0.000	0.000
Commercial Contributions	0.000	0.000
Business rates pool fund	0.000	0.000
Other	9.754	14.635
Total capital programme	298.357	868.111

Note: this table may contain rounding differences

- 2.3 For the purposes of the table above, it is assumed that capital receipts will be applied to short-life assets and through the flexible use of capital receipts as set out in section 3 below and will be applied in line with the Council's Minimum Revenue Provision Statement.
- 2.4 Developer contributions are funding held in relation to planning applications. Section 106 (Town and Country Planning Act 1990) contributions are held in relation to specific projects: primarily schools, with smaller amounts for libraries and highways. The majority of highways developer contributions are a result of section 278 agreements (Highways Act 1980).
- 3 Capital Receipts**
- 3.1 The Council's property portfolio is constantly reviewed to ensure assets are only held where necessary so that capital receipts or rental income can be generated. This in turn reduces revenue costs of the operational property portfolio.
- 3.2 The capital programme, approved in February 2023, gave the best estimate at that time of the value of properties available for disposal in the four years to 2026-27, totalling £18.744m.

Table 5a: Disposals capital programme forecast

Financial Year	Property sales forecast £m
2023-24	3.678
2024-25	4.640
2025-26	6.641
2026-27	3.785
	18.744

The timing of future year sales is the most optimistic case and may slip into future years if sales completions are delayed.

3.3 The revised schedule for current year disposals is as follows:

Table 5b: Capital receipts and forecast use current financial year £m

Capital receipts 2023-24	£m
Capital receipts reserve brought forward	21.947
Loan repayments – subsidiaries forecast for year	2.856
Loan repayments – LIF loan repayments to date	1.131
Capital receipts to date	
Capital receipts in year	1.233
Capital Receipts forecasted for asset disposals subject to contract	3.183
Secured capital receipts to date	4.416
Potential current year farms sales	0.656
Potential current year non-farms sales	1.844
Potential development property sales	1.200
Potential capital receipts	3.720
Forecast available capital receipts	34.071
Forecast use of capital receipts	
Maximum flexible use of capital receipts to support transformation costs (ASC £2.25m)	3.000
Repayment of CIL supported borrowing and Capital Loans	3.987
To fund short-life assets – IT and VPE	20.000
Total Capital Receipts Utilisation	26.987
Capital Receipts Reserve to carry forward	7.083
Norwich Western Link Reserve	5.061
Remaining Capital Receipts Unutilised	2.022

3.4 As can be seen from this table, enough capital receipts have been secured to support the use of capital receipts to support transformation costs, short-life capital expenditure and the Norwich Western Link project, previously approved by County Council.

3.5 Further sales will contribute to the capital receipts reserve which can be used to reduce the external borrowing requirement, fund debt repayments, flexible use of capital receipts or to directly fund capital expenditure, thereby reducing the Capital Funding Requirement (CFR).

3.6 On 10 February 2021, the DLUHC announced that the flexibility granted to local authorities to utilise capital receipts to support transformation costs has been extended for a further 3 years. Table 5b includes £3m earmarked for this in 2023-24, of which £2.25m has been utilised within the Adult Social Care Transformation Programme

4 New capital budget in the pipeline

4.1 There are no new schemes for consideration this month.

ANNEX A: Movements in Capital Budgets – P6 September 2023

SR SubCom	Funding Type	Project co	Project Description	Sum of 23-24 reduction	Sum of 23-24 increase	Sum of Reprofile 23-24	Sum of Reprofile FY	Sum of FY movement
Adult Social Care.	External Funding	SC8140	Disabled Facilities Grant		799,110			
Adult Social Care.	External Funding	SC8172	OP Estate Transformation (Norse Care)			4,000	- 4,000	
Adult Social Care.	External Funding	SC8195	SL Allington Smith Close TCP Core 4		40,500			
Adult Social Care.	External Funding Total				839,610	4,000	- 4,000	
Adult Social Care.	NCC Borrowing and Capital Receipts	SC8153	ICES Equipment			300,000	- 300,000	
Adult Social Care.	NCC Borrowing and Capital Receipts Total					300,000	- 300,000	
Adult Social Services (Directorate)	Adult Social Care. Total				839,610	304,000	- 304,000	
Children's Services	External Funding	EC3802	Costessey Developer cont					- 168,130
Children's Services	External Funding	EC3815	Dereham Developer cont		109,340	- 109,340	109,340	
Children's Services	External Funding	EC3823	Martham Developer contribution		107,940	- 107,940	107,940	
Children's Services	External Funding	EC3827	Bradwell Developer contribution		913,680	- 913,670	913,670	
Children's Services	External Funding	EC3839	CS - Gayton S106		119,810	- 119,810	119,810	
Children's Services	External Funding	EC3865	Hopton Developer Contribution					- 3,000
Children's Services	External Funding	EC3868	Banham Developer Contribution		204,880	- 204,880	204,880	
Children's Services	External Funding	EC3899	CS S106 Interest in year			50,230	- 50,230	
Children's Services	External Funding	EC4352	AC - Sprowston Academy			100,000	- 100,000	
Children's Services	External Funding	EC4695	Basic need	- 430				
Children's Services	External Funding	EC4750	HARNESSING TECHNOLOGY			- 492,650	492,650	
Children's Services	External Funding	ECAPAA	SCHOOL BASED PROJECT		11,750			
Children's Services	External Funding	ECAPDC	VA SCH BASED CAPITAL PROJ		5,280			
Children's Services	External Funding	ECAPFM	CAPITAL FORMULA	- 42,550	15,110	- 113,240	113,240	
Children's Services	External Funding Total			- 42,980	1,487,790	- 1,911,300	1,911,300	- 171,130
Children's Services	NCC Borrowing and Capital Receipts	EC4750	HARNESSING TECHNOLOGY			- 1,290	1,290	
Children's Services	NCC Borrowing and Capital Receipts	ECAPFM	CAPITAL FORMULA		- 7,970	- 136,760	136,760	
Children's Services	NCC Borrowing and Capital Receipts Total				- 7,970	- 138,050	138,050	
Children's Services	Revenue and Reserves	ECAPAA	SCHOOL BASED PROJECT		15,430			
Children's Services	Revenue and Reserves Total				15,430			
Children's Services (Directorate)	Children's Services Total			- 42,980	1,495,250	- 2,049,350	2,049,350	- 171,130
Fire	NCC Borrowing and Capital Receipts	CF0395	Hethersett & Fakenham FS Water Carriers			- 200,000	200,000	
Fire	NCC Borrowing and Capital Receipts	CF0396	Technical Response Units			- 60,000	60,000	
Fire	NCC Borrowing and Capital Receipts Total					- 260,000	260,000	
Fire Total						- 260,000	260,000	

SR SubCom	Funding Type	Project co	Project Description	Sum of 23-24 reduction	Sum of 23-24 increase	Sum of Reprofile 23-24	Sum of Reprofile FY	Sum of FY movement
Growth and Investment	External Funding	PU2918	GY O&M Campus					500,000
Growth and Investment	External Funding Total							500,000
Growth and Investment	NCC Borrowing and Capital Receipts	PU2918	GY O&M Campus					2,900,000
Growth and Investment	NCC Borrowing and Capital Receipts Total							2,900,000
Growth and Investment Total								3,400,000
Highways	External Funding	PAA003	Norwich - Transforming Cities bid			- 594,080	594,080	
Highways	External Funding	PB0000	Bus Infrastructure Budget & Forecast			- 80,920	80,920	
Highways	External Funding	PE0000	Cycling Schemes Budget & Forecast			- 950,030	950,030	
Highways	External Funding	PFA060	Wimbotsham Trod to link Wimbotsham and Stow Bridge		3,500			
Highways	External Funding	PJA108	Holt Fish Hl/Market Plice (Pedn) & Church St (Park)		14,640			
Highways	External Funding	PKA019	Hempnall - Long Stratton Bypass		100			
Highways	External Funding	PKA117	Harleston and Redenhall, Town Centre Refurbishment		73,950			
Highways	External Funding	PRA002	HADBA B1172/Colney Lane, Hethersett Traffic Sig		3,380			
Highways	External Funding	PRA027	S278 HADBA D Mkt - Properity Homes 9/2/21/0152		3,500			
Highways	External Funding	PRA030	S278 HADBA Sth Wootton, Knights Hill - 9/2/16/2231		41,370			
Highways	External Funding Total				140,440	- 1,625,030	1,625,030	
Highways	NCC Borrowing and Capital Receipts	PKA021	West Winch Bypass - Local Road Schemes		1,050,000			
Highways	NCC Borrowing and Capital Receipts	PM9999	Other Highways Schemes Budget & Forecast			3,200	- 3,200	
Highways	NCC Borrowing and Capital Receipts	PMA259	North Walsham - Market Town Drainage			1,500	- 1,500	
Highways	NCC Borrowing and Capital Receipts	PMB383	Countywide - Ash Dieback			8,520	- 8,520	
Highways	NCC Borrowing and Capital Receipts	PMB389	Additional Surface Dressing funding from extra 10m			- 36,060	36,060	
Highways	NCC Borrowing and Capital Receipts	PN9999	Default Project code for CES schemes	- 20,000		1,000	- 1,000	
Highways	NCC Borrowing and Capital Receipts Total			- 20,000	1,050,000	- 21,840	21,840	
Highways Total				- 20,000	1,190,440	- 1,646,870	1,646,870	
Libraries	External Funding	LL0688	S106 White Horse Lane, Trowse TUK			- 4,660	4,660	
Libraries	External Funding	LL0690	S106 The Gardens, Lt Melt HET	- 130				
Libraries	External Funding	LL0752	S106 Chalk Lane, Narborough	- 1,190				
Libraries	External Funding	LL0768	S106 27-31, New Road, North Walsham	- 10				
Libraries	External Funding	LL0803	S106 Alderman Jackson School, King's Lynn			- 840	840	
Libraries	External Funding	LL0817	S106 Whissonsett Rd, Colkirk. FAK					- 20
Libraries	External Funding	LL0834	S106 Allens Garage, Lynn Road, Gayton			- 2,960	2,960	
Libraries	External Funding	LL0841	S106 Northgate Hospital, Northgate Street. Gt YAR		6,630			
Libraries	External Funding	LL0842	S106 Land at Grove Road, Banham. CEN348			- 2,530	2,530	
Libraries	External Funding	LL0844	S106 Land adj. Lowestoft Rd, Hopton. GOR	- 1,590				
Libraries	External Funding	LL1040	Library Building Improvements			- 12,800	12,800	
Libraries	External Funding Total			- 2,920	6,630	- 23,790	23,790	- 20
Libraries	NCC Borrowing and Capital Receipts	LL1040	Library Building Improvements			- 52,100	52,100	
Libraries	NCC Borrowing and Capital Receipts Total					- 52,100	52,100	
Libraries Total				- 2,920	6,630	- 75,890	75,890	- 20
Offices	NCC Borrowing and Capital Receipts	CA2318	Estate Buildings Decarbonisation			- 1,000,000	1,000,000	
Offices	NCC Borrowing and Capital Receipts Total					- 1,000,000	1,000,000	
Offices Total						- 1,000,000	1,000,000	
Community & Environmental Services (Directorate) Total				- 22,920	1,197,070	- 2,982,760	2,982,760	3,399,980

SR SubCom	Funding Type	Project co	Project Description	Sum of 23-24 reduction	Sum of 23-24 increase	Sum of Reprofile 23-24	Sum of Reprofile FY	Sum of FY movement
Digital Services	NCC Borrowing and Capital Receipts	KT2612	Strategic Co-ordinating Group Accommodation	- 1,240				
Digital Services	NCC Borrowing and Capital Receipts	KT2613	Future Network Project			- 300,000	300,000	
Digital Services	NCC Borrowing and Capital Receipts	KT2662	Schools ICT Refresh 23-24 to 26-27		- 300,000			- 900,000
Digital Services	NCC Borrowing and Capital Receipts	KT2671	Woodside One Community Hub		- 261,090			
Digital Services	NCC Borrowing and Capital Receipts	KT2690	LoRaWAN Innovation Network			- 100,000	100,000	
Digital Services	NCC Borrowing and Capital Receipts	KT2706	Fire Service Station End Equipment Refresh			- 425,000	425,000	
Digital Services	NCC Borrowing and Capital Receipts	SC8147	Social Care Information System Reproc			- 24,770	24,770	
Digital Services	NCC Borrowing and Capital Receipts Total			- 1,240	- 561,090	- 849,770	849,770	- 900,000
Digital Services Total				- 1,240	- 561,090	- 849,770	849,770	- 900,000
Legal Services	NCC Borrowing and Capital Receipts	KA0002	Nplaw IT System			- 200,000	200,000	
Legal Services	NCC Borrowing and Capital Receipts Total					- 200,000	200,000	
Legal Services Total						- 200,000	200,000	
Strategy and Transformation Directorate Total				- 1,240	- 561,090	- 1,049,770	1,049,770	- 900,000
Grand Total				- 67,140	2,970,840	- 5,777,880	5,777,880	2,328,850

