

**Norfolk County Council
Minutes of the Meeting Held at 10am on
Tuesday 30 January 2024**

Present:

ADAMS Tim	MACKIE Ian
ADAMS Tony	MASON BILLIG Kay
ANNISON Carl	MAXFIELD Ed
AQUARONE Steffan	MORIARTY Jim
ASKEW Stephen	MORPHEW Steve
BAMBRIDGE Lesley	NEALE Paul
BENSLY James	NUNN William
BILLS David	OSBORN Jamie
BLUNDELL Sharon	PECK Greg
BORRETT Bill	PENFOLD Saul
BROCIEK-COULTON Julie	PLANT Graham
CARPENTER Penny	PRICE Ben
CHENERY OF HORSBRUGH Michael	RICHMOND Will
CLANCY Stuart	ROPER Dan
COLWELL Rob	ROWETT Catherine
CORLETT Emma	RUMSBY Chrissie
CROFTS John	SANDS Mike
DALBY Michael	SAVAGE Robert
DARK Stuart	SAYERS David
DAWSON Chris	SHIRES Lucy
DEWSBURY Margaret	STONE Barry
DUIGAN Phillip	STOREY Martin
EAGLE Fabian	THOMAS Alison
ELMER Daniel	THOMSON Vic
FISHER John	VARDY Eric
GRANT Andy	VINCENT Karen
JAMES Jane	WALKER Colleen
JAMIESON Andrew	WARD John
JERMY Terry	WATKINS Brian
JONES Brenda	WHYMARK Fran
LONG Brian	WILBY Martin

Present: 62

1. Apologies

- 1.1. Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Lana Hempsall. Cllr Tony White, Cllr Keith Kiddie, Cllr Maxine Webb, Cllr Alison Birmingham, Cllr Richard Price, Cllr Andrew Proctor, Cllr Rhodri Oliver, Cllr Carl Smith, Cllr Shelagh Gurney, Cllr Matt Reilly, Cllr Mike Smith-Clare, Cllr Alexandra Kemp, Cllr Nigel Dixon, Cllr Graham Carpenter, Cllr Tom FitzPatrick, Cllr Ed Connolly, Cllr Judy Oliver, Cllr Steve Riley, Cllr Claire Bowes, Cllr Mark Kiddle-Morris, and Cllr Julian Kirk.
- 1.2 The Chair reminded Councillors that meetings of the Council would not normally extend beyond 3 hours unless this was extended in accordance with rule 11. 1 (n) of the Council Procedure Rules, however it was his intention to enact rule 4 (v) and rule 4 (vi) of the constitution once the meeting period had elapsed if any business remained. The practical application of this would be that the meeting continued on a vote only basis.
- 1.3 The Chair also stated he intended to adjourn the meeting after about 2 hours for a short comfort break.

2. Minutes

- 2.1 The minutes of the Council meeting held on 12 December 2023 were confirmed as an accurate record and signed by the Chair.

3. To receive any announcements from the Chair, Leader, or Chief Executive

- 3.1 The Leader was pleased to announce she would be attending the opening ceremony for Herring Bridge alongside Brandon Lewis MP on Thursday 1 February. A public celebration to mark the opening of the bridge was planned.
- 3.2 The Leader stated she would be attending Portcullis House in Westminster tomorrow to speak with MPs on the topic of coastal erosion and flooding. Steve Barclay MP, the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, was also invited to this meeting and the Leader expressed hopes that he would be able to attend.
- 3.3 The Chair gave a speech relating to Holocaust Memorial Day, which was commemorated on the 27 January. Fragility of Freedom was the theme for the memorial in 2024, where Council pledged not to take freedoms for granted, but to consider what could be done to strengthen freedoms around the world.
- 3.4 The Chair sadly announced the passing of John Dobson, a former County Councillor who represented the division of Dersingham between 2009 and 2017. A one minute silence was held.
- 3.5 The Chair offered congratulations to everyone in Norfolk who had received an honour in the New Year's Honours List. James Bullion, Sara Tough, Steve Miller, and Al Collier were mentioned as Norfolk County Council employees who had been awarded honours, along with Geoffrey Lowe and Carl Smith, employees from Norfolk Fire and Rescue.

3.6 The Chair mentioned that the Chaplain, the Revd. Albert Cadmore, had also received an honour and paid tribute to his care, kindness, and professionalism over the years.

4. Declarations of Interest

4.1 Cllr Daniel Roper declared an interest relating to item 17.1 on the agenda, as he was a current employee of HM Prisons and Probation Service.

5. Petitions presented to Council

5.1 There were no items of petition for Council to consider.

6. Business (if any) remaining from the last Council meeting

6.1 There were no outstanding business items.

7. Questions to the Leader

7.1 Question from Cllr Brian Watkins

7.1.1 Cllr Watkins commented that the proposed closure of the Bernard Matthews facility at Great Witchingham would be a severe blow to the Norfolk economy, affecting more than 600 employees. Cllr Watkins asked what the Council could do to mitigate the worst effects if the closure occurred and what measures were being considered to minimise the impact on the local economy.

7.1.2 The Leader expressed sadness regarding the proposed closure, stating that she understood Bernard Matthews were planning to transfer some employees to their other sites in the UK. The Council would try and assist if this happened. Increased economic development in Norfolk was required to provide more skilled jobs in the county. The Leader stated the Devolution Deal would help with economic development in Norfolk, as there was a £12m adult education budget built into it which the Council could then decide how it was used. Better infrastructure was also required, as Bernard Matthews had stated the current road network to the Great Witchingham site was one of the deciding factors in the proposed closure. Delivering the Norwich Western Link would go some way to alleviating this issue.

7.2 Question from Cllr Colleen Walker

7.2.1 Cllr Walker recalled that at the Full Council meeting held on the 12 December 2023, she asked the Leader if a letter had been sent to the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs containing a set of requests on behalf of Norfolk's beleaguered coastal communities, along with the contents of the letter and the response. The Leader had advised that the letter and response would be retrieved, however it subsequently transpired that the letter had not been written or sent. Cllr Walker asked why the letter had not been sent in a timely fashion and why the Leader had given an excuse that the delay was caused by the Secretary of State changing as part of a government reshuffle.

7.2.2 The Leader stated she had corresponded with Cllr Walker immediately after the 12 December meeting. The letter existed and had subsequently been amended to include the motion agreed by Members to establish a dedicated Minister for the Coast. The Leader stated the letter would be handed to the Secretary of State tomorrow and that she had raised concerns regarding coastal erosion when he recently visited to Norfolk. Coastal erosion was too important to be lost in a correspondence “black hole”. A copy of the letter would be made available to Members forthwith (Appendix A).

7.3 **Question from Cllr Jamie Osborn**

7.3.1 Cllr Osborn stated that the decision by Norwich City Council to exempt the developers of Anglia Square from Community Infrastructure Levy had resulted in the Greater Norwich Growth Board losing out on approximately £2.8m in the first tranche of the project. As the Leader was also the Chair of the Greater Norwich Growth Board, Cllr Osborn asked if she took umbrage at this decision.

7.3.2 The Leader stated that Norwich City Council was a sovereign body which could not be influenced by the Council. It was suggested that Cllr Osborn write to the Leader in her capacity as Chair of the Greater Norwich Growth Board.

7.4 **Question from Cllr Ed Maxfield**

7.4.1 Cllr Maxfield expressed sadness regarding the recent tragic incident in Costessey and commented that mental health support was currently divided between several different agencies such as the police, NHS, Adult Social Care and Children’s Services among others. Noting that an inquiry had been announced into the 2023 Nottingham stabbings, Cllr Maxfield asked if a public inquiry was required into the state of mental health support in Norfolk, stating that this would be an opportunity for the Council to lead on the coordination and provision of effective mental health support.

7.4.2 The Leader expressed her shock and sadness regarding the incident in Costessey, but stated it was not right to point blame at this stage. The Council worked closely with colleagues in the NHS to ensure there was joined-up provision of support. The Leader acknowledged it was disappointing that mental health support did not come under one agency but that the Council was limited in what it could do, as this was a government decision.

7.5 **Question from Cllr Emma Corlett**

7.5.1 Cllr Corlett commented that the Council’s SEND safety valve plan was already off track just a few months after it started, with the government demanding Norfolk County Council submit a remodelled plan by the end of March. Cllr Corlett asked if the language in the report to Schools Forum, which warned of ‘managing parental expectations’, of ‘relative vs absolute need’ and having ‘courageous conversations’, was just a way of dressing up a further reduction in support to Norfolk’s disabled children and their families.

7.5.2 The Leader disagreed with this statement, mentioning that the Council was currently negotiating with the government as to how the safety valve plan was being administered.

7.6 **Question from Cllr Martin Wilby**

7.6.1 Cllr Wilby mentioned that the Leader had recently visited the Broadland Food Innovation Centre alongside the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs. Cllr Wilby asked the Leader to recall how the visit went.

7.6.2 The Leader mentioned that the Secretary of State had wished to see how food innovation in Norfolk was progressing. They visited Club Cultured, which was a start-up business offering Kimchi and Tempeh projects. The Leader stated this business had recently relocated from London to Norfolk as they would receive better support in the county than in the Capital. The Secretary of State also visited Fisher Farms, which was a four acre vertical farm mainly powered by renewable energy. Vertical farming equated to 1,000 acres of traditional farming and was considered the future of food production. The Leader remarked that the Secretary of State was impressed by what he saw. During the visit the Leader and the Secretary of State discussed various issues pertaining to Norfolk.

8. **Recommendations from Cabinet**

8.1 The Leader moved, seconded by Cllr Andrew Jamieson, moved recommendations 1,2,4 and 5 from the Cabinet meeting held on 4 December 2023. Recommendation 3 related to the Youth Justice Plan 24-25 and was being considered separately as the substantive item at 17.1 on the agenda.

8.2 Cllr Steve Morphew, seconded by Cllr Terry Jermy, moved an amendment to recommendation 1 relating to the Norwich Western Link, which read as follows:

To recommend to Council, at its January 2024 meeting, an increased budget of £273.9m (compared with the £251.0m included in the OBC Addendum, that was reported to Cabinet on 4 July 2022), and an increase to the local contribution of £22.9m, as set out in Section 6 of the report.

Council notes:

- The hopes of cabinet that government will agree to fund 100% of scheme costs for the NWL to the amount included in the OBC of £251m but that any increases and overruns will be entirely the responsibility of the county council to fund.
- Unpredictable future projected increases from inflation and any other cost overruns may fall on the council budget with every £1m borrowed adding approx £100k a year to the revenue budget to service the debt and the cost of every £50m borrowed equating to approximately 1% on council tax for every home in Norfolk. As the scheme cost is already £273.9 the amount the council will be funding is a minimum of £22.9m already.
- The current forecast for project completion has slipped considerably leaving blighted communities without prospect of relief before 2029 at the earliest under existing plans.
- Estimates of the scheme costs based on the best available evidence at the time and including substantial contingency amounts have nevertheless so far been exceeded.

- The growing risk to the council finances of the costs of a failed scheme reverting to the revenue budget and lack of details for how this can be accommodated without serious impacts on front line services.

Council therefore:

1. resolves to ask the Cabinet to pause all spending on the NWL from the capital programme until confirmation from the government they will meet 100% of the costs of the scheme including risks from cost overruns for whatever reason.
2. Requests the Cabinet to develop a rolling plan to accommodate within the council budget the consequences of the so far capital costs of the NWL scheme reverting to the revenue budget updated at every repricing of the scheme.
3. Requests the Cabinet Member to request that the Exec Director CES to develop an alternative strategy for reducing rat running in the areas west of Norwich where possible repurposing development work undertaken on the NWL to reduce costs and mitigate against the risks of a failed NWL reverting to revenue.

8.3 The Leader did not accept the amendment and a debate began.

8.4 Cllr Steffan Aquarone proposed that the three recommendations within the amendment be voted on separately. Cllr Aquarone subsequently made a point of order to suggest the Council procedure rules be suspended for this item only. The Monitoring Officer stated she did not believe it necessary to suspend procedure rules in this case and that the recommendations should be taken as one. Cllr Aquarone's proposal was **LOST** on a show of hands.

8.5 The amendment was put to a vote and **LOST** (Appendix B). There were 15 votes in favour of the motion, 39 votes against, and 8 abstentions.

8.6 Cllr Brian Long made a point of information to confirm that he had abstained from the vote on the amendment due to his position as Chair of the Planning (Regulatory) Committee.

8.7 Recommendations 1, 2, 4 and 5 were **CARRIED** on a show of hands.

8.8 Council **RESOLVED** the following:

1. Norwich Western Link - an increased budget of £273.9m (compared with the £251.0m included in the OBC Addendum, that was reported to Cabinet on 4 July 2022), and an increase to the local contribution of £22.9m, as set out in Section 6 of the report.
2. Summary Annual Review of NCC Residential Children's Homes recommend the approval of the Statements of Purpose for all the Local Authority children's homes to comply with the Care Standards Act 2000.
4. Endorse the Mid-Year Treasury Management Monitoring Report 2023-24.
5. Finance Monitoring Report 2023-24 P7: October 2023 – to recommend the increase of £126.541m to the capital programme to address capital funding requirements funded mostly from various external sources as set out in detail in capital Appendix 3 to the report, paragraph 1.4 as follows:

- £73.300m increase to the West Winch Bypass project, mainly funded through a £74.202m increase in Department of Transport and Homes England funding reflecting the Outline Business Case submission and a £1.05m reduction in NCC Borrowing required to fund this project. The latest forecast is disclosed in a paper elsewhere on the agenda.
- £22.882m increase in the Norwich Western Link project following the approval of the Outline Business Case and to reflect the latest forecast reported elsewhere on the agenda.
- £11.646m increase in the Long Stratton Bypass project mainly funded through an increase in the Department of Transport grant of £17.717m and a £4.979m reduction in the GNGB supported borrowing required for the project as reported to Cabinet on 6th November.
- £18.483m increase in Department for Transport funding for Countywide BSIP schemes
- £0.155m increase in external contributions to various Children's Services schemes
- £0.07m increase in NCC Borrowing to support the Planning and Advisory Scheme
- £0.006m net increase in various other schemes.
- For planning and monitoring purposes, to incorporate the changes under recommendation 1 into the 2023-24 monitoring position and proposed 2024-25 Capital Programme.

9. Cabinet Report (Questions to Cabinet Members)

9.1 The Leader moved the report of the Cabinet meetings held on the 4 December 2023 and 10 January 2024.

9.2 Council **RESOLVED** to **AGREE** the report.

9.3 Question from Cllr Rob Colwell to the Cabinet Member for Children's Services

9.3.1 Cllr Colwell mentioned that West Norfolk Carers and West Norfolk Young Carers were due to close at the end of March 2024 due to a lack of funding. Cllr Colwell asked the Cabinet Member what reassurance could be provided to the 4,000 family carers and 600 young carers under 18 which had been supported by this charity.

9.3.2 The Cabinet Member stated that a procurement process was undertaken before the new contract was awarded. Families, carers, and professionals were consulted as part of the closure process, as well as stakeholders. The contract had now been awarded to Voluntary Norfolk. As part of due process, support would continue to be made available to carers and children.

9.4 **Question from Cllr Mike Sands to the Cabinet Member for Highways, Infrastructure and Transport**

9.4.1 Cllr Sands advised that in Norwich, bus drivers were being blamed for diversions, while cab drivers were being blamed for delays in journey times and increased costs to passengers. Cllr Sands asked the Cabinet Member what mitigation measures could be put in place to improve traffic flow and decrease waiting times at multiple locations, including Dereham Road, the Heartsease roundabout, Queen's Road, St Stephen's roundabout and elsewhere across the city where roadworks were currently in progress.

9.4.2 The Cabinet Member acknowledged there were numerous sets of roadworks in Norwich at the present time, which were part of the package of Transport for Norwich improvements. These were mitigated as best as possible. Once the works were completed, buses would have the ability to cross the city with minimal or no delays. £48m in funding from the government's Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) was enabling the addition of extra bus lanes across Norwich. The delays were an unfortunate aspect of the roadworks. The Cabinet Member remarked that the works would reduce pollution in Norfolk, as they would make buses more attractive to use and that 80 people on a bus would result in 80 less cars on the road.

9.5 **Question from Cllr Catherine Rowett to the Cabinet Member for Highways, Infrastructure and Transport**

9.5.1 Cllr Rowett mentioned there had been 18 requests from 13 villages in her division to apply for the Road Safety Community Fund. Of these, two had been prioritised, however only a limited part of one application had been approved, with the reasons for rejection stating that these were not dangerous roads. Cllr Rowett asked the Cabinet Member to clarify matters, as it appeared the Speed Management Strategy criteria was either inadequate or being used to obstruct the delivery of safety measures.

9.5.2 The Cabinet Member stated that safety was of prime importance on the roads of Norfolk. The Speed Management Strategy illustrated how the Council would work countywide in making roads safer for all. The Cabinet Member stressed that any rejections were based on criteria which met legal requirements.

9.6 **Question from Cllr Ed Maxfield to the Cabinet Member for Children's Services**

9.6.1 Cllr Maxfield stated that the Member of Parliament for North Norfolk, Duncan Baker MP, was supporting a Bill which would increase training and awareness amongst teachers towards issues around autism. Cllr Maxfield welcomed this development along with the Council's investment in early support for families of children with autism. However, there would still be pressure on the diagnosis pathway until the system fully adapted to understand neurodiversity. Cllr Maxfield asked the Cabinet Member what actions the Council was taking to support the NHS-led service so that the diagnosis pathway still worked effectively for children.

9.6.2 The Cabinet Member confirmed that the Council was working closely with its health partners. A health collaborative body had been established to redesign services for children with neurodiverse and emotional well-being needs. It was recognised that the waiting list for the diagnosis pathway needed to be addressed. The Council's partners were working closely together to consider different operational approaches which would improve the position.

9.7 **Question from Cllr Emma Corlett to the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care**

9.7.1 Cllr Corlett stated that Right Care, Right Person – the police policy that would see the constabulary stop responding to many mental health related calls – was due to commence in Norfolk this month, explaining this would place additional pressure on the Council's social care services. Concern was expressed that there were no additional resources for the Council or the health system to meet this extra pressure. Cllr Corlett explained that she had monitored the evaluation of the pilot project in Hull and was concerned that it appeared to focus purely on the number of policing hours reduced, with no scrutiny of patient safety, deaths, the voice or experience of patients or their families who were seeking help. Cllr Corlett asked if the Cabinet Member would use her influence with the local system to ensure that there was close monitoring and evaluation of the implementation of Right Care, Right Person, which included a way of tracking and measuring safety and captured the opinions, experiences and outcomes of patients and families who contact the police and were declined help rather than purely policing hours saved.

9.7.2 The Cabinet Member shared concerns regarding Right Care, Right Person, given the recent tragic incident in Costessey and stated she would endeavour to work alongside Cllr Corlett to ensure that the importance of involving all families and users of the service was brought across to the Council. The Cabinet Member stated that Norfolk Constabulary had made the decision to implement Right Care, Right Person, and that concerns would need to be put forward to the Police and Crime Commissioner.

9.8 **Question from Cllr Kay Mason Billig to the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care**

9.8.1 Cllr Mason Billig mentioned there had been reports in the media regarding the Council's budget for 2024/25, with particular attention focussed on the Minimum Income Guarantee (MIG). Cllr Mason Billig asked the Cabinet Member if she could clarify what was involved with this.

9.8.2 The Cabinet Member confirmed that a Cabinet meeting was held on the 29 January, where a budget for 2024/25 was recommended, which would be analysed by the Scrutiny Committee on the 14 February and subsequently be debated at the Full Council meeting scheduled for the 20 February. One of the proposals in the budget papers was a request to begin a consultation on potential changes to the Adult Social Care charging policy, which would include a reduction to the MIG. This would generate a recurrent saving, which the Cabinet Member stressed was necessary as the level of funding from the Local Government Settlement was continuing to decline while costs were expected to increase. The Cabinet Member stated that additional funding had been

announced by the government last week, however the full amount and what restrictions on where it could be spent were unknown at present. As a result, it was important to undertake a consultation. This was to begin on the 19 February and run for 12 weeks, enabling people to respond and for support to be provided by those potentially impacted by the proposed change. The Council would work closely alongside the independently-chaired Charging Reference Group to ensure this would happen, and the Cabinet Member was organising a meeting with the group. Responses to the consultation would be analysed, with equality impact assessments conducted before Cabinet would consider whether to proceed with the proposed change. The Cabinet Member stressed that MIG would not be reduced below the national statutory minimum, which was £171.75 per week for those aged 25-65 and £150.25 per week for those aged 18-24

9.9 Question from Cllr Steffan Aquarone to the Cabinet Member for Strategy and Transformation

9.9.1 Cllr Aquarone stated that Norfolk faced a worsening situation with flooding every year. Helpful flood prevention reports were written by officers, but there was rarely sufficient funding available to implement recommendations. Cllr Aquarone expressed concern that the Council's overall approach to flood prevention was not working and asked the Cabinet Member whether the Council had a long-term strategy to tackle flooding.

9.9.2 The Cabinet Member shared Cllr Aquarone's concerns regarding flooding in Norfolk, stressing that it was important to protect rural and coastal communities from both flooding and coastal erosion. Henry Cator OBE, Chair of the Norfolk Strategic Flooding Alliance, was attending Westminster alongside the Cabinet Member to speak to MPs about the issues facing the people of Norfolk. There were some areas of the county suffering from a lack of water; however other parts were saturated, causing issues for farmers. The Cabinet Member stated that the government appointing a dedicated Minister for the Coast was the right way forward to tackle the issue of coastal erosion and that she would impress this view upon MPs at the meeting tomorrow, before reporting back to Council.

9.10 Question from Cllr Terry Jermy to the Cabinet Member for Corporate Services and Innovation.

9.10.1 Cllr Jermy commented that "a means of entry into farming for those who may not otherwise have the opportunity to farm" was one of the stated defining purposes of the Norfolk County Farms Estate and expressed disappointment that over the last 10 years the number of County Farms tenancies had reduced from 130 to just 94. Cllr Jermy requested reassurance from the Cabinet Member that the founding principles of the county farms estate would continue to be adhered to in order to provide support for those smaller tenancies and people entering into farming.

9.10.2 The Cabinet Member mentioned that a response was provided to Cllr Jermy at the Cabinet meeting held on the 29 January, which she hoped had provided reassurance. Four entry farms were coming up on the market shortly, with a viewing day scheduled for Tuesday 13 February. The Cabinet Member stated it was important to have a proper understanding of the rural economy in Norfolk, along with listening to tenants was key to the Council's strategy.

9.11 **Question from Cllr Paul Neale to the Cabinet Member for Finance**

9.11.1 Cllr Neale mentioned that the Cabinet Member for Finance was quoted in the media last week saying that cuts to the Minimum Income Guarantee (MIG) were necessary. Cllr Neale stated that the proposed cuts to MIG would represent a 14% real terms cut, which would disproportionately affect disabled people in Norfolk and asked if the Cabinet Member would reconsider the cuts as at present the Council appeared out of touch with people's real lives.

9.11.2 The Cabinet Member stressed that the budget being considered by the Council for 2024/25 was proving difficult to finalise, with significant challenges being realised which could affect any of the 950,000 people living in Norfolk. Every other local authority was going through the same struggle to create their budget for the new financial year, as significant long-term savings were required to balance them. The Cabinet Member stated his quote was attempting to explain the context as to how savings were being made. It was important that the Council continued to deliver its services to the most vulnerable groups in Norfolk while ensuring that the local authority did not end up in a position where it would need to issue a Section 114 notice. Due to work undertaken over the previous three years, the Council was not in such a situation. The Cabinet Member remarked that it was the correct decision to undertake a consultation regarding MIG and that he was not making a final decision at this stage until the full details from the consultation were known.

9.12 **Question from Cllr Jim Moriarty to the Cabinet Member for Economic Growth**

9.12.1 Cllr Moriarty referred to a recent briefing regarding the Norfolk Rural Business Awards and thanked the Cabinet Member and his team for all their work putting this together. Cllr Moriarty asked for reassurance that the Awards would be concentrated and focused on the rural aspect, along with assurances that the Awards were being promoted in good time.

9.12.2 The Cabinet Member acknowledged that Norfolk was a rural county centered on rural businesses, but that many people who worked in rural communities lived in urban areas. If their business were centred in rural areas, their applications would be welcomed. The Cabinet Member thanked sponsors for the nine awards and expressed gratitude to the Royal Norfolk Agricultural Association for their partnership with the Council. The Awards would officially be launched on the 6 February and it was hoped that the promotion would be taken forward. In addition, a website was due to be launched.

9.13 **Question from Cllr James Bensly to the Cabinet Member for Children's Services**

9.13.1 Cllr Bensly expressed grave concern regarding recent incidents of knife crime across Norfolk and the UK, given the debilitating affect it had on individuals, families, and the wider community. Cllr Bensly asked the Cabinet Member if she could commit the Council to support the campaign led by Idris Elba to ban the sale of "zombie knives" and machetes to reduce the number of young people losing their lives.

9.13.2 The Cabinet Member commented that the recent interview given by Idris Elba to Sky News about knife crime was extremely powerful and had struck a chord with her. Serious youth violence had risen across the country and there was a feeling of helplessness within parents which was growing every day. The Cabinet Member stated that Norfolk had not escaped knife crime and that she had spoken with the Leader, Cabinet, and the Executive Director of Children's Services about writing to Idris Elba to support his campaign, which was agreed. A letter was sent to him on the 15 January.

10. Recommendations from the Scrutiny Committee and Norfolk Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee

10.1 Cllr Steve Morphew, seconded by Cllr Brian Watkins, moved recommendation 1 from the Scrutiny Committee, which related to the terms of reference for the Norfolk Countywide Community Safety Partnership Scrutiny Sub-Panel (NCCSPSSP). Cllr Morphew paid tribute to Cllr Mark Kiddle-Morris for his work as NCCSPSSP chair over the years and expressed disappointment that there had been several inquorate meetings recently. The recommendation was unanimously **CARRIED** by Members on a show of hands.

10.2 Council **RESOLVED** to **AGREE** the proposed changes to the future arrangements for scrutiny of the Norfolk Countywide Community Safety Partnership and amendments to the Terms of Reference, for implementation in May 2024.

11. Recommendations from Committees

11.1 There were no recommendations from Committees.

12. Reports from Committees, Select Committees and Joint Committees

12.1 The Chair proposed that Items **12, 13, 14, 15** and **16** on the agenda be considered in one block. This was unanimously **APPROVED** by Members on a show of hands.

12.2 Council **RESOLVED** to **AGREE** the reports.

17. Specific Business Items

17.1 Youth Justice Plan 24/25

17.1.1 Cllr Penny Carpenter, seconded by Cllr Bill Borrett, moved the recommendation contained in the report. This was unanimously **CARRIED** by Members on a show of hands.

17.1.2 Council **RESOLVED** to **APPROVE** the Norfolk Youth Justice Plan 2023/24 and recommend inclusion on the policy framework.

17.2 Independent Remuneration Panel – Norfolk County Council Members' Allowances Scheme

- 17.2.1 Cllr Kay Mason Billig, seconded by Cllr Andrew Jamieson, moved the recommendations contained in the report.
- 17.2.2 Cllr Steve Morphew, seconded by Cllr Brian Watkins, moved an amendment to recommendation 1 to suggest that Members did not take the backdated allowance, given the context of the Council needing to set its budget for 2024/25. Cllr Mason Billig did not accept the amendment and a debate began.
- 17.2.2 The amendment was put to a vote and **LOST** on a show of hands.
- 17.2.3 The substantive item was put to a vote and **CARRIED** on a show of hands.
- 17.2.4 Council **RESOLVED** to **AGREE** the following:
1. That Member allowances be increased by 3.82% to be backdated to 1st April 2023.
 2. That Member allowances be increased annually by an equivalent percentage to the pay award agreed by the National Joint Council for Local Authority Services (NJC) for 2024/25, 2025/26 and 2026/27. If however the NJC took the same approach to the pay award as for 2023/24 then the formula outlined in the report would be applied annually during this time.

18. Order of Business – Appointments to Committees, Sub-Committees and Joint Committees

- 18.1 At the request of the Chair, it was agreed that Item 20 would be taken at this point, before the meeting was adjourned for a short break.
- 18.2 Council **RESOLVED** to **NOTE** the following appointments:
- Cllr Martin Wilby was appointed to the vacant position on the Infrastructure and Development Select Committee.
 - Cllr Alexandra Kemp was appointed to the vacant position on the Planning (Regulatory) Committee.

19. Meeting Adjourned

- 19.1 Council took a break between 12:05 and 12:25

20. Notice of Motions

20.1 Motion 1 – Cash Options for Norfolk

- 20.1.1 The following motion was proposed by Cllr Chris Dawson and seconded by Cllr Stuart Clancy:

The loss of cash from our daily lives would have a significant impact on the people of Norfolk, and on our way of life. Whilst in no way wishing to arrest the march of progress, it is important to recognise that. Cash is essential, not only for many

people who budget, but for those on lower incomes, the elderly and those with disabilities, who so often need the facility the most. Alongside this cash can help support those experiencing domestic financial abuse and can provide an escape method from this exploitation.

As the Member Champion for the Rural Economy I should add further that many small business operations rely on cash, be they outlets at sales & fairs, farm gate sales etc.

Where would charitable collections be without cash.

In light of this, this Council recognises the acceptance of cash remaining an option for the foreseeable future and welcomes the work of Duncan Baker MP, and support of all of our Norfolk's MPs, to promote the necessity of cash throughout our rural communities. Furthermore, this Council will call on Government to ensure there are cash alternative payment options available to all Norfolk's retailers.

20.1.2 Cllr Mike Sands, seconded by Cllr Colleen Walker, moved the following amendment to this motion:

The loss of cash from our daily lives would have a significant impact on the people of Norfolk, and on our way of life. Whilst in no way wishing to arrest the march of progress, it is important to recognise that. Cash is essential, not only for many people who budget, but for those on lower incomes, the elderly and those with disabilities, who so often need the facility the most. Alongside this cash can help support those experiencing domestic financial abuse and can provide an escape method from this exploitation.

~~As the Member Champion for the Rural Economy I should add further that many small business operations rely on cash, be they outlets at sales & fairs, farm gate sales etc.~~

~~Where would charitable collections be without cash.~~

~~In light of this, this Council recognises the acceptance of cash remaining an option for the foreseeable future and welcomes the work of Duncan Baker MP, and support of all of our Norfolk's MPs, to promote the necessity of cash throughout our rural communities. Furthermore, this Council, through the Leader, will call on Government to ensure there are cash alternative payment options available to all Norfolk's retailers.~~

Council recognises the importance of cash in many settings and the preference of many for cash transaction options. Council further recognises access to cash is a significant issue with the closure of many High Street banks and loss of ATMs.

Council welcomes the announcement that a future Labour government would ensure a minimum of 350 banking hubs in its first term providing access to cash and basic banking services in response to 5,000 local bank branches having closed during the 13 years that the Conservative Party has been in power, leaving just 3,200 throughout the UK. Council notes Which? said 'The country's banking infrastructure has been left threadbare in recent years, with the closure of bank

branches leaving millions of consumers who rely on these services at risk of being cut adrift.’

Council welcomes proposals that cash should wherever practicable and safe be an option for customers and resolves that the county council sets and example by ensuring cash options are available for staff and residents paying for goods and services provided by and on behalf of Norfolk County Council.

- 20.1.3 Cllr Chris Dawson, the proposer of the original motion, did not accept the amendment. Following a debate, the amendment was put to a vote and **LOST** on a show of hands.
- 20.1.4 A debate was held on the original motion. Cllr Steve Morphew, seconded by Cllr Kay Mason Billig, moved an amendment to recommend that a Select Committee undertook further investigation into the retention of cash options within Norfolk. Cllr Chris Dawson accepted the amendment.
- 20.1.5 The substantive amended motion was put to a vote and unanimously **CARRIED** on a show of hands.

20.2 **Motion 2 – Fuel Poverty**

- 20.2.1 This motion was proposed by Cllr Saul Penfold and seconded by Cllr Sharon Blundell:

This Council acknowledges that all Norfolk residents deserve to live in a warm, dry home which they can afford to heat and power. More than 30pc of households in various neighbourhoods across Norfolk were living in fuel poverty in 2022, a number which is estimated to rise due to rising energy costs, inflation and the worsening cost of living situation.

This council recognises the work carried out to end fuel poverty in Norfolk, but acknowledges that thousands of households are estimated to fall into fuel poverty within the next decade. Additionally, it is recognised that more can be done to end fuel poverty by 2030.

This council acknowledges the findings of a British Medical Journal report on the detrimental impact on children growing up in cold, damp, and mouldy homes due to fuel poverty. It is recognised in the report that these children have “higher than average rates of respiratory infections, asthma, chronic ill health, and disability. They are also more likely to experience depression, anxiety, and slower physical growth and cognitive development.”

This council resolves to:

1. To create a strategy with the aim of helping to end fuel poverty in Norfolk by 2030.
2. To ask the Executive/Cabinet/Leader to report on progress with the strategy every six months.
3. Work with partners such as the Health and Wellbeing Board, Integrated Care Board and advice services to develop effective referral systems to reduce fuel poverty and cold-related health.

4. Develop a strategic approach to improve energy efficiency to create jobs and prosperity in our local communities.
5. Explore ways of reducing fuel poverty that involve the whole community, including district and parish councils and community organisations.
6. To become a member of the End Fuel Poverty Coalition.

20.2.2 Following a debate, the motion was put to a vote and **LOST** (Appendix B), with 20 votes in favour and 29 votes against.

20.3 **Three Hour Meeting Time Elapses**

The Chair announced the three hours allocated for the meeting had now elapsed.

20.3.1 As a result of the three-hour meeting period having elapsed, Council Members agreed to move to the part of the meeting where all remaining business relating to motions or amendments to motions would be considered, moved, and seconded in line with procedure rule 4 (iv).

20.3.2 The Chair confirmed he would deal with each motion in turn. Initially he would ask the proposer of the motion if they wanted the motion to go ahead or be withdrawn. If the motion was withdrawn, the Council would continue through the motions in the order they appeared on the agenda, which was by reference to the size of the group. If the motion was not withdrawn, the Chair would consider if there were amendments. If amendments had been submitted, then the Council would vote on those first and then, when those were completed, a vote would be taken on the substantive motion.

20.4 **Motion 3 – Carer Parking Permits**

20.4.1 This motion was **WITHDRAWN**.

20.5 **Motion 4 – Proactive Safe Speeds Policy for Norfolk**

20.5.1 This motion was **WITHDRAWN**.

20.6 **Motion 5 – Footpaths Toolkit**

20.6.1 This motion was **WITHDRAWN** prior to the meeting, following written requests from Cllr Steffan Aquarone as proposer and Cllr Andrew Jamieson as seconder.

20.7 **Motion 6 – Malnutrition: Time to Act**

20.7.1 This motion was **WITHDRAWN**.

21. **Questions on notice under rule 9.3**

21.1 There were no questions received under rule 9.3

The meeting concluded at 13:26

**Cllr Barry Stone
Chair, Norfolk County Council**



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KMB/MBC

Tel: 01603 223201

31 January 2024

The Rt Hon Steve Barclay MP
Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs

Delivered By Hand

Dear Secretary of State

I am writing on behalf of Norfolk County Council to pledge our support for the Coast initiative and the call for a UK Government dedicated Minister for the Coast. This follows two separate motions, which came to our Full Council recently, both of which received unanimous support from our multiple political groups. They asked me to write to you to ask for your assistance, as this is such an important issue for our residents and coastal communities.

We believe that there are critical coastal issues that a dedicated Minister would be able to address. Issues that impact on the UK Government's ability to deliver on its pledges and meet its obligations.

We are in the front line of climate change here in Norfolk and that is bringing with it serious challenges and major impacts in relation to issues around erosion and coastal flooding, issues that are affecting our coastal communities right now and will continue to do so. We ask for a dedicated Minister who can support coastal communities with issues including the following:

- Amendments to be made to the Defra Partnership Funding Calculator – acknowledging and providing more weighting to the value and importance of tourism in coastal areas.
- Legislation relating to income derived from offshore dredging and wind energy companies to allow a greater percentage to remain with local authorities for use on the coast.
- Urgent Government provision for an emergency fund for coastal areas impacted by erosion before the Flood and Coastal Innovation Programme completes. This would be for Risk Management Authorities to access and could be time limited until 2027.
- Dedicated resource to establish a National Coastal Adaptation Framework - as recommended by the Climate Change Risk Assessment in 2021.

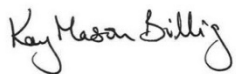
Norfolk has 84 miles of coastline, a buoyant tourism industry, key ecological sites including most of the world's ecologically important lowland chalk streams and is a key part of the 'Energy Coast' - critical to enabling the UK government deliver on its pledge of Net Zero by 2050. Against this, Norfolk has also the fastest eroding coastline in North-West Europe.

Recent issues on the Norfolk coast – including coastal erosion at Hemsby and Happisburgh - really underline the need for a dedicated Minister, one that could work across Government and raise the profile of the needs of our unique coastal communities.

This campaign is about helping secure the best future for our coastal communities in a wider sense; one that is driven by their particular needs and potential. I think that a dedicated Minister for the Coast would be fundamental in helping ensure that.

I hope that you will put your support behind such an appointment.

Yours sincerely



CIlr Kay Mason Billig
Leader of the Council

Norfolk County Council - Date: 30 January 2024

RECORDED VOTE – ITEM NUMBER: 8.7 – Labour Amendment to Norwich Western Link

FOR		AGST	ABST	FOR		AGST	ABST
	ADAMS Tim		X		LONG		X
	ADAMS Tony	X			MACKIE	X	
	ANNISON	X			MASON BILLIG	X	
	AQUARONE		X	X	MAXFIELD		
	ASKEW	X			MORIARTY		X
	BAMBRIDGE	X		X	MORPHEW		
	BENSLY	X		X	NEALE		
	BILLS	X			NUNN	X	
	BIRMINGHAM				OLIVER J		
	BLUNDELL	X			OLIVER R		
	BORRETT	X		X	OSBORN		
	BOWES				PECK	X	
X	BROCIK-COULTON			X	PENFOLD		
	CARPENTER G				PLANT	X	
	CARPENTER P	X		X	PRICE B		
	CHENERY OF HORSBRUGH	X			PRICE R		
	CLANCY	X			PROCTOR		
	COLWELL		X		REILLY		
	CONNOLLY				RICHMOND	X	
X	CORLETT				RILEY		
X	CROFTS				ROPER	X	
	DALBY	X		X	ROWETT		
	DARK	X		X	RUMSBY		
	DAWSON	X		X	SANDS		
	DEWSBURY	X			SAVAGE	X	
	DIXON				SAYERS		X
	DUIGAN	X			SHIRES		X
	EAGLE	X			SMITH		
	ELMER	X			SMITH-CLARE		
	FISHER	X			STONE	X	
	FITZPATRICK				STOREY	X	
	GRANT	X			THOMAS	X	
	GURNEY				THOMSON	X	
	HEMPSALL				VARDY	X	
	JAMES	X			VINCENT	X	
	JAMIESON	X		X	WALKER		
X	JERMY				WARD	X	
X	JONES				WATKINS		X
	KEMP				WEBB		
	KIDDIE				WHITE		
	KIDDLE-MORRIS				WHYMARK	X	
	KIRK				WILBY	X	

Sub-Total

Sub-Total

For
Against
Abstentions

15
39
8

Norfolk County Council - Date: 30 January 2024

RECORDED VOTE – ITEM NUMBER: 18.2.2 – Lib Dem Group Motion – End Fuel Poverty

FOR		AGST	ABST	FOR		AGST	ABST
X	ADAMS Tim				LONG	X	
	ADAMS Tony				MACKIE	X	
	ANNISON	X			MASON BILLIG	X	
X	AQUARONE				MAXFIELD		
	ASKEW				MORIARTY		
	BAMBRIDGE	X		X	MORPHEW		
	BENSLY	X		X	NEALE		
	BILLS	X			NUNN		
	BIRMINGHAM				OLIVER J		
X	BLUNDELL				OLIVER R		
	BORRETT			X	OSBORN		
	BOWES				PECK	X	
X	BROCIK-COULTON			X	PENFOLD		
	CARPENTER G				PLANT	X	
	CARPENTER P	X		X	PRICE B		
	CHENERY OF	X			PRICE R		
	HORSBRUGH				PROCTOR		
	CLANCY	X			REILLY		
	COLWELL				RICHMOND		
	CONNOLLY				RILEY		
	CORLETT			X	ROPER		
X	CROFTS			X	ROWETT		
	DALBY	X		X	RUMSBY		
	DARK	X		X	SANDS		
	DAWSON				SAVAGE	X	
	DEWSBURY	X		X	SAYERS		
	DIXON			X	SHIRES		
	DUIGAN	X			SMITH		
	EAGLE	X			SMITH-CLARE		
	ELMER	X			STONE	X	
	FISHER	X			STOREY		
	FITZPATRICK				THOMAS	X	
	GRANT				THOMSON	X	
	GURNEY				VARDY	X	
	HEMPSALL				VINCENT		
	JAMES	X		X	WALKER		
	JAMIESON	X			WARD	X	
X	JERMY			X	WATKINS		
X	JONES				WEBB		
	KEMP				WHITE		
	KIDDIE				WHYMARK	X	
	KIDDLE-MORRIS				WILBY	X	
	KIRK						

Sub-Total

Sub-Total

For
Against
Abstentions

20
29
0