



Policy and Resources Committee

**Minutes of the Meeting Held on 28 January 2019
2:00pm Edwards Room, County Hall, Norwich**

Present:

Mr A Proctor (Chairman)

Mr B Borrett
Ms E Corlett
Mr S Dark
Mrs M Dewsbury
Mr T FitzPatrick
Mr S Morpew

Mr G Plant
Mr D Roper
Mr E Seward
Mr B Stone
Mr M Wilby

Substitute Member present:

Mr A Jamieson (sub for Mr R Oliver)

Also present:

Ms A Kemp
Mr J Mooney
Mr B Spratt

Mrs A Thomas
Mrs K Vincent

1 Apology for Absence

1.1 An apology for absence was received from Mr R Oliver.

2 Minutes

2.1 The minutes of the previous meeting held on 26 November 2018 were confirmed by the Committee and signed by the Chairman.

3 Declarations of Interest

3.1 Mr T FitzPatrick and Mr A Jamieson declared "Other Interests" in the NORSE Business Plan at item 17 on the agenda.

4 Items of Urgent Business

4.1 There were no items of urgent business.

5 **Public Question Time**

- 5.1 There was one public question from Marilyn Hoxley which can be found together with a supplementary question and the answer given in the meeting at Appendix A to these minutes.

6 **Local Member Issues**

- 6.1 There was one local Member question from Ms A Kemp which can be found together with a supplementary question and the answer given in the meeting at Appendix B to these minutes.

Section A – Items for Discussion and Decision/Action

7 **Finance Monitoring Report Period 8 November 2018**

- 7.1 The annexed report (7) by the by the Executive Director of Finance and Commercial Services was received.
- 7.2 The Committee received a report by the Executive Director of Finance and Commercial Services that summarised the Period 8 (30 November 2018) forecast financial outturn position for 2018-19, to assist Members to maintain an overview of the overall financial position of the Council.
- 7.3 The Committee noted that Norfolk continued to experience high and increasing levels of need across Children's Services, particularly in relation to children with special educational needs and children at risk of harm. Changes in the assumptions behind the reporting of the DSG High Needs block net deficit (that had previously been set against LMS balances) meant that the total forecast deficit on the DSG High Needs block at 31 March 2019 was now £13.601m.
- 7.4 Members drew attention to the finance general underspend and the flexible use of capital receipts (from the sale of land at Hethel Engineering Centre to Hethel Innovation Ltd) to support transformation costs. In reply to questions, the Executive Director of Finance and Commercial Services said that it was intended that £2m of the capital receipts would be allocated to the Children's Services Demand Management and Prevention Strategy to help meet pressures within that department. The Executive Director of Children's Services added that a business model for the Demand Management and Prevention Strategy (originally developed by East Sussex County Council) had been successfully introduced in Hampshire and Hertfordshire.
- 7.5 In reply to questions about whether adult social services had unallocated grant monies that could be used to support people with disabilities, the Executive Director of Finance and Commercial Services said that the challenging financial climate meant that these grants had in effect already been spent and were subject to an agreement reached with the NHS.

7.6 The Committee RESOLVED:

1. To note a period 8 forecast general fund revenue underspend of £0.035m (period 6 overspend £4.496m) noting also that Chief Officers will take measures throughout the year to reduce or eliminate potential over-spends;
2. To note the forecast General Balances at 31 March 2019 of £19.536m, before taking into account any over/under spends;
3. To note the revised expenditure and funding of the current and future 2018-22 capital programme as set out in Appendix 2 of the report.

The Committee also RESOLVED (with 2 recorded abstentions):

4. To approve additional current year capital funding for 1) Norfolk Community Learning Services ICT Transformation Project (£0.420m) and 2) Schools ICT refresh programme 2018-22 £0.360m, in advance of schools contributions, as set out in capital Appendix 2 section 3 of the report;
5. TO RECOMMEND TO COUNTY COUNCIL the flexible use of £2m capital receipts to fund the Children's Services Demand Management & Prevention Strategy in 2018- 19, as set out in Appendix 2 section 4 of the report.

8 Delivering Financial Savings 2018-19

8.1 The annexed report (8) by the Executive Director of Finance and Commercial Services was received.

8.2 The Committee received a report by the Executive Director of Finance and Commercial Services that provided details of the forecast year-end position in respect of the delivery of the 2018-19 savings agreed by the County Council at its budget meeting 12 February 2018.

8.3 The Committee RESOLVED to:

- a. Note that officers are taking action to ensure that savings are delivered and that shortfalls in savings are met through alternative savings or underspends;
- b. Note the total projected shortfall of £5.459m in 2018-19, which amounts to 18% of total savings;
- c. Note the budgeted value of 2018-19 savings projects rated as RED of £3.142m, of which £0.893m are forecast to be delivered;
- d. Note the budgeted value of 2018-19 savings projects rated as AMBER of £12.145m, of which £8.715m are forecast to be delivered;
- e. Note the budgeted value of GREEN and BLUE rated projects of £14.712m, where are forecast to deliver £14.932m.
- f. Agree the forecast changes to assumptions and rescheduling of savings totalling £5.900m in 2019-20, £1.550m in 2020-21 and £2.500m in 2021-22, which have been reflected in budget planning.

9 **Strategic and Financial Planning 2019-20 to 2021-22 and Revenue Budget 2019-20.**

- 9.1 The annexed report (9) by the by the Executive Director of Finance and Commercial Services was received. The Committee also received by way of a supplementary agenda the unconfirmed draft Service Committee minutes (Appendix G to the main report) and (to be found on the Committee pages website) the equality and rural impact assessment report (Appendix H (ii) to the main report).
- 9.2 The Committee received a report by the Executive Director of Finance and Commercial Services that set out the overall direction of travel for strategic and financial planning for 2019-20 to 2021-22 and provided the detailed financial information to support the Committee's proposed Revenue Budget and Council Tax recommendations.
- 9.3 **It was moved by Mr Morphew, seconded by Mr Roper:**
- “That the Adult Social Care Business Risk Reserve (£2m for 2019/20) be used to fund the overspend in the adult minimum income guarantee for the forthcoming year.”**
- 9.4 In the ensuing discussion those Members who were in support of the motion said that to go ahead with the removal of the adult minimum income guarantee would create additional financial hardship for people who already had a low standard of living / limited ability to boost their income from other sources. A delay in implementing the change would gave these people the extra time that they needed to adjust their spending for the year ahead and prevent benefit dependency. It was suggested that any change in the guarantee should be made after the publication of the long-awaited social care green paper.
- 9.5 Other Members said that the Adult Social Care Committee had already carefully considered the implications of not going ahead with the change in the adult minimum income guarantee. The Council should not look to use its reserves to delay the introduction of changes in policy that had budgetary implications for other council services. Without making the reduction in the adult minimum income guarantee the Council would be unable to adequately plan its budget and to properly address issues that were driving long-term demand for other Council services. The change in the adult minimum income guarantee, while regrettable, had become necessary to bring Norfolk in line with national government policy and the position taken elsewhere in the country.
- 9.6 **On being put to the vote the motion on the table was LOST (by four votes in favour and 9 votes against).**
- 9.7 The Leader and Deputy Leader commended the officers for their hard work in compiling a very comprehensive budget report that was rooted in strong financial management. The Leader said that he regularly pursued opportunities to promote Norfolk and represent its interests to Government.

- 9.8 In reply to questions, the Executive Director of Finance and Commercial Services said that the budget was based on an increase in general council tax of 2.99% and no increase in the Adult Social Care precept from the 2018-19 level. Funding relating to adult social care services in recent years had predominately been on a one-off basis. Whilst the Council had aimed to align one-off funding to one off expenditure, such as invest to save proposals, this was not always possible. The additional demand for SEND places had placed additional pressure on the High Needs block spend in the dedicated schools grant and that this matter was reported regularly to Children's Services Committee.
- 9.9 In reply to further questions, it was pointed out that the Council's projected overall budget gap position was highly sensitive to assumptions made about the levels of Government funding from 2020-21 onwards. There was a risk in relation to the Comprehensive Spending Review and the Fair Funding Review that a failure by the Government to provide adequate resources to fund local authorities could lead to a requirement for further service reductions, particularly where the Fair Funding Review results in a redistribution between authority types or geographical areas.
- 9.10 In response to a member question about the level of increase in council tax that would be required to close the forecast £70m budget gap, the Executive Director of Finance and Commercial Services advised that this would result in a double digit increase of around 10% in council tax each year, significantly above the referendum threshold. It was confirmed that the additional council tax required to raise £70m would be approximately 8% in both 2020-21 and 2021-22, which would be the increase over and above the existing council tax assumptions.

9.11 **RESOLVED**

That the Policy and Resources Committee:

- 1. Note the specific recommendations for budgets and savings proposals relating to Policy and Resources Committee's own budgets as set out in Appendix F of the report and detailed in Appendix C of the report.**
- 2. Note the statements regarding the robustness of budget estimates, assumptions and risks relating to the 2019-20 budget, set out in section 6 of the report, and the separate report on the Robustness of Estimates elsewhere on the agenda.**
- 3. Note the feedback from Service Committees, the findings of public consultation, and the further changes required to deliver a balanced budget as set out in this report (in particular paragraph 5.7 and Table 7 of the report).**
- 4. Note the findings of equality and rural assessments, linked at Appendix H(ii) to this report, and in doing so, note the Council's duty under the Equality Act 2010 to have due regard to the need to:**
 - Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Act;**
 - Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it; and**

- Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.
5. Note that the Council has responded to the consultation on the Provisional Settlement, and delegate authority to the Leader of the Council to approve responses on behalf of the Council to the two further consultations in respect of the Review of Relative Needs and Resources, and the Business Rate Retention Scheme, as referred to in paragraph 4.4 of the report.
 6. Note the pressures on the High Needs Block of the Dedicated Schools Grant and that these will give rise to a requirement for significant savings in future years if the issues are not adequately addressed by Government as set out in section 13 of the report.

9.12 **RESOLVED (by 9 votes to 4 votes)**

That Policy and Resources Committee RECOMMEND to COUNTY COUNCIL:

- a. An overall County Council Net Revenue Budget of £409.073m for 2019-20, including budget increases of £116.081m and budget decreases of -£95.807m as set out in Table 8 of this report, and the actions required to deliver the proposed savings.
- b. The budget proposals set out for 2020-21 to 2021-22, including authorising Chief Officers to take the action required to deliver budget savings for 2020- 21 to 2021-22 as appropriate.
- c. With regard to the future years, that further plans to meet the remaining budget shortfalls in the period 2020-21 to 2021-22 are developed and brought back to Members during 2019-20.
- d. To note the advice of the Section 151 Officer, at paragraph 10.11, on the financial impact of an increase in council tax, as set out in section 6 of the report and section 10 of the report, and confirm the assumptions that:
 - I. The Council's 2019-20 budget will include a general council tax increase of 2.99% with no (0.00%) increase in the Adult Social Care precept, an overall increase of 2.99% (shown at Appendix D of the report) based on the current discretions offered by Government and as recommended by the Executive Director of Finance and Commercial Services.
 - II. The Council's budget planning in future years will include council tax increases 1.99%, as set out in the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS Table 5 of the report). These council tax assumptions have regard to the level of referendum threshold expected to be set for the year, and take into account the Government's assumptions in the Local Government Finance Settlement that Local Authorities will raise the maximum council tax available to them. The final level of council tax for future years is subject to Member decisions annually.
 - III. No future increases in the Adult Social Care precept in 2020-21 onwards are assumed based on current Government policy but that these will be subject to Member decisions annually

within and informed by any parameters defined by the Government.

- IV. That if the referendum threshold were increased in 2020-21 and/or 2021-22 to above 1.99%, or any further discretion were offered to increase the Adult Social Care precept (or similar), then it is likely that the Section 151 Officer would recommend the Council take advantage of this flexibility in view of the Council's overall financial position.**
- e. That the Executive Director of Finance and Commercial Services be authorised to transfer from the County Fund to the Salaries and General Accounts all sums necessary in respect of revenue and capital expenditure provided in the 2019-20 Budget, to make payments, to raise and repay loans, and to invest funds.**
- f. To agree the Medium Term Financial Strategy 2019-22 as set out in Appendix I of the report, including the two policy objectives to be achieved:**
 - I. Revenue: To identify further funding or savings for 2020-21 and 2021-22 to produce a balanced budget in all years 2019-22 in accordance with the timetable set out in the Revenue Budget report (Appendix E to the report).**
 - II. Capital: To provide a framework for identifying and prioritising capital requirements and proposals to ensure that all capital investment is targeted at meeting the Council's priorities.**
- g. The mitigating actions proposed in the equality and rural impact assessments (Appendix H(i) to the report).**

10. Capital Strategy and Programme 2019-20

- 10.1 The annexed report (10) by the Executive Director of Finance and Commercial Services was received.
- 10.2 The Committee received a report by the Executive Director of Finance and Commercial Services that presented the proposed capital strategy and programme for 2019-20 including information on the funding available to support the programme.
- 10.3 Some Members drew attention to the planned refurbishment of the remaining areas of county hall. They questioned whether all the proposed expenditure on the building and the resurfacing of car parks and access roads on the county hall site was justified in the current financial climate. Other Members said that this work was essential to prevent structural deterioration, provide for asbestos and major plant replacement and to add to the lifespan of the building, prevent car park flooding and enable the release of other buildings.
- 10.4 Some Members also drew attention to the ending of the Norwich Highway Agreement between the County Council and City Council to jointly oversee the operation of the highways function within the city boundary and asked for the cost implications of the changes in responsibility for highway work in the city to be kept under review by the County Council at a corporate member level.

10.5 **RESOLVED**

That Policy and Resources Committee note:

1. The capital grant settlements summarised in Section 4 of the report;
2. The estimated capital receipts to be generated, subject to market conditions, over the next three years to support schemes not funded from other sources, as set out in Table 5 of the report.

That Policy and Resources Committee agree (with four abstentions):

3. The Capital Strategy at Appendix A to the report as a framework for the prioritisation and continued development of the Council's capital programme;
4. The proposed 2019-22+ capital programme of £548.592m.

That Policy and Resources Committee RECOMMEND TO COUNTY COUNCIL:

5. The programme for approval, including the new and extended capital schemes outlined in Appendix D to the report;
6. The Council's Flexible Use of Capital Receipts Strategy for 2019-20 to 2021-22 as set out in Section 5 of the report.

11 **County Council Budget 2019-20 to 2021-22: Statement on the Adequacy of Provisions and Reserves 2019-22**

11.1 The annexed report (11) by the Executive Director of Finance and Commercial Services was received.

11.2 The Committee received a report by the Executive Director of Finance and Commercial Services that detailed the County Council's reserves and provisions, including an assessment of their purpose and expected usage during 2019-22. The report included an assessment of the Council's financial risks that should be taken into consideration in agreeing the minimum level of General Balances held by the Council.

11.3 **RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND (with two abstentions):**

That County Council:

- a. Note the planned reduction in non-schools earmarked and general reserves of 42.4% over three years, from £85.180m (March 2018) to £49.044m (March 2022) (paragraph 5.2 of the report);
- b. Note the policy on reserves and provisions in Appendix C of the report;
- c. Agree, based on current planning assumptions and risk forecasts set out in Appendix B of the report:
 - i. for 2019-20, a minimum level of General Balances of

- £19.536m, and**
- ii. **a forecast minimum level for planning purposes of:**
 - a) **2020-21, £25.927m; and**
 - b) **2021-22, £26.550m.**
- as part of the consideration of the budget plans for 2019-22, reflecting the transfer of risk from Central to Local Government, and supporting recommendations;**
- d. **Agree the use of non-school Earmarked Reserves, as set out in Appendix E of the report.**

12 County Council Budget 2019-20 to 2021-22: Robustness of Estimates

12.1 The annexed report (12) by the Executive Director of Finance and Commercial Services was received.

12.2 The Committee received a report from the Executive Director of Finance and Commercial Services that provided an analysis of the robustness of the estimates used in the preparation of the County Council's budget which was reported elsewhere on the agenda.

12.3 RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND (with two abstentions):

That the County Council agree to the level of risk and set of assumptions set out in the report, which underpin the revenue and capital budget decisions and planning for 2019-22.

13 Annual Investment and Treasury Strategy 2019-20

13.1 The annexed report (13) by the Executive Director of Finance and Commercial Services was received.

13.2 The Committee received a report by the Executive Director of Finance and Commercial Services that in accordance with regulatory requirements, presented the Council's investment and borrowing strategies for 2019-20, including the criteria for choosing investment counterparties and managing the Council's underlying need to borrow for capital purposes.

13.3 RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND:

That Policy and Resources Committee endorse and recommend to County Council the Annual Investment and Treasury Strategy for 2019-20 at Annex 1 to the report, including:

- a. **the capital prudential indicators included in the body of the report;**
- b. **the Minimum Revenue Provision Statement 2019-20 at Appendix 1 to the report;**
- c. **the list of approved counterparties at Appendix 4 to the report, including working capital facilities for Hethel Innovation Limited (maximum £0.5m) and Repton Property Developments Limited (maximum £1m) to be made available from the date of approval by County Council;**

d. the treasury management prudential indicators detailed in Appendix 5 to the report.

14 Developing a whole-Council business plan

- 14.1 The annexed report (14) by the Executive Director of Strategy and Governance was received.
- 14.2 The Committee received a report by the Executive Director of Strategy and Governance that proposed the development of a Norfolk County Council business plan for the period 2019-2025, to be developed between January and April 2019.
- 14.3 In reply to questions, it was confirmed that the business plan would focus on the “big ticket items” behind the Council’s ambition, approach and plans to grow the economy and improve social mobility in Norfolk, rather than on the Council’s day to day service activities which would continue to be included in departmental and team plans.

14.3 RESOLVED

That Policy and Resources Committee:

- 1. Agree to the development of a 6-year Norfolk County Council business plan, in line with the principles and proposals set out in the report.**
- 2. Agree the timetable for completing the Norfolk County Council business plan as set out in paragraph 4 of the report.**

15 Brexit Implications for the County Council

- 15.1 The annexed report (15) by the Executive Director of Community and Environmental Services was received.
- 15.2 The Committee was updated on changes in government guidance since the publication of the report for EU citizens to apply to continue to live, work and study in the UK after Brexit under the EU settlement scheme without having to incur a fee.

15.3 RESOLVED

That Policy and Resources Committee:

- 1. Note the work in hand to understand Brexit’s impact on the Council’s workforce and that of its supply chain, as well as schools with significant EU communities.**
- 2. Note the Council’s efforts to shape future funding to benefit Norfolk plans to make the case to Government for more funding for local business advice related to Brexit.**
- 3. Ask for a further progress report at the next meeting.**

16 **Liquidlogic Project Update**

16.1 The annexed report (16) by the Executive Director of Adult Social Services was received.

16.2 Members spoke about the good progress that continued to be made with the Liquidlogic project in Adult Social Services, Children's Services and Finance.

16.3 **RESOLVED**

That Policy and Resources Committee note the good progress in delivering the new Social Care System for Adult Social Services, Children's and Finance and ask for no further progress reports to be presented to this Committee.

17 **NORSE Business Plan**

17.1 The annexed report (17) by the Executive Director of Finance and Commercial Services was received.

17.2 The Managing Director of the Norse Group Ltd outlined the aspirations of Norse Group Ltd for the financial year 2019-20 including plans for on-going growth in the business and the benefits the company would continue to bring to the Norfolk economy.

17.3 Mrs K Vincent, Chair of the Norse Shareholders Committee, said that the shareholder committee had considered the growth strategy for the company to be both ambitious and achievable. She said that the shareholder committee had discussed a potential change in the brand name (within the umbrella of Norse Group Ltd) for Norfolk Property Services to Norse Consulting (subject to further discussion). The shareholder committee had also considered a proposal for the appointment of non-executive directors at Norse Group Ltd which would be reported to the next meeting of Policy and Resources Committee.

17.4 **RESOLVED**

That Policy and Resources Committee:

- 1. Approve the Norse Group Business plan for 2019/20.**
- 2. Note that the business plan reflects the aspirations of the shareholders.**
- 3. Note that a further report on a proposal for the appointment of non-executive directors of Norse Group Ltd will be reported to the next meeting of Policy and Resources Committee.**

18 **Limited Company Consents**

18.1 The annexed report (18) by the Executive Director of Finance and Commercial Services was received.

18.2 The Committee **RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND TO COUNCIL:**

- 1. The change of directors to companies as detailed in Appendix A to the report.**
- 2. The formation of a new subsidiary company of NPS Property Consultants Limited to be called Medway Growth Limited as detailed in Appendix B to the report.**

19 **Health, Safety and Well-being mid-year report 2018/19**

- 19.1 The annexed report (19) by the Executive Director of Strategy and Governance was received.
- 19.2 The Committee received a report by the Executive Director of Strategy and Governance that summarised the County Council's key priorities to ensure that the Council had in place a robust management system to ensure the health and safety of Council employees and others affected by Council business undertaking; including anyone who the Council provided services to (either directly or through a 3rd party) such as school pupils, commissioned services clients, contractors and Members.
- 19.3 It was noted that at the mid-year point progress with key improvements was slow, however a refresh of the figures in January had indicated an increase in pace.
- 19.4 Members stressed the importance of encouraging more managers to undertake mental health first aid training. It was confirmed that feedback from those who had undergone the training reported feeling more able to have good quality conversations with staff regarding mental health.
- 19.5 **RESOLVED**

That the Policy and Resources Committee:

- 1. Note overall performance position at the midyear Point;**
- 2. Endorse the commitments made by Executive Directors to further improve the position by the end of March 2019.**

20 **Determination of Admission Arrangements 2020/21**

- 20.1 The annexed report (20) by the Executive Director of Children's Services was received.
- 20.2 The Executive Director of Children's Services explained the changes in admission arrangements for 2020/21 that were consulted upon, considered by Children's Services Committee on 22 January 2019 and recommended to this meeting of Policy and Resources Committee for approval.

20.3 **RESOLVED**

That the Policy and Resources Committee:

1. Approve the co-ordination schemes and timetables including in-year coordination for 2020/21.
2. Agree the admission arrangements for Community and VC schools.
3. Agree to the revised priority for Looked After Children, to include children adopted from abroad within the over-subscription rules for Community and VC schools.
4. Approve the introduction of the Fair Access Protocol.

21 **Notifications of Exemptions Under Contract Standing Orders**

- 21.1 The annexed report (21) by the Executive Director of Finance and Commercial Services was received.

RESOLVED

That as required by paragraph 9.12 of the Council's Contract Standing Orders, Policy and Resources Committee note the exemptions that have been granted under paragraph 9.11 of Contract Standing Orders by the Head of Procurement and Head of Law in consultation with the Chairman of Policy and Resources Committee that are over £250,000.

Section B – Items for Report

22 **Feedback from Members serving on Outside Bodies**

- 22.1 The Chairman briefly updated the Committee on the local government financing issues that were on the agenda for a recent meeting of the East of England LGA which he had been unable to attend.

Appendix A

Public Question from Marilyn Hoxley:

“Re: Decision by the Adult Social Care Committee on 14/1/19 to vote in favour of the change of charging policy.

The Care Act 2014 places on the Local Authority a duty to promote physical, mental and emotional well-being, social and economic well-being and personal dignity and helping people with disabilities to connect with their local communities.

95% of respondents to Norfolk County Council's consultation on the

proposal to change the adult care charging policy objected to the proposals. Many stated that this would cause financial hardship - the respondents were service users or parents/carers like myself. In my daughter's case I hold a finance Lasting Power of Attorney as she has a severe learning disability and does not have capacity to comprehend such matters. In her case as a tenant in supported living she will have little money left over per week once she has contributed this vastly increased amount to her care and has paid for all her utilities and food and necessary outgoings. How can Norfolk County Council fulfil this duty under The Care Act 2014 when it is making a decision to leave the most vulnerable members of our society in financial hardship?"

Answer by Executive Director of Social Services:

"The proposals do not change the way that the Council works with people with care needs. Wellbeing is a part of the care assessment and is considered along with other outcomes within the Care Act. The process of one to one review and examination of the wide range of community options would allow individual well-being to be considered, which is within the criteria of the Care Act.

The proposals are in line with the government's guidelines on charging and the minimum income guarantee proposed is based on the level that the government sets, which considers relevant legislation including the Care Act.

However, we recognise that these changes will have an impact on people's finances. Following the consultation and the responses received we are now working on how the changes will be implemented.

The proposal also looks to increase support, primarily for working age adults with disabilities and mental health needs, to access employment and other opportunities. As well as improved benefits and debt management support, which was a priority for many people responding to the consultation."

Supplementary Question by Marilyn Hoxley:

"When will the changes be implemented and does the County Council operate a similar scheme of benefits for the disabled to that available to County Council employees?"

Answer given Executive Director of Social Services:

"The changes will be phased in over two years. The method used to bring about the changes has yet to be finalised and will be made public shortly. "

Additional Answer by Executive Director of Finance and Commercial Services:

"The Director of Public Health may be aware of a scheme of support for those with disabilities. An answer will be provided to the next meeting of the

Committee. “

Appendix B

Question from Alexandra Kemp:

Value for Money in Large Contracts

“To what extent has Norfolk County Council made savings in this financial year, through Contract Compliance Audits and the robust monitoring of Framework Contracts, particularly of high value Framework Contracts without detailed underlying contracts, in order to achieve maximum value for money for the Norfolk taxpayer from contracts with the private sector, including major contracts affecting King’s Lynn?”

Answer:

“The Council does not have framework contracts without detailed underlying contracts. Framework contracts (and term contracts) set out in considerable detail the terms and conditions of contract and the rates that apply. Officers must then specify accurately the work that is required for a particular project and agree terms of reference for that work, the price for which is determined using the rates in the framework.

To assist officers in this task, training has recently been provided to relevant CES staff on making best use of consultants. Officers found this valuable and the training is now being rolled out to other directorates. Training on contract management has also been provided to CES staff; again this is now being rolled out to other directorates.

Internal audit has a rolling programme of audit of major contracts, and any significant adverse findings are reported to the Audit Committee in the usual way.

It is not possible to attribute a monetary value to these activities, which are part of normal good governance.”

Supplementary Question by Alexandra Kemp:

“How would the Council’s 6-year Business Plan ensure proper infrastructure was in place for the relocation of businesses to King’s Lynn, make the most of the town’s cultural assets and support development of the Nar Ouse Enterprise Zone (NOEZ) with regard to 1. the West Winch Bypass 2. the Locate Norfolk website which underplayed Lynn and should include St George’s Guildhall and the international King’s Lynn Festival. 3. A commitment to the future vision of St George’s Guildhall as supported by the Shakespeare Guildhall Trust as a regional, national and international centre for artistic and cultural opportunity for all?”

Answer:

“The County Council was working with the Borough Council of King’s Lynn and West Norfolk on the need for infrastructure in King’s Lynn and West Norfolk. The content of the Locate Norfolk website would be checked to ensure that there was as much detail about events and activities in King’s Lynn as there was for elsewhere in the county.”

The meeting concluded at 12.12 pm

Chairman