

**Cabinet**  
**Minutes of the Meeting held on Wednesday 10 May 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 Jane James	Cabinet Member for Corporate Services and Innovation
Cllr Graham Plant	Cabinet Member for Highways, Infrastructure and Transport
Cllr Alison Thomas	Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care
Cllr Eric Vardy	Cabinet Member for Environment and Waste

**Deputy Cabinet Members Present**

Cllr Shelagh Gurney	Deputy Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care
Cllr Lana Hemsall	Deputy Cabinet Member for Highways, Infrastructure and Transport

**Executive Directors Present:**

Harvey Bullen	Director of Strategic Finance
James Bullion	Executive Director of Adult Social Services
Paul Cracknell	Executive Director of Transformation and Strategy
Kat Hulatt	Assistant Director of Governance
Tom McCabe	Executive Director for Community and Environmental Services
Sara Tough	Executive Director of Children's Services

**1 Apologies for Absence**

- 1.1 Apologies were received from the Cabinet Member for Economic Growth

**2 Minutes from the meeting held on 3 April 2023**

- 2.1 Cabinet agreed the minutes of the meeting held on 3 April 2023 as an accurate record.

**3 Declaration of Interests**

- 3.1 None declared

**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 The Cabinet Member for Public Health and Wellbeing gave an update to Cabinet:

- The Executive Director for Adult Social Services was due to go on a secondment to the Care Quality Commission to run an assurance regime for Adult Social Care Nationally. The Cabinet Member for Public Health and Wellbeing wished him well and said he would be missed as he had contributed to the Adult Social Services performance at Norfolk County Council immensely, however he noted that him being asked to take on this role reflected well on him and on Norfolk County Council.
- The secondment would be for one year and he hoped to see the Executive Director for Adult Social Services return to the Council afterwards.

5.2 The Chair gave an update to Cabinet:

- The Chair was humbled to be elected as Leader of Norfolk County Council at the meeting of Full Council held on 9 May 2023. This meeting was her first meeting of Cabinet as Leader of the Council, and she looked forward to working collaboratively with all of Norfolk County Council and partner agencies.

## **6 Public Question Time**

6.1 The list of public questions and the responses is attached to these minutes at Appendix A.

6.2.1 Anna Sanfield asked a supplementary question:

- With the tremendous success of Better Broadband for Norfolk she felt there could not be enough of a demonstrable benefit of allowing Norwich to be peppered with new industrial scale 13-20m monopoles at odds with beautification she asked why there was evidence of neighbours being unaware of these applications, particularly with the risks of new beam forming millimetre waves of 5G. She noted that International Commission on Non-Ionizing Radiation Protection (ICNIRP) guidelines did not cover those with metal implants such as pacemakers and there was a lack of adequate health impact studies. Anna Sanfield felt that the Council had a duty to protect the historic heritage of the county and health of all its residents by staying with existing broadband instead.

6.2.2 The Cabinet Member for Environment and Waste replied that erection of masts was a decision that was made along with District Councils and thought that they would appreciate hearing her views.

## **7 Local Member Questions/Issues**

7.1 The list of Local Member questions and the responses is attached to these minutes at Appendix B.

7.2.1 Cllr Brian Watkins asked a supplementary question:

- Cllr Watkins welcomed the new administration's intentions however noted the cancellation of two Member briefings on the County Deal. He asked how the Leader planned to take on board the frustrations of Norfolk

District Councils to build a consensus around the County Deal.

- 7.2.2 The Chair replied that the Member briefings and working groups had been delayed for a short time given the new chair of it and would be brought back. As a twin hatter the Chair understood the frustrations of District Councils and would meet with District Councils and talk to Government to find a good governance model.
- 7.3.1 Cllr Maxine Webb asked a supplementary question:
- Cllr Webb asked the Cabinet Member to expand on the details in the last line of the response to her question, discussing the dedicated parent resource and how it would enhance co-production; she asked if independent carers and parents of young people would have direct input into the teams that were being created about issues and the work being done on inclusion that would impact their children at school.
- 7.3.2 The Cabinet Member for Children's Services replied that local first inclusion teams would be sited in schools, so parents and children would have direct access to staff in mainstream schools. The Cabinet Member for Children's Services suggested that Cllr Webb discuss this with her at a later date to discuss what she felt the issues were to help get this right.

## **8. Norfolk County Council Climate Strategy**

- 8.1.1 Cabinet received the report setting out Norfolk County Council's climate strategy.
- 8.1.2 The Cabinet Member for Environment and Waste introduced the report to Cabinet:
- Norfolk County Council was committed to supporting Britain's journey to net zero at local level by showing leadership in making its estate net zero by 2030 and working with partners to achieve carbon neutrality.
  - In April 2022, Cabinet endorsed a recommendation to Council to produce a formal strategy, articulating in one place a range of actions to tackle climate change.
  - The strategy included with the report brought together the Norfolk County Council approach to addressing its own estate emissions and the national journey towards a low carbon future, working with others including businesses and community groups to achieve best outcomes for Norfolk.
  - The strategy highlighted interlinking issues to address in a holistic manner to support landscapes and wildlife and would help the Council maintain momentum on the progress made so far including halving carbon emissions on its estate since 2016-17 and leveraging money from grant funding
  - The strategy set out 7 areas for climate change
    1. "Reduce the estate emissions", committing to making the Council's estate net zero by 2030 and leading by example by addressing emissions of buildings, street lights and buildings
    2. "Reduce scope 3 emissions" by using influence as a procurer and shareholder to drive carbon emission reductions across the supply chain and companies owned by the Council
    3. "Address Norfolk's countywide emissions" by playing a pivotal role in mitigating and adapting against climate change across the Norfolk

- area to implement change to make an impact across the county
4. "Promoting a green economy" by seeking to catalyse Norfolk's private sector to be an engine for green, inclusive growth, working in partnership with partners to produce jobs and economic growth
  5. "Ensuring that nature has space to recover and grow" by using the Council's position in the County to show leadership in ensuring better joined up spaces for nature and supporting better land management to support improved biodiversity.
  6. "Climate adaptation" by ensuring the services delivered by the Council are resilient to the impact of climate change and ensure the resilience of citizens and services
  7. "Engagement and collaboration", by prioritising collaborative engagement with public, private and community stakeholders to draw on shared expertise and make service delivery more cost effective.

- The Cabinet Member for Environment and Waste thanked all officers who worked to produce the comprehensive strategy, and the Deputy Cabinet Member for Finance and his team for their involvement in looking at actions related to the Council estate.
- The Cabinet Member for Environment and Waste moved the recommendations as set out in the report

8.2 The Cabinet Member for Public Health and Wellbeing felt that this was an immense piece of work which would underpin all decisions made across the council. Everyone across Norfolk was responsible for making decisions which would have a positive impact on the climate and the council would seek to set the tone with this piece of work.

8.3 The Vice-Chair agreed that this was a powerful and important strategy which was clear and coherent. The range of recommendations underscored how the work would be carried out internally and externally. The best outcomes would be achieved through working collaboratively. The Vice-Chair noted that work was already underway in this arena such as the Norfolk Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP), Supplemented by the Queens Platinum Jubilee walking networks, and the Norfolk Natural Recovery Strategy, which was showing Norfolk to be a leader in the Country.

8.4 The Cabinet Member for Highways, Infrastructure and Transport noted page 63 of the report which showed the importance of a good road network to connect businesses and communities however, transport represented a quarter of the county's carbon footprint so mitigations in this area were important such as promoting electric vehicles, use of public transport and electric buses. The Norwich Western Link (NWL) would be important in this by reducing the amount of traffic travelling through areas such as Weston Longville and reducing journey times on the West of Norwich by up to a half, supporting modes of travel such as walking and cycling and taking traffic out of local communities. The NWL had strong support from people who lived in areas nearby particularly those affected by high traffic volumes. The council had secured £128m grant funding for significant investment in walking, cycling and electric charging infrastructure. This included £38.1m capital funding for improved sustainable infrastructure in Norwich through two tranches of the Transport for Norwich fund consisting of improvements to junctions, new bus and cycle lanes, upgrades to Norwich bus depot, and the introduction of the beryl bike scheme, £49.6m to deliver the

Norfolk bus service improvement plan including £30.9m for capital projects and £14.7m through the zebra scheme matched by £21m local investment by First Bus to bring 70 electric buses to Norwich making the Norwich bus depot one of first fully electric bus depots outside London.

- 8.5 The Cabinet Member for Corporate Services and Innovation noted that the strategy showed the Council's collective response to leave the environment in a better way than we found it. In March 2023 1.8m funding to provide low carbon heating and energy efficiency measures in 6 libraries, 5 children's homes, 3 fire stations and 2 community centres through the public sector decarbonisation scheme.
- 8.6 The Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care noted the extraordinary amount of work that had gone into this strategy and that the LCWIP had contributed to the Long Stratton Bypass Project to ensure people could walk or cycle to Long Stratton.
- 8.7 The Cabinet Member for Environment and Waste noted that the strategy was a live document; on 20 June 2023, a seminar would be held at Gressenhall Environmental Hub to see how large businesses could affect climate change.
- 8.8 The Deputy Cabinet Member for Highways, Infrastructure and Transport congratulated the Cabinet Member for Environment and Waste on the consultative approach to the strategy making this a Norfolk strategy.
- 8.9 The Chair noted that Covid-19 lockdowns had shown the importance of walking in nature for wellbeing. As the Cabinet Member for Highways, Infrastructure and Transport said, new and better infrastructure was not incompatible with the green agenda, as it was important for people to get about the County either by foot, cycle or car. The council was doing good work, for example, County Hall had been developed to bring it into the new century and look after staff and visitors in the building; the building won an award for supporting disabled and partially sighted people.
- 8.10 **Cabinet RESOLVED**
- A. To agree the climate change strategy
  - B. To agree that a series of engagement workshops be held with a view to refining specific aspects of the strategy and developing evidence-based action plans. These aspects would include:
    - 1. engagement with public sector partners, including the Norfolk Climate Change Partnership;
    - 2. bringing together key public and private stakeholders to move forward domestic retrofit;
    - 3. further reducing carbon emissions from buses, taxis and private hire vehicles, including those used for the council's contracts;
    - 4. reducing carbon emissions from other major areas of contract spend – social care, highways and construction;
    - 5. engagement with the private sector on partnering opportunities; and
    - 6. engagement to reduce emissions from schools.
  - C. To agree that the definition of estate emissions for the purposes of the council's 2030 net zero target should be broadened to include emissions from

the council's vehicle fleet [alongside emissions from water consumption, building heating, and building and streetlighting energy consumption]

- D. To ask officers to develop a funding blueprint that will identify high-level funding options for reducing indirect (scope 3) and county wide emissions and for climate adaptation, including leveraging in private investment, grant funding, direct investment by government agencies and community funding.
- E. To agree that proposed changes to the Policy Framework be brought to select committee and then, in the autumn, to Council to reflect the Climate Strategy
- F. To endorse the targets set out in the draft climate change strategy for
  - 1. a 90% reduction in gross carbon emissions from the Council's estate for the year 2030/31, compared to the 2016/17 baseline, with intermediate targets of
  - 2. a two-thirds reduction for the year 2024/25; and
  - 3. an 85% reduction for the year 2028/29.

## 8.11 **Evidence and Reasons for Decision**

Please refer to section 3 of the report.

### **Alternative Options**

8.12 Please refer to section 4 of the report.

## 9. **Local first inclusion update**

9.1.1 Cabinet received the report presenting the final element of the multi-year financial plan, which was an important and vital opportunity for Norfolk to bring significant investment to enable the delivery of an ambitious programme of change to improve better outcomes.

9.1.2 The Executive Director for Children's Services gave an introduction. This was an update setting out the second phase of the SEND transformation programme now known as Local First Inclusion, reflecting the full financial investment received through negotiations with the Department for Education. The Department for Education had invited local authorities to invite packages to bring the deficit in their high needs block back into balance. The investment which would be received by Norfolk, referred to as the Safety Valve deal, would fund a 6-year plan spread over 7 years with an upfront payment of £28m which had already been received. Financial investment was also committed by the Norfolk Schools Forum and Norfolk County Council as previously reported to Cabinet. An in-principle agreement of £28m capital was in place in addition to the Council's capital investment of £120m. Local First Inclusion was the delivery approach aimed at changing culture and practice to ensure the right approach was provided in children's local communities and mainstream schools, in engagement with parents to improve confidence that children's needs can be met.

9.1.3 The Cabinet Member for Children's Services introduced the report to Cabinet:

- The Local First Inclusion plan report focussed on an update of the Safety Valve agreement with the Department for Education which had secured an additional funding of over £70m over 7 years. In Norfolk the Safety

Valve would be known as Local First Inclusion and it was an opportunity to improve on Special Educational Needs and Disability services and specialist provision. There was agreement in principle for 2 new special needs schools to be built.

- It would also be an opportunity to ensure children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities would have the support they needed in mainstream schools from an earlier age which would provide them with better life chances and reduce the need for them to have to travel significant distances from home to school.
- There would be significant monitoring through this programme to include the involvement of the Norfolk Schools Forum and a core aim for Norfolk County Council and the Department for Education was to achieve an in year balanced budget and ensure outcomes for children were improved and a long term sustainable model of Special Educational Needs and Disabilities and special provision for children with complex needs.
- The Cabinet Member for Children's Services moved the recommendations as set out in the report.

- 9.2 The Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care noted that the report set out the challenges in the high needs block which had been felt for many years as well as the challenges for the council and Norfolk Schools Forum, making the decision of Government welcome. There was detail in the paper around cultural change which would allow young people to grow up and learn in their own communities, as young people did not want to be singled out due to their different needs and wanted to have the option to be educated with their friends, neighbours and peers. Local schools had a duty to support children within their own setting.
- 9.3 The Deputy Cabinet Member for Highways, Infrastructure and Transport, as a person who had been through specialist education, was pleased with this report, noting that it was not helpful to separate children with special needs from society.
- 9.4 The Vice-Chair felt this was a good news story; he congratulated Children's Services and the Finance Team for their work pulling this together. The high needs block was an escalating problem across country due to central Government instructions, but the cost was borne by local authorities resulting in an unsustainable position; the solution set out in the report was as good as could be expected, with £70m investment over 7 years and a change in direction of travel including building 11 new special resource bases in schools. There was an in-principle agreement from the Department for Education for two new special schools, with £30m funding from the Department for Education for this. If an agreement had not been reached with the Department for Education, the Vice-Chair noted that there would have been up to a £100m deficit by the end of the period.
- 9.5 The Chair was pleased that this would allow the views of parents to be acknowledged. The Council had a duty to meet the needs of children which the council took seriously and understood that children were better off in school close to their home since travelling long distances to school each day was not good.
- 9.6 Cabinet **RESOLVED**:
1. to endorse the development of the Safety Valve agreement with the Department for Education.

2. to delegate decision making powers to the Executive Director of Children's Services and the Director of Strategic Finance, in conjunction with the Lead Member for Children's Services and the Lead Member for Finance, to sign the reports to the Department for Education enabling the draw-down of funding.

## 9.7 **Evidence and Reasons for Decision**

Please refer to section 4 of the report.

## 9.8 **Alternative Options**

Please refer to section 5 of the report

## 10. **Winter Service Policy Review**

10.1.1 Cabinet received the report setting out the refreshed winter service policy.

10.1.2 The Executive Director for Community & Environmental Services reported that annually the performance of the gritting service was reviewed and improvements for the following year then made; this was a higher-level review of the policy which underpinned the annual service.

10.1.3 The Cabinet Member for Highways, Infrastructure and Transport introduced the report to Cabinet

- Winter services were an essential and highly valued service, relied on by visitors, communities and businesses to ensure the roads remained open for all modes of transport.
- The council had a well-established winter plan to provide gritting to a third of the highway network of around 2,200 miles of road, delivered by Norse Highways, using 49 gritting vehicles. In addition, 636 miles of priority 3 network was treated during prolonged periods of ice and snow.
- There were 7 salt barns throughout the county with a strategic salt stock in Swaffham which could collectively hold 15,000 tonnes of salt, and 1,900 salt bins for the public to use.
- Across the county the service was supported by the farming community and contractors when weather deteriorated to help keep the county open.
- The service commenced each year in mid-October until April.
- Since the last review of the policy there had been changes and events, including:
  - the addition of the full length of the 28 miles of the Broadland Northway which was added into the P1 and P2 route without additional vehicles
  - The salt private finance initiative with Compass ending in 2020
  - winter services delivery being transferred to Norse in 2019
  - the "Beast from the East" extreme winter weather in 2018 and snow in March 2021.
- During the Covid-19 pandemic, the winter services team worked with Public Health England to ensure gritting at vaccination and testing sites.
- The report showed the updated service policy which incorporated advances in technology and national guidance. There were no changes proposed to the delivery of the service.
- The Cabinet Member for Highways, Infrastructure and Transport noted the



excellent work of Councils and the Norse Highways team in delivering the service, noting the national award won by the gritting team before Christmas 2022 for their work in using new technology to improve the effectiveness of gritting. The team were proactive in adopting new technology such as low cost temperature sensors connected to the Council's LoRaWAN (Long Range Wide Area Network) network and would continue to deliver a safe and resilient network.

- 10.2 The Cabinet Member for Environment and Waste noted the human cost of serious accidents caused by ice and therefore the importance of gritting to help keep the roads safe in winter.
- 10.3 The Cabinet Member for Public Health and Wellbeing noted the investment in new technology which could provide benefits and make the service more efficient; by investing in such technologies less raw materials could be used, creating an overall saving.
- 10.4 The Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care thanked the teams who provided this service keeping the roads open including the support of local farmers.
- 10.5 The Chair also thanked teams and volunteers who helped keep roads open in winter; she was happy to see that the team were investing in new technology to help keep roads open and prevent accidents.
- 10.6 Cabinet **RESOLVED** to approve the proposed Winter Service Policy in Appendix B of the report

#### 10.7 **Evidence and Reasons for Decision**

Norfolk County Council are recognised nationally for the way the winter service is delivered across the county. Norfolk County Council has a robust winter plan which has been consistently reviewed and followed, which has allowed the service to perform well. However, there are opportunities to make efficiencies and utilise new and emerging technologies which have developed in the field of winter treatment operations. These new technologies are successfully used by other local authorities. Against strong national competition, in October 2022 Norfolk County Council received a national award for the work it has carried out in using new technology to inform the winter service in the County.

#### 10.8 **Alternative Options**

The winter service will continue to deliver the operations in line with national guidance, to a high standard. The proposals outlined within the report and refreshed Winter Services policy are there to further improve the performance and cost-effectiveness of the winter service going forward.

### 11. **Corporate Delivery Plan**

- 11.1.1 Cabinet received the report setting out a review of the 2022-23 corporate Delivery Plan.
- 11.1.2 The Executive Director of Transformation and Strategy reported that the Corporate Delivery Plan was agreed by Cabinet each year; the report presented

gave a look back on the last financial year and summarised the targets and priorities set for 2022-23 and the challenges and achievements over that year.

- 11.2 The Cabinet Member for Highways, Infrastructure and Transport noted page 221-222 of the report which showed the achievements over the past year including 7175 emergency callouts by the emergency services a saving of 3403 tonnes of CO2 on the council's estates which was an 81.5% decrease since 2016/17, 40,000 children attending programmes in libraries, £61m savings over the past 5 years from promoting independence in Adult Social Care, over 2 million kilometres, a good rating in all areas for Children's Services following inspection and 1300 laptops provided to residents including 500 to Ukrainian refugees, among others. This had been a successful year and showed the Council was working to make the lives of people in Norfolk better.
- 11.3 The Vice-Chair noted the achievement of £61m savings in Adult Social Services from the Promoting Independence Strategy which supported the savings of the Council and provided a better service.
- 11.4 The Cabinet Member for Public Health and Wellbeing noted that this document promoted the Better Together for Norfolk aim "healthy and fulfilling lives" and that the strategy "sets out the ambition for Norfolk to be a place where everyone can live fulfilling, independent lives and, where necessary, access the support they need at the right time. We want to ensure that health conditions which can compromise quality of life are addressed early and lifestyles changed for the better. A key piece of this puzzle lies in the continuing integration of health and social care. This will enable us to respond to new pressures and demands through stronger partnership and collaboration by tackling health inequalities at their roots". This was a key ambition two years ago and was just as important now.
- 11.5 The Chair noted that the administration of the Council was mid-term and this report showed how they had kept their promises and intended to deliver on them building on the legacy of Cllr Andrew Proctor who had put in place the building blocks for a successful Council. The Chair noted the good rating achieved by Children's Services and the balanced budget achieved by the Council. 40,000 children had attended programmes in libraries, showing how libraries were still relevant today for people to access books, the internet and as warm rooms. The report was an audit trail to success and a forward-looking plan would be brought to Cabinet soon, showing how the Council would move forward over the next year. The Chair moved the recommendation as set out in the report.
- 11.6 Cabinet **RESOLVED** to approve the Annual Report of the 2022/23 Corporate Delivery Plan
- 11.7 **Evidence and Reasons for Decision**
- N/A
- 11.8 **Alternative Options**
- N/A
- 12 Reports of the Cabinet Member and Officer Delegated Decisions**

**made since the last Cabinet meeting**

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

The meeting ended at 11:16

**Chair of Cabinet**

**Cabinet**  
**10 May 2023**  
**Public & Local Member Questions**

	<b>Public Question Time</b>
6.1	<p><b>Question from Dale Rea</b>            What plans do you have to introduce LTN's (Low Traffic Neighbourhoods) into Norfolk's Towns and Cities, where and when?</p> <p><b>Response from the Cabinet Member for Highways, Infrastructure and Transport</b>            The Transport for Norwich Strategy sets out that the County Council will work with local communities, elected members and stakeholders to reduce the impact of unnecessary traffic in neighbourhoods and provide connections that meet local needs and support active travel. This will involve the investigation of different measures based around the principle of Healthy Streets, that could include Low Traffic Neighbourhoods, School Streets and lower speed limits. This work is at a very early stage and there are no firm plans at the current time.</p> <p><b>Supplementary question from Dale Rea</b>            Will we be duly consulted and will we be given all the relevant facts?</p> <p><b>Response from the Cabinet Member for Highways, Infrastructure and Transport</b>            The development of any scheme such as a Low Traffic Neighbourhood, in the future, anywhere in Norfolk, would need to be in consultation with local elected representatives, the local community and other local stakeholders.</p>
6.2	<p><b>Question from Anna Sanfield</b>            I am pleased that the council has had and continues to have such tremendous success with Better Broadband for Norfolk, particularly within the city itself. This rollout is not only safe and fast but also allows for residents to enjoy connections which are well within capacity for both working from home and enjoying leisure time. However, I am very concerned about the increasing numbers of planning applications for ugly, disquieting and over-dominant telecommunications monopoles, which further blight our beautiful, heritage county. For example, how is the council going to protect the stunning view from Mousehold Heath from so many masts that are at the very minimum, at least 13m high?</p> <p><b>Response from the Cabinet Member for Environment and Waste</b>            Firstly, please can I thank you for your positive feedback on the incredibly hard work carried out by the better broadband for Norfolk team to ensure that Norfolk has the communication network it needs for the 21st century. With regards to the concerns going forward, I think the masts you are referring to are those being installed by telecoms companies largely driven by the expansion of the 5g network. These are matters for the relevant district council as local planning authority rather than the County Council.</p>
6.3	<p><b>Question from Judith Lubbock</b>            Have there been additional costs to the original £6.1m of digging up St Stephens again, the second time in 2 years, to install essential bus shelters and associated cabling to install 'real time information' to them? An explanation is needed to bus passengers, businesses, pedestrians, cyclists and taxis who have all been very badly affected by both sets of works.</p> <p><b>Response from the Cabinet Member for Highways, Infrastructure and Transport</b>            The costs of installing the bus shelters and electronic information screens in St Stephens Street is covered within the original £6.1m budget allocated to the scheme. The paving</p>

where the shelters are being installed was laid in such a way to minimise the extent of works needed to install the shelters at this later date. I would like to thank the bus passengers, businesses, pedestrians, cyclists and taxis for their patience as we complete this project.

**Cabinet**  
**10 May 2023**  
**Local Member Questions**

	<b>Member Question Time</b>
7.1	<p><b>Question from Cllr Saul Penfold</b> We're still feeling the effects of covid on the education of children nationally across the country and in this county. Figures from the 2021/22 academic year portrayed a worrying situation where one in 50 pupils across Norfolk's schools are absent for more than half of their school time. What work is being undertaken to identify these 'lost children' and to ensure they receive the education they deserve?</p> <p><b>Response from the Cabinet Member for Children's Services</b> In response to learning from the Covid-19 Pandemic, Norfolk Children's Services began work to review its response to school attendance in 2021. School attendance is a key priority for us locally as well as nationally and we have benefitted from engaging with the Department for Education and other LAs to develop a strategic approach to tackling poor school attendance.</p> <p>The <a href="#">Attendance Strategy</a> which was formally launched in March this year and has been developed to help the Local Authority, schools, settings and other services understand what we need to do to work in a more coherent way, making the best use of resources available, in order to ensure that all children and young people can make the most of the opportunities provided by attending school. This strategy is a vital contribution to our aim of supporting young people to flourish in Norfolk and will impact almost every team working with or supporting children and young people in Norfolk.</p> <p>The strategy includes 4 key priorities in order to make the required improvements.</p> <p>Priority 1: Relationships &amp; Communication Priority 2: Effective Intervention Priority 3: Systems &amp; Data Priority 4: Workforce development</p> <p>An Action Plan was developed in July 2022 to address the priorities identified within the Strategy. Work started in September 2022 within 4 workstreams aligned to the strategic priorities. These workstreams are made up of professionals from across Children's Services and as well as other agencies and meet regularly to deliver the priorities. A School Attendance Strategic Board has been established which meets monthly to monitor the progress of the Strategy and Action Plan; Membership includes representation from across Children's Services.</p> <p>We are working with colleagues from a wide variety of services in Norfolk including the voluntary and community sector to deliver this strategy in a comprehensive and effective manner. The critical importance of school attendance is something that we want all practitioners and teams to prioritise in their work with families. Some key achievements to date have been:</p>

- Awareness raising activities across the Partnership including a formal launch of the Strategy endorsed by the Executive Director for Children’s Services and the Chair of the NSCP.
- In order to support practitioners with this area of work, the Attendance Team now run weekly attendance surgeries that provide anyone working with a child where school attendance is of concern can receive support and advice; further information about the surgeries can be accessed [here](#).
- Support for schools through the development of a self-evaluation framework, whole school training and attendance networks.
- Work with school leaders to develop a system for gathering live attendance data and nationally as a critical partner to the work the DfE is doing nationally regarding attendance data.

**7.2 Question from Cllr Sharon Blundell**

In June this year, the Director of Adult Social Care will take up a year-long seconded post at the CQC. At a time where adult social care is facing substantial financial and capacity pressures, can the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care ensure me that arrangements have been made to ensure the directorate will continue to function and the priorities of the directorate will not be affected by this change?

**Response from the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care**

Thank you for your question.

I can confirm that Tom McCabe, our Head of Paid Service, has put in motion arrangements to ensure that Norfolk’s DASS role is appropriately covered with an interim appointment, and members will receive further information in due course. I certainly recognise the need for clear leadership and would say the Adult Social Care Department has a strong leadership team to ensure the services continues to function well.

**7.3 Question from Cllr Brian Watkins**

Your election as Leader of the County Council will undoubtedly create great interest about how the new Administration might differ from the one which went before. What are the first things that you will be looking to change as Leader?

**Response from the Leader and Cabinet Member for Strategy and Governance**

Thank you for the question. I was very proud to be chosen to lead the conservative Group and therefore become leader of this Council. I will continue to deliver the strong track record of this Administration and tackle the issues facing the council over the next two years. I look forward to working in a collaborative way with all Members in this chamber and partner organisations across the County.

**7.4 Question from Cllr David Sayers**

How does the cabinet member for Adult Social Care, Public Health and Prevention respond to the hundreds of West Norfolk residents who queued from as early as 5am in Kings Lynn, hoping to register with an NHS dentist. Does he agree with the comments of Shawn Charlwood, British Dental Association who said, “they remind me of images you used to see in the Soviet Bloc when people used to queue up for food”?

**Response from the Cabinet Member for Public Health and Wellbeing**

Thank you for your question. As you are already aware Norfolk County Council does not have responsibility for the provision of dental health services in Norfolk. Dentistry is an important part of Norfolk's Health provision, and I personally would like to see better access for residents.

7.5 **Question from Cllr Steffan Aquarone**  
A consultation paper was published by the council recently which suggests a reduction in spending for SEN Independent Schools from just over £42m a year to less than £4m a year by 2029. Many children rely on these schools to give them the best opportunity in life and education. What impact assessment has been done on the students currently enrolled in these schools, given that many SEND children will suffer disproportionately from disruption caused by changing schools?

**Response from the Cabinet Member for Children's Services**

The reduction in funding for the independent specialist school sector for Norfolk children and young people, with Education Health and Care Plans, is part of our Local First Inclusion programme. This is the ambitious plan that has been negotiated with the DfE to secure £70million revenue funding from DfE alongside £35million from NCC to address the historic underfunding and resulting cumulative deficit to the 'High Needs Block' budget. This major revenue investment is complemented by additional capital funding from both DfE and NCC to continue our expansion of specialist SEN provision, literally building on the recent success of opening 3 new special schools in Norfolk since 2021. The Local First Inclusion programme sets out, over a six year period, an ambition to achieve greater local mainstream inclusion for children with special educational needs and disabilities whilst expanding state-funded specialist resource bases and special schools; in excess of 1000 specialist places will be achieved when all current expansion and new provision is completed. This enables us to reduce our reliance on the independent sector. Historically we have had an over-reliance on the independent sector and, in the main, these schools do not compare favourably to the state-funded sector in Norfolk when taking into account funding levels and outcomes as judged by Ofsted. Norfolk state-funded schools are almost exclusively judged Good and Outstanding and are, on average, half the cost per pupil in comparison. However, we have stated that the majority of children currently placed within the independent sector schools will continue within their placements. It will be new placements that will be prioritised within the new state-funded specialist provision. We are working closely with the independent sector schools and are grateful to those we have had initial discussions with for their approach which has been typified by a spirit of joint working to navigate this transition.

**Second question from Cllr Steffan Aquarone**

What impact assessment on health and wellbeing the County Council carried out as part of its statutory response to the application for the offshore wind development consent order by Orstead?

**Response from the Cabinet Member for Environment and Waste**

Thank you for your question.

As part of the County Council's statutory response to the submitted Development Consent Order (DCO) in 2018, all the relevant services and teams within the County Council were consulted on the applicant's Environmental Statement, including Public Health. No health-related matters were raised by the County Council at that time, and it



	<p>was accepted that more detailed issues were the responsibility of other statutory bodies such as District Councils who have responsibility for environmental health.</p>
7.6	<p><b>Question from Cllr Rob Colwell</b> The Norfolk hospitality, care and healthcare, plus farming industries continue to face a recruitment and staffing crisis following Brexit. What efforts will this new administration make to lobby the government for further relaxation of rules to allow vital EU workers to return and grow the Norfolk economy?</p> <p><b>Response from the Cabinet Member for Economic Growth</b> We continue to develop the skills of our Norfolk workers to meet the present and future needs of industry. We are working with providers to ensure that the needs of business are met in the design and delivery of the training that they provide. The County Deal offers Norfolk the opportunity for greater responsibility for the Adult Education Budget which would enable us to further focus the needs of Norfolk businesses on skills and training provision</p>
7.7	<p><b>Question from Cllr Lucy Shires</b> Years of Government neglect has caused a GP shortage crisis leaving people unable to see a local doctor when they need to. Do you agree with the Liberal Democrats that people should have a guaranteed right to a GP appointment within one week?</p> <p><b>Response from the Cabinet Member for Public Health and Wellbeing</b> Thank you for your question. As you already know Norfolk County Council does not have responsibility for NHS primary care services. As Cabinet Member for Public Health I fully support easy access to local general practice services for all of Norfolk's residents</p>
7.8	<p><b>Question from Cllr David Sayers</b> Do you believe that free school meals should be a basic right for all children who need them, and if so, do you support the expansion of free school meals provision to every child whose family is in receipt of Universal Credit or with a low-income?</p> <p><b>Response from the Cabinet Member for Children's Services</b> I welcome that nationally there continues to be research and policy considerations to help meet the needs of children and families who need it, particularly at a time when cost of living is affecting many children and families. Based on current free school meal criteria the Council seeks to encourage every family who is currently entitled to free school meals to access this support and indeed 91% of eligible families do so. Norfolk County Council has supported the provision of cost of living support to families eligible for free school meals over the last 3 years, initially during the pandemic and now as part of wider cost of living support. Children in reception, year 1 or year 2 are already entitled to free school meals regardless of household income. As a council we support nearly 30,000 children across our primary and secondary schools who are eligible for means tested free school meals, at a weekly cost of approximately £450,000. We believe that all households in the County should be able to access hardship support, in a variety of ways, should they need it. This is why we have developed a hardship programme that has helped over 31,000 households the last 6 months alone and which will continue for a further 12 months. In addition, there are now 17 community supermarkets rising to 25 by the end of the Summer, providing affordable and low cost food for families to purchase.</p>

7.9	<p><b>Question from Cllr Maxine Webb</b></p> <p>The “Better Together, For Norfolk” strategy commits to “improve the real-life experiences of people in Norfolk” by “empowering” people and communities and of being “collaborative” with individuals and willing partners.</p> <p>The Local First Inclusion Update leaves out any mention of how parent carers and families will be involved as the programme is implemented.</p> <p>Can the Cabinet Member for Childrens Services confirm what plans does the Council have to enable the families of children and young people with SEND to give input directly to the Council’s new teams that are being appointed, about their experiences and whether meaningful improvements are being felt</p> <p><b>Response from the Cabinet Member for Children’s Services</b></p> <p>The Local First Inclusion programme sets out, over a six year period, an ambition to achieve greater local mainstream inclusion for children with special educational needs and disabilities whilst expanding state-funded specialist resource bases and special schools; these core elements of the programme have been informed by the co-production carried out with parents/carers, young people and the professionals who support them as part of our Area SEND Strategy. It is true that due to the nature of the negotiations with the DfE, as part of their ‘safety valve’ process, NCC were not able to co-produce the detail of the Local First Inclusion programme with parents/carers, young people or school leaders. We have acknowledged this previously and, now that the Secretary of State decision is in the public domain, now will be implementing the programme in a way that ensures engagement with parents/carers and professionals in the way we do across all of our SEND improvement work. We have recently carried out high level briefings to Family Voice Norfolk and to the multi-agency professional group who oversee the Area SEND Strategy. We have provided a commitment to work together on the next stages of Local First Inclusion and will do this through existing mechanisms, for example the ‘Making Sense of SEND’ events held regularly around the county, and assisted through the dedicated participation resource that we are planning to enable us to enhance our co-production with children and families during implementation and delivery.</p>
7.10	<p><b>Question from Cllr Chrissie Rumsby</b></p> <p>Will the Leader confirm that the Council continues to support the Nourishing Norfolk Network?</p> <p><b>Response from the Leader and Cabinet Member for Strategy and Governance</b></p> <p>Thank you for your question</p> <p>Norfolk County Council will continue to support the Community Foundation to deliver the Nourishing Norfolk Initiative across the County, having invested £500k last year to support the creation of 15 food hubs across the County. NCC’s arms reach company, Norse, will continue to provide warehousing and logistics for a centralised deliver hub.</p> <p>Over the next 12 months the county council has committed £800k of funding, through the governments Household Support Fund, to provide emergency food support to households, via the community food hubs across the County.</p> <p>So as you can see from all I have outlined NCC is and will continue to support this initiative.</p>

