

# Scrutiny Committee

Date: **Wednesday 20 March 2024**

Time: **10 am**

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

## Membership:

Cllr Steve Morpew (Chair)	Cllr Mark Kiddle-Morris
Cllr Daniel Elmer (Vice-Chair)	Cllr Brian Long
Cllr Carl Annison	Cllr Ed Maxfield
Cllr Lesley Bambridge	Cllr Jamie Osborn
Cllr Phillip Duigan	Cllr Brian Watkins
Cllr John Fisher	
Cllr Tom FitzPatrick	
Cllr Keith Kiddie	

## Parent Governor Representatives      Church Representatives

Vacancy	Helen Bates
Vacancy	Paul Dunning

## Advice for members of the public:

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

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

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

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

## Agenda

### 1. To receive apologies

### 2. Minutes

To confirm the minutes of the meetings held on the following dates:

- 25 January 2024
- 14 February 2024

Page 4  
Page 15

### 3. Members to Declare any Interests

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

### 4. Public Question Time

Fifteen minutes for questions from members of the public of which due notice has been given. Please note that all questions must be received by the Committee Team ([committees@norfolk.gov.uk](mailto:committees@norfolk.gov.uk)) by **5pm on Thursday 14 March 2024**. For guidance on submitting a public question, please visit <https://www.norfolk.gov.uk/what-we-do-and-how->

**5. Local Member Issues/Questions**

Fifteen minutes for local member to raise issues of concern of which due notice has been given. Please note that all questions must be received by the Committee Team ([committees@norfolk.gov.uk](mailto:committees@norfolk.gov.uk)) by **5pm on Thursday 14 March 2024**.

**6. To note that the deadline for calling-in matters, from the Cabinet meeting held on Monday 4 March 2024 was 4pm on Monday 11 March 2024.**

**7. Anglian Water: Update on Storm Water Overflows/Sewage Discharges** **To follow**

**8. Climate Policy for Norfolk County Council** **Page 27**  
Report from the Interim Executive Director of Community and Environmental Services

**9. Scrutiny Committee Forward Work Programme** **Page 42**

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

Date Agenda Published: 12 March 2024



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



# Norfolk County Council

## Scrutiny Committee

Minutes of the Meeting held on Thursday 25 January 2024  
at 10am at County Hall Norwich

### Present:

Cllr Steve Morphew (Chair)  
Cllr Daniel Elmer (Vice-Chair)  
Cllr Carl Annison  
Cllr Lesley Bambridge  
Cllr Phillip Duigan  
Cllr John Fisher  
Cllr Tom FitzPatrick  
Cllr Keith Kiddie  
Cllr Brian Long  
Cllr Jamie Osborn  
Cllr Brian Watkins

### Also Present:

David Allfrey	Interim Director of Highways, Transport and Waste
Harvey Bullen	Director of Strategic Finance
Grahame Bygrave	Interim Executive Director for Community and Environmental Services
Paul Cracknell	Executive Director for Strategy and Transformation
Cllr Margaret Dewsbury	Cabinet Member for Communities and Partnerships
Kat Hulatt	Director of Legal Services and Monitoring Officer
Cllr Andrew Jameison	Cabinet Member for Finance
Cllr Kay Mason Billig	Leader of the Council
Mark Kemp	Interim Assistant Director – Infrastructure Delivery
Tom McCabe	Chief Executive
Steve Miller	Director of Culture and Heritage and Head of Norfolk Museums Service
Cllr Graham Plant	Cabinet Member for Highways, Infrastructure and Transport
Peter Randall	Democratic Support and Scrutiny Manager
Colin Scott	Learning Manager, Norfolk Museums
Laine Tisdall	Committee Officer

## 1 Apologies for Absence

1.1 Apologies were received from Cllr Mark Kiddle-Morris and Paul Dunning. Cllr Ed Maxfield was also absent.

## 2 Minutes

2.1 The minutes of the previous meetings held on the 13 and 20 December 2023 were confirmed as an accurate record and signed by the Chair.

### **3. Declarations of Interest**

- 3.1 Cllr Brian Long declared an interest relating to Item 8 on the agenda, as he was the Chair of the Planning (Regulatory) Committee.
- 3.2 Cllr Lesley Bambridge declared an interest relating to Item 7 on the agenda, as she was the Council appointee to the King's Lynn and West Norfolk Area Museums Committee.
- 3.3 The Monitoring Officer confirmed that the advice regarding bias and predetermination, which had been circulated to all Committee Members prior to the 20 December meeting of the Scrutiny Committee, was still valid.

### **4. Public Question Time**

- 4.1 No public questions were received

### **5. Local Member Issues/Questions**

- 5.1 No local member questions were received.

### **6. Call In**

- 6.1 The Committee noted that the deadline for call-in of Cabinet items was 4pm on Tuesday 16 January. No call-ins were received.

### **7. Access to Norfolk Museums**

- 7.1 The Committee received the annexed report (7).
- 7.2 The Cabinet Member for Communities and Partnerships introduced the report, which provided an update regarding current access to the Norfolk Museums Service. The Service aimed to encourage all residents and especially young people and children of all ages to take an interest in museum activities. Free admission options were available to schools and a number of different groups to ensure equality of opportunity.
- 7.3 The Service ran the nationally significant Kick the Dust programme, funded by the National Lottery Heritage Fund, between October 2018 and March 2023, which helped young people from targeted backgrounds develop skills and confidence and consider employment in the heritage sector if they wanted to.
- 7.4 The following points were discussed and noted.
- A Committee Member stated it was encouraging that the Museums Service had recovered well from the COVID-19 pandemic given its great record of historical success. The Committee Member queried officers as to whether Virtual Reality (VR)

had been considered for future exhibitions, as Norwich Castle used 3D video in certain galleries. Officers stated VR was an opportunity to be grasped, as the Museum of Norwich had such an installation, which was proving successful in enhancing the visitor experience. The Museums Service was currently undertaking a project with two digital artists creating digital artworks for a VR gallery in the Time and Tide Museum of Great Yarmouth Life.

- A Committee Member asked if there were any plans to improve collaboration with universities and colleges across Norfolk. Officers stated the Museums Service worked alongside the University of East Anglia (UEA) and Norwich University of the Arts (NUA) on a variety of projects. The UEA was a stakeholder in the Norwich Castle: Royal Palace Reborn Project and was also collaborating on the current Norwich Works exhibition, utilising archives from the Norfolk Record Office and footage from the East Anglian Film Archive. There were future plans to collaborate with other universities such as Cambridge and Durham.
- A Committee Member queried the context of the Kick the Dust figures and asked if targets were being reached. Officers stated Kick the Dust was a nationally significant project which had exceeded all engagement targets. The Museums Service liaised with partners such as the YMCA to ensure young people from a variety of backgrounds could engage successfully with museums. A significant percentage of young people who had enrolled in Kick the Dust had gone into further studies or employment within the museum and cultural sector. Kick the Dust was such a success that the National Lottery Heritage Fund (NLHF) had illustrated it as a national example of good practice. The NLHF had approved a round one application for the Museums Service for a further project focused on young people working with the YMCA in Leicestershire.
- A Committee Member queried about access for working class children to the Museums Service. Officers stated there was the Stories from the Sea project, which was a partnership between Royal Museums Greenwich and Time and Tide Museum, funded by the Department for Education and Arts Council England. Now in its twelfth year, the project aimed to provide creative education to students in schools in the Great Yarmouth area, focussing resources on children's literacy levels. The Museums Service also worked closely with charities and the Youth Offending Team to get young people to engage with the sector where opportunities were limited.
- A Committee Member asked if there were any future projects aimed towards elderly groups planned, as this had previously been offered by the Museums Service. An officer confirmed that the Service offered a targeted programme for such groups, which involved representatives going into care homes, providing drop-in sessions for dementia patients, and special events at Norwich museums.
- A Committee Member expressed concern that the Museums Service was not being promoted more widely, pointing to the success of Kick the Dust. The Committee Member suggested working closely with English Heritage and other castles locally, with a possible campaign link-up between Norwich Castle and Framlingham Castle in Suffolk as one such opportunity. An officer stated that the Museums Service was fortunate to work along several important partners, stressing that many partnerships were long-term. The Museums Service also delivered the SHARE Museums East

museum development programme on behalf of Arts Council England which covered all museums in Norfolk and the East of England, with 100% of funding coming from the Arts Council. A new partnership with Brighton and Hove Museums would see the two museum services delivering a new South East programme.

- A Committee Member asked if there was scope for corporate events to be held at Norwich Castle once the Palace Reborn Project was complete, suggesting this would enable the Castle to open for longer hours and increase footfall. The Committee Member added that the success of the project could also lead to improvements to Castle Meadow to make it a more pleasant thoroughfare for residents and tourists. Officers expressed gratitude to the Council and the NLHF for their investment in the project. The Grade 1 listed Keep would be futureproofed and fit for purpose for all groups, offering breakfast and evening meetings, weddings, and weekend functions. The Museums Service was beginning to unlock the potential of this capital project. The Cabinet Member for Communities and Partnerships stated that Norwich Castle Museum was continuing to offer ceremonies and often did up to 700 per year. It was planned to work with Norwich City Council on a package of changes to Castle Meadow, hoping to reduce anti-social behaviours and improve the physical appearance of the street through landscaping measures.
- A Committee Member stated he was pleased to see investment in the Time and Tide Museum of Great Yarmouth Life. Officers explained there were plans to illustrate the history of Great Yarmouth, from the Pleistocene to the present day. It was hoped to enclose the forecourt of the museum with glazing to create an open space for to local community groups and school visitors. There was a possibility of generating further income from corporate events.
- A Committee Member stated the Museums Service was a joint partnership between the Council and districts which began in 1974 and had provided an uplift to museums countywide over the 50 successful years of partnership working. The Museums Service also provided support to small independent museums across Norfolk, as they received advice and support from officers in lieu of Council funding.
- A Committee Member mentioned he was pleased to see the access for all provisions in the Norwich Castle: Royal Palace Reborn project. The lift to all parts of the Keep was an important part of the project and should be promoted widely, as the Castle would be more inclusive for disabled visitors.
- The Chair queried officers regarding access to free activities at museums and whether this stimulated numbers attending on open days or enabled visitors to spend more on other activities. Officers stated that free days such as Heritage Open Weekend often saw excellent visitor numbers. On normal open days there would often be a number of people attending museums for free, whether they be schools or other groups. On very popular days such as Lottery Player events, increased visitor numbers were to the point where controls were to be placed at the gate to ensure safety regulations were followed, along with ensuring the sheer number of visitors did not degrade the experience within. Officers felt the current operational model was balanced and flexible.
- The Chair asked officers if there was a model used to assess and identify community groups to work with on projects. An officer explained that Norfolk used a

unique model by working with districts and Arts Council England, which could then illustrate where resources should be allocated. The model worked with both demographics and geography. The Museums Service offered a comprehensive countywide service based on local needs. Input from districts and charities was also routinely received.

- The Chair asked how the Museums Service captured and stored data. Officers stated the five-year strategy report laid out the aims and hopes for the Service as a whole. The Norfolk Joint Museums Committee also played a role in scrutinising reports and documents to ensure matters were on the right trajectory. Programmes such as Kick the Dust were evaluated nationally, requiring thousands of pages of quantitative data to be recorded and stored. The Chair asked if the Norfolk Joint Museums agenda would be the first point of call to find out more on this subject. Officers confirmed this was the case, explaining that the agenda also included district data in the form of minutes from the area working groups of each district.

7.5 Having considered the information presented in the report, The Scrutiny Committee **RESOLVED** the following:

1. **CONSIDERED** potential opportunities for NMS to work with other partners to help mitigate barriers to access.
2. **SUGGESTED** ideas and connections to ensure maximum benefit arose from the Norwich Castle: Royal Palace Reborn project.
3. **AFFIRMED** support for the Time and Tide new development project 'Changing Tides - Shaping Our Great Yarmouth'

## 8. Norwich Western Link Update

8.1 The Scrutiny Committee received the annexed report (8).

8.2 The Cabinet Member for Highways, Infrastructure and Transport introduced the report, which was produced in request to the Committee's request for continued scrutiny of the Norwich Western Link (NWL). The Cabinet Member explained that residents around Norwich were being affected by traffic congestion every day. There was a need to support new infrastructure projects in Norfolk, and the NWL would bring national investment to the county. It had only been a few short years since the Northern Distributor Road (NDR) and A11 dualling were completed and it was difficult to see how the Norwich of 2024 would cope without these recently delivered infrastructure projects.

8.3 The Cabinet Member stressed that the Council took its environmental responsibilities seriously. Extensive ecology surveys were being conducted to shape the NWL planning application. Green bridges, underpasses, and improved habitat such as woodland and hedgerows also formed part of the project

8.4 The Department for Transport (DfT) had pledged more than £200m towards the project, with the potential that more funding could be secured. The planning application was due to



be submitted in early 2024, upon which a statutory public consultation would go ahead.

8.5 The Cabinet Member summed up that the NWL would improve journey times and access to sites such as the Norwich Research Park, Norwich Airport, and the Food Enterprise Park in Easton, benefiting the local economy. The NWL would also contribute towards improved road and cycle safety in Norwich. For these reasons, this was a priority infrastructure project for the Council.

8.6 The following points were discussed and noted:

- A Committee Member commented that the DfT were prepared to fund 85% of the original estimate based on 2022 prices, which would be £213m. The cost of the scheme had since increased to £273m due to inflation, leaving a £60m funding gap which the Council could be exposed to. If the DfT agreed to fund 100% of the estimated cost (£251m), this would naturally reduce the funding gap. However, it appeared the project start date would be delayed, with the NWL opening in 2029 at the earliest. Delays to the project could mean the overall cost would increase beyond £273m, with inflationary forecasts for the project stages meaning the final cost could be in the range of £330m, leaving an £80m shortfall. The Committee Member asked the Cabinet Member what contingencies were in place for such an eventuality, as well as how confident the Council was that the DfT would provide more funding. Officers stated the budget reporting for the NWL reflected the 2029 timescale, with forecasts and inflation built into calculations. Risks had also been considered. Regular conversations were taking place between officers and the DfT regarding extra funding; however there was no timescale as to if or when this would be confirmed.
- A Committee Member requested confirmation that the £273m figure was the definite final cost for the NWL with inflation factored in. The Cabinet Member for Highways, Infrastructure and Transport stated that as the project progressed, it was normal for risk allowance to reduce as risks were realised and closed during the construction phase. If the final cost of the project were expected to exceed £273m, this would need to be approved by Full Council. Considerable contingencies were built into the project. The Cabinet Member for Finance commented that the NWL had risks and adjustment built into the final cost. There was a £66m contingency built into the project, comprised of inflation and other determined risks. The Cabinet Member expressed support for the work of the officers, stating that sensible and conservative estimates were being made regarding additional potential costs due to inflation. The Chair asked if there was a base date for the estimated final cost. Officers confirmed the calculations were completed in the early 2020s, with inflation built in during late 2022/early 2023. The level of inflation had since decreased.
- A Committee Member asked if the Council had any red lines on the final cost of the NWL. The Cabinet Member for Finance stated that as the outline business case was approved by the government, this meant that the NWL was a government supported project. If there was a marked increase above the £66m contingency, the project would need to go back to Full Council for further reappraisal of the benefits of the

- scheme to Norfolk.
- A Committee Member expressed concern about the potential use of council reserves to shore up any funding gaps, given the recent announcement of reserves being used for Adult Social Care matters. The Committee Member asked officers if they could be sure if the NWL project was going ahead. The Cabinet Member for Finance stated the NWL was a key political priority for the Council, which would only be cancelled if government funding was suddenly withdrawn. It appeared likely that the government would approve 100% of funding up to the £251m cost estimate but confirmation of this was still awaited.
  - A Committee Member commented that the NWL route decision in 2019 stated Route C offered good value for money and had limited effects on the environment. The Committee Member asked if Cabinet still agreed that the project met these standards and whether the other three route options would be revisited. Officers confirmed there would be no change from Route C, as substantial appraisal work had been undertaken on all routing options prior to the decision being taken.
  - A Committee Member asked the Cabinet Member for Finance what level of contingency was originally built into the project, expressing concern that the risk level of the project would increase due to possible legal challenges and the need for the planning application to be approved. The Cabinet Member for Finance highlighted the contingency figure in the latest Cabinet report was around £26m, with inflation at £43m. A large contingency was still being provided to the project, as new issues could arise which the team would have to respond to. The Committee Member stated the cost of the NWL had increased from that in 2021 and 2022 and asked if the contingency was built in when the project cost was originally £150m and then increased to £193m. The Cabinet Member confirmed this was the case. Officers stressed that construction inflation was a challenge that needed to be managed as this had been high over recent years. There was a nationwide shortage of construction materials post-COVID which had now stabilised; however this meant a higher rate of inflation had been assumed in the project costs. All cost estimates had now been projected forward to 2029, with significant allowances made for inflation and risk.
  - A Committee Member queried as to where the government had published their response about possibly funding the project to 100% of the estimated cost. Officers stated this was recorded in the government's formal approval letter for the outline business case. Discussion with officials from the DfT were ongoing regarding this. The Cabinet Member for Finance stated that if the 100% funding to £251m was approved, then the Council had already made its contribution towards the project.
  - The Chair stated the contingency appeared to have been exceeded each time the cost of the project had been revised and asked if there was a degree of confidence that it would not be exceeded a further time. The Cabinet Member for Finance commented that as the project developed, the team had a clearer idea of how inflation and risk would affect matters. Risk was managed by the risk register, which was then reported back to the project and relevant boards. The Cabinet Member for Highways, Infrastructure and Transport and officers stressed that further costs could never be ruled out on major infrastructure projects, however Norfolk County Council

had a track record of delivering such projects. Herring Bridge in Great Yarmouth followed the same process as the NWL and was on track to be delivered on-budget. Other schemes had benefited from funding provided by the government's Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) and Transforming Cities fund.

- A Committee Member asked the Cabinet Member for Highways, Infrastructure and Transport if they accepted the level of contingency was not enough at each final cost. The Cabinet Member responded to confirm there was a process in place, with the 2019 costs based on tender quotes from contractors. As the project developed, costs have been revised as more details became accurate.
- A Committee Member expressed concern about the rise in costs, as it appeared there was no clear answer as to where the extra funds would be sourced if the funding gap were more than £20m. The Cabinet Member for Finance stated that the NWL was a capital project.
- The Chair queried biodiversity net gain, as the report mentioned a 10% gain in report. However, the NWL would result in loss of habitat such as rare and veteran trees. The Chair asked for clarity regarding how much irreplaceable habitat would be lost and whether this would influence biodiversity net gain. Officers confirmed that the environmental statement for the NWL would set out the loss of veteran trees, which would form part of the public consultation alongside the planning application. The veteran trees were excluded from the biodiversity net gain calculations as they could not be replaced. The aim was to minimise the effects of the project on veteran trees, as such only a small number were now affected by the NWL. The design of the road was considered to avoid as many trees as possible. Biodiversity net gain was based on metrics provided by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA), which the Council had to comply with and demonstrate 10% net gain from the NWL. The Chair pressed for clarity as to whether lost trees would be replaced in a different way, as it seemed the trees were being disregarded from all calculations. Officers confirmed the environmental statement would demonstrate what impact mitigations were being taken.
- The Vice-Chair asked if trees had a numeric value attached to them when it came to biodiversity net gain calculations. Officers stated this was the case, but that it was not possible to do a like-for-like replacement of veteran trees, which was why they were excluded from the calculations. The Cabinet Member for Highways, Infrastructure and Transport commented that the Council was aiming to achieve biodiversity net gain on all metrics set out by DEFRA. Plans were in place to create new habitats along the NWL route along with maintaining existing ones.
- The Vice-Chair queried red rated risks in the risk register, as one of them was the A47 upgrade programme, which was currently facing a legal challenge in the Royal Courts of Justice. Officers stated there were a number of overlapping features between the A47 upgrade at Easton and the NWL. These were being managed together. At present a verdict was being awaited from the Court of Appeal. At present there was no requirement to make changes to the NWL, however if the circumstances were to change, amendments to the project would be considered.
- The Vice-Chair expressed agreement with the Cabinet Member for Finance's previous comments regarding the closer timescale of the project meaning that risks

could be calculated more accurately, but expressed concern about the Council receiving punitive fines if the project overran. Officers stated that the risk register had been updated to reflect that the outline business case was delayed. The timings of the project had been revised but not yet approved, as there were a number of issues beyond the control of the Council which would affect the programme. Contracts in Stage 1 included break clauses in the event of overruns.

- A Committee Member stated Route C was realigned a couple of years ago. The report from Cabinet dated the 4 December 2023 appeared to refer to another options appraisal report. The Committee Member asked if this report was available for scrutiny. Officers stated this report was unavailable at present due to it being subject to a review process but would eventually form part of the environmental statement.
- A Committee Member remarked that he had seen Freedom of Information requests appeared to show surveys for the route appraisal were incomplete, including ones relating to barbastelle bats. Officers stated there were unaware of incomplete surveys and requested the Committee Member to write to them with further information.
- A Committee Member stated there had been conflict in the media between the Council and the Norfolk Wildlife Trust (NWT) regarding datasets and asked officers if they received full datasets or reports from contractors when conducting surveys. Officers confirmed that the team had access to full datasets and that the Council had conducted ecological surveys in the project area. Consultants were appointed who would conduct the surveys, collate the data, and then report back to the Council. The Cabinet Member for Highways, Infrastructure and Transport commented that the Council was aware of an independent ecologist conducting surveys along the NWL route but stressed that he felt confident that the Council's data would stand up to scrutiny. The Committee Member requested further clarification, stating that it appeared the Council had one dataset which would go through the planning application but that there would be an independent dataset which would conflict this. The Chair intervened at this point to advise that planning disputes could not take place in a Scrutiny Committee meeting. The NWT were welcome to attend a future Scrutiny meeting to advise Committee Members of their findings.
- A Committee Member commented that the biggest risk he had identified to the NWL was that the road might not be built at all, explaining that the NWL would cut down ambulance response times between his division and the Norfolk and Norwich University Hospital by over 20 minutes. It was necessary to scrutinise the project but the finances were being considered appropriately by officers.

8.4 Having considered the update to Cabinet on the 4 December, the Scrutiny Committee **RESOLVED** the following:

1. **PROVIDED** scrutiny around the development of the Western Link project and associated environmental and financial risks.
2. **DISCUSSED** the potential for further scrutiny at future meetings of the committee, and specific areas where additional scrutiny would be valuable.

## **9. Update on Provisional Local Government Settlement 2024-25**

- 9.1 The Scrutiny Committee received the annexed report (9).
- 9.2 The Cabinet Member for Finance introduced the report, which was intended to provide the Committee with support to scrutinise the annual budget setting process for the Council. The Cabinet Member remarked that parts of the report had now been superseded due to the announcement from the Secretary of State for Levelling Up of an additional £600m support package for councils across England the day before this meeting.
- 9.3 The level of Core Spending Power (CSP) was forecast to increase by 6.5% during this period. 59% of that increase would come from council tax, which was considered the highest percentage on record.
- 9.4 Officers stated the provisional settlement as set out in the Autumn Statement was broadly in line with expectations; however, the Council and other local districts were surprised by the size of the reduction in the services grant, as there was no forewarning about this. It was possible that some of the reductions would be rectified by yesterday's support package announcement. The Cabinet Member commented that only the national top-line figure was known at this stage, with no breakdowns as to how the £600m would be allocated across local authorities at present. £500m of the package was to be allocated to the Social Care Grant for use primarily by Children's Services, though Adult Social Care would also be permitted to access funds. An additional £15m funding for the Rural Services Delivery Grant was also included in the package.
- 9.5 The finalised Local Government Settlement was expected between the 31 January and the 8 February 2024. The Cabinet Member and officers would wait to see what the Council's allocation would be.
- 9.6 The following points were discussed and noted:
- A Committee Member welcomed the additional funding from the Rural Services Delivery Grant and asked if the Council was still an active member of the Rural Services Network (RSN). The Cabinet Member confirmed the Council still held membership of the RSN. There had been several recent meetings held on Teams with representatives from the network and the relevant government minister, where the Cabinet Member lobbied the Council's case against the urban/rural divide which often influenced funding decisions. The extra £15m funding was useful but did not change the formula. The Cabinet Member remarked that lobbying had proven highly effective as up until the support package announcement on the 24 January, there had only been one previous change in the Local Government Settlement after it had been announced, which illustrated just how extraordinary developments had been.
  - A Committee Member stated he was unsurprised at the government's support package given recent lobbying by council leaders and MPs and expressed hopes that lobbying would continue to push the government towards a multi-year funding

settlement for local authorities, as financial planning required more certainty. The Committee Member asked the Cabinet Member whether the Council's allocation for 2024/25 would be known before the February meeting of Full Council and whether any proposed budget cuts could be rescinded. The Cabinet Member agreed that a long-term funding settlement would be beneficial. There were encouraging signs from a meeting of the County Councils Network (CCN) yesterday, whether both government and opposition ministers expressed support for long-term funding settlements for local authorities. Once the new allocation was known, the provisional Budget could then be amended to take advantage of any changes from the support package.

- The Chair requested clarity regarding productivity plans, as the government's announcement yesterday referred to councils being obliged to produce such plans. The Cabinet Member commented that it seemed sensible to improve access to the Council's strategy and transformation agenda. Further work in this area would be conducted once guidance or templates from the government were available.

9.7 The Scrutiny Committee **RESOLVED** to **CONSIDER** the update provided by officers on the provisional local government finance settlement and the impact on the annual budget setting process.

## 10. Scrutiny Committee Forward Work Programme

10.1. The Scrutiny Committee received the report (10) which set out the current forward work plan for the Committee.

10.2 The Scrutiny Committee **RESOLVED** to **NOTE** the current forward work programme.

The meeting concluded at 12:28

**Cllr Steve Morphew, Chair  
Scrutiny Committee**



# Norfolk County Council

## Scrutiny Committee

Minutes of the Meeting held on Wednesday 14 February 2024  
at 10am at County Hall Norwich

### Present:

Cllr Steve Morphew (Chair)  
Cllr Daniel Elmer (Vice-Chair)  
Cllr Carl Annison  
Cllr Lesley Bambridge  
Cllr Phillip Duigan  
Cllr John Fisher  
Cllr Tom FitzPatrick  
Cllr Brian Long  
Cllr Ed Maxfield  
Cllr Jamie Osborn  
Cllr Brian Watkins

### Substitute Members Present:

Cllr Fran Whymark for Cllr Mark Kiddle-Morris

### Also Present:

Titus Adam	Assistant Director of Finance
Debbie Bartlett	Interim Executive Director of Adult Social Care
Cllr Bill Borrett	Cabinet Member for Public Health and Wellbeing
Harvey Bullen	Director of Strategic Finance
Grahame Bygrave	Interim Executive Director of Community and Environmental Services
Paul Cracknell	Executive Director for Strategy and Transformation
Kat Hulatt	Director of Legal Services and Monitoring Officer
Cllr Andrew Jamieson	Cabinet Member for Finance
Cllr Kay Mason Billig	Leader of the Council
Tom McCabe	Chief Executive
Cllr Greg Peck	Deputy Cabinet Member for Finance
Peter Randall	Democratic Support and Scrutiny Manager
Cllr Alison Thomas	Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care
Laine Tisdall	Committee Officer
Sara Tough OBE	Executive Director of Children's Services

## 1 Apologies for Absence

1.1 Apologies were received from Cllr Mark Kiddle-Morris (substituted by Cllr Fran Whymark), Cllr Keith Kiddie, and Paul Dunning.

## 2. Declarations of Interest

2.1 No declarations of interest were made.

### **3. Public Question Time**

- 3.1 One public question was received, from Anne Landamore. The question and the written response from the Cabinet Member for Finance are appended to this set of minutes at Appendix A.

### **4. Local Member Issues/Questions**

- 4.1 No local member questions were received.

### **5. Call In**

- 5.1 The Committee noted that the deadline for the call-in of items from the Cabinet meeting held on Monday 29 January 2024 was 4pm on Monday 5 February 2024. No call-ins were received.

### **6. Norfolk County Council Budget 2024-25**

- 6.1 The Committee received the annexed report (6).
- 6.2 The Cabinet Member for Finance introduced the report, which was produced to support the Scrutiny Committee in its duty to provide oversight and challenge to the council's process for developing the 2024-25 budget.
- 6.3 The Cabinet Member welcomed the additional Local Government Settlement funding announced by the Secretary of State for Levelling Up on the 24 January 2024. Norfolk County Council would receive an extra £9.539m from this, of which £8.706m was additional Social Care Grant which would be used to ease pressures on Adult Social Care and home school transport. In addition, the Council had been allocated an extra £737,000 through the Rural Services Delivery Grant. The Cabinet Member commented that the extra settlement was most likely only for one year, which would require more difficult budget decisions to be taken to balance the books, such as service reductions and increasing council tax by the highest percentage possible without a referendum. A £46m budget gap had been identified for 2024-25 and successfully addressed in the Budget process.
- 6.4 For 2023-24, an overspend of £30m was forecast across Adult Social Care and Children's Services. This was partially mitigated by the use of the Council's reserves; however, such measures would not be available in the coming years. The Cabinet Member acknowledged that the initial Local Government Settlement was disappointing.
- 6.5 The Council's core spending power was forecast to increase by 6.8%, but the rise was based on the maximum 4.99% increase in council tax being applied. This would mean that council tax now represented nearly 56% of the Council's core spending power, which was reduced only marginally to 55% by the extra one-year funding.



- 6.6 Total net savings of £41m were now required to balance the budget, which was a reduction from the £45m originally expected due to the additional funding announced in January. The Council was forecast to have a net budget of £527.7m in 2024/25, a record total. The level of inflation and the current economic climate had caused significant issues, meaning a number of difficult budget decisions had to be taken. Financial pressures were being caused by increased demand for services, the increase in the National Minimum Wage and inflation being £9m higher than originally budgeted. The Cabinet Member acknowledged that the number of local authorities issuing Section 114 notices had increased substantially since 2018 and it was prudent to put strategies in place to ensure Norfolk did not end up in the same situation.
- 6.7 The government now expected local authorities to produce productivity plans to set out how improvements would be made to service delivery and reduce wasteful expenditure. Officers in the Strategy and Transformation department had already conducted work in this area as part of the Council's transformation strategy. The Cabinet Member stressed it was important to be as open as possible regarding the strategies adopted to achieve these requirements. The transformation programme in Adult Social Care was forecast to generate £20m of savings per annum. Children's Services was also achieving efficiency savings through the adoption of new technology and working practices proven to be a success in other businesses. The Cabinet Member stated that departmental transformation programmes were the bedrock of achieving the required savings to balance the Council's budget.
- 6.8 Apart from the increase in council tax, no specific items in the October budget proposals required consultation. However, to achieve long term sustainable savings, a number of further items would go out to consultation before a decision was made.
- 6.9 **Norfolk County Council Revenue Budget 2024-25 and Medium Term Financial Strategy 2024-2028**
- 6.10 The Committee received the annexed report (6A).
- 6.11 The Cabinet Member for Finance introduced the report, which presented a set of balanced Budget proposals for 2024-25
- 6.12 The primary aim of the strategy was to show a balanced budget over the four year period. Some budget gaps remained, requiring either further savings to be identified or additional revenue to be generated. There was an overall deficit of £135.908m across the medium term. The Cabinet Member stressed that a longer term funding settlement from the government was required to make budget planning more robust, however at present the single-year Local Government Settlement approach by central government appeared set to continue. This was making long term planning increasingly difficult.

6.13 The following points were discussed and noted:

- A Committee Member welcomed the final funding settlement as it was better than originally expected. The extra funding would mean that a one-off use of the Council's reserves to shore up gaps in Adult Social Care and Children's Services would no longer need to go ahead; however £50m of reserves would still need to be allocated over the medium term. The Committee Member questioned whether general reserves could be maintained at the 5% level in the meantime and whether there was scope to increase them. The Cabinet Member confirmed there was a focus on maintaining reserves at the 5% level. As the net revenue budget increased, the amount of reserves would also increase, but would be maintained at 5%.
- A Committee Member noted that Norfolk had among the lowest levels of useable reserves compared to other top-tier authorities and asked whether this was a cause for concern. The Cabinet Member stated that the government did not wish for local authorities to sit on large levels of reserves, which was part of the reason for the initial reduction in local government settlement. Replenishing the reserves depended on the level of risk and how the Council was managing its finances. If a local authority was able to balance books effectively and remain within its in-year budget, it could then operate with lower levels of reserves. If risk increased, the levels of reserves would be reviewed. It was considered that the Council had sufficient levels of reserves in place for the level of risk anticipated. The Committee Member commented on the aspiration that general reserves could be increased as part of the closure of accounts this year and asked officers whether they were confident this could occur. An officer stated that a balanced budget was forecast, but if there was any underspend the money could then be used to increase reserves.
- Committee Members asked how confident the Cabinet Member was that the budget strategy proposals were as robust and sustainable as they could be. The Cabinet Member commented that the budget proposals had to be taken as a whole rather than in isolation. It was the aim to prevent, reduce and delay the demand for social care in Norfolk. This was the best approach to both support vulnerable people in the county and ensure sound financial management of the services. The long-term management of the Council's finances enabled support to be provided to departments to assist with their long term programmes, ultimately allowing Norfolk County Council to deliver consistent, robust budgets each year. However, this could only be achieved if departments were able to find sustainable long-term savings.
- A Committee Member asked how the Council would protect vital services and retain jobs. The Cabinet Member stated that services were evolving radically due to the use of technology, which was part of the Council's transformation strategy. Innovative ideas across the UK were being tapped for inclusion. It was imperative that the Council was not static as the needs of residents would continue to evolve. It was also planned to make better use of data and reduce wasteful spend on systems. The Cabinet Member stressed this would be an ongoing process.
- A Committee Member expressed interest in how a future strategic review would be conducted. Specific questions were raised around whether outside consultants would be contracted or if skills from the Council's own workforce would be utilised. The

Cabinet Member stated that the Council's future transformation programmes had to be set out in public. Ongoing transformation and review processes would be built into the structure of the Council to ensure it was not a stop-start, haphazard process. The aim was to utilise the best new technology while continuing to deliver for the people of Norfolk.

- A Committee Member requested clarification regarding savings resulting from the Strategic Review, as the report suggested an increase in the budget by £3.8m over the next two financial years. It appeared that some of this increase was from the reversal of cuts which were planned during the 2023/24 financial year. The Cabinet Member stated the Strategic Review had identified a number of savings which could feasibly be delivered, however some of these were one-off and had therefore been reversed in the following year (2024-25). The Strategic Review had identified £17m in savings for the current year (2023-24), with a further £12m forecast for the 2024-25 budget (officers noted that the £12m in the table represented the position as at Cabinet and would be impacted by the final budget proposals to Full Council). The Committee Member requested clarification, as the £12m savings appeared to be from the transformation programme rather than the Strategic Review. The Cabinet Member clarified that the table in the report set out saving proposals from both the transformation programme and the Strategic Review, which had been developed using consistent principles with a focus on delivering services more efficiently with less money required. The Council had a large reserve of expertise to deliver this.
- A Committee Member commented that when the Strategic Review was launched in 2022, it set out to find £20m in savings annually. As the figures stated the review had identified £17m in savings during 2023, a further £12m forecast in 2024, and potentially £3.8m of reversed savings. The Committee Member queried if the Strategic Review had been successful. The Cabinet Member stressed that without the transformation programme it would be impossible to make savings without severe cuts to services. Officers clarified that the Strategic Review had a stated target to find between £15m and £20m of savings. The transformation programme aimed to bring in different ways of working, such as executive hubs, business support hubs, and stronger analytics teams. The Strategic Review effectively gave the Council the ability to move into a different stage of transformation. There was still a need to deliver a balanced budget, where transformation would play a key role. The Committee Member requested clarification on the savings target. Officers stated that certain savings identified for the 2023-24 Budget were one-off proposals. The way that the Council's Budget is prepared meant that these planned reversals were shown as a positive figure in the budget in the following year. The £17m of savings identified by the Strategic Review were built into the budget process for the 2023/24 financial year, and progress on delivering these was regularly reported to Cabinet. Further savings from the Strategic Review were built into the budget model for 2024/25. Officers confirmed that in total overall terms, £25m of net savings were built into the ongoing Budget from proposals for 2023-24 and 2024-25.
- A Committee Member commented there were significant budget pressures to deliver services in a largely rural county and asked what was being done to lobby the government for further funding. The Cabinet Member confirmed that the Council had

responded to the consultation on the Settlement. Letters had been written to the government on numerous occasions to request a fairer funding settlement. Local MPs had also lobbied on behalf of the Council. Securing a long term funding settlement for local government was an important aim, as further increases in council tax were likely going to be unsustainable in the future. It was important to recognise the costs of delivering services in rural areas compared to urban areas. In addition, a reform of business rates and a meaningful reform of the way Adult Social Care was funded were also required. The Council had lobbied various governments regarding these issues over the years.

- A Committee Member stated the budget factored in a 1.65% increase in the taxbase for 2024-25, as opposed to 1% growth assumed in future years. There was a need to deliver more housing in Norfolk but it appeared this aim was being hampered by nutrient neutrality regulations and the inability to deliver new homes, which would also have a knock-on effect by reducing the sum total of council tax takings the Council would receive. The Cabinet Member commented that the 1% prediction was a prudent and conservative estimate, acknowledging that nutrient neutrality had made other local authorities cautious about the amount of new housebuilding that could be delivered in the short to medium term. Some local authorities were considering charging or amending council tax on second homes, which could potentially also slow down the amount of new builds.
- A Committee Member asked the Cabinet Member if he agreed that the Council delivered value for money for the residents of Norfolk, as the county was in line with many other local authorities by raising council tax. The Cabinet Member agreed with this statement, commenting that around 70% of the budget went towards delivering services to vulnerable residents. The Council also delivered a substantial amount of non-statutory services, while statutory services were delivered above and beyond the statutory minimum limit.
- The Chair asked what the current state of the Council was with regard to the Strategic Review, whether it was now “business as usual” or if the Council was continuing to monitor and adopt new methods of working. The Cabinet Member stated the Strategic Review was a defined one-year programme, but that it was the aim to provide continuity of this programme under a different name as part of the Council’s continuing transformation strategy. It was important to build upon the lessons learned from the review rather than considering it as a tick box exercise.
- The Chair stated the productivity plan was about further transformation and asked where the further transformation occurred beyond “business as usual”. Officers stated productivity was an important measure to consider in public services, with the aim to drive waste, inefficiency, and double handling of queries out of systems. It was expedient to bring in different methods of providing services while continuing to deliver value for money to taxpayers. Norfolk County Council had a tradition of committing to significant transformational programmes, which meant these were now considered “business as usual” as they were now tried and tested techniques. Technology would play a large role in future ideas, with the use of artificial intelligence possibly being a new frontier to improve productivity and deliver sustainable savings.
- The Chair requested evidence of the positive impacts delivered by the Strategic

Review, along with the difference these interventions made at the Council. The Leader of the Council stated the Strategic Review and transformational strategy were unilateral decisions taken by Norfolk County Council, as there had been several cases of local authorities struggling and ultimately having to issue a Section 114 notice due to imprudent financial decisions. Transformation was now considered part and parcel of the Council's structure, to the point where Norfolk was now ahead of the schedule set out by the Secretary of State for Levelling Up. The Cabinet Member for Public Health and Wellbeing commented it was important that transformation was appropriately scrutinised, as it was a key part of the Council's future plans. Adult Social Care began their transformation journey in 2017, which reviewed everything that the department was doing. Outside consultants were an important part of the process in order to challenge the status quo and consider different methods of working.

- A Committee Member requested clarification regarding elements of the productivity plan and how this would be constructed. An officer stated that a government template was not expected for the productivity plan; instead local authorities were expected to incorporate certain points outlined in the Supplementary Agenda within their plans. Norfolk County Council had a good track record of supporting, equality, diversity and inclusion for its staff and the communities it served. The Committee Member asked how the Council's internal timeline was set out prior to the plan being submitted to the government. The officer stated the Leader of the Council would need to give final approval before the plan was submitted. Prior to this, the productivity plan would go through the formal council policy pipeline. The Chair commented it would be good to see the papers as part of the corporate strategy, along with a submission at a future meeting of the Scrutiny Committee.
- A Committee Member asked if the additional government settlement would mean that proposed reductions to the Minimum Income Guarantee (MIG) would no longer go ahead. The Cabinet Member stated that any changes to the MIG required consultation, which would go ahead as it was important to seek the views of Norfolk residents. A final decision would be taken by Cabinet in July 2024. The Committee Member asked what weight the responses would have on the final decision. The Cabinet Member stated that the consultation could not be prejudiced. As the Council had a legal responsibility to produce a robust budget for 2024/25 and for future years, departments were asked to review a range of items to find savings, with some requiring a consultation to take place. The Committee Member asked if there was a threshold where changes could be made to the MIG. The Cabinet Member affirmed that the consultation could not be prejudiced; however a wide range of views and impacts would need to be reviewed.
- The Chair stated that there had been a national increase to the MIG, commenting that this change would make a difference to the level of savings generated by any cut in the MIG. The Chair asked how the savings would change and what work was being carried out to accommodate the increase. The Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care stated that officers in the department had met with a charging reference group regarding proposed changes to the MIG. The reference group represented many parties who would be impacted by the proposed reduction in the MIG. At present, the Cabinet recommendation was to hold a consultation on the MIG changes before taking a final decision. Regarding the government decision to increase MIG, the level had increased

the previous year and an assumption was made by officers that a further increase in line with inflation was likely this year. This had been factored into any calculations. The Cabinet Member commented that a decision was yet to be taken regarding the changes and that the consultation could not be prejudiced. The Chair requested clarification that the MIG level would increase in accordance with the cost of living but would then decrease, depending on the consultation outcome. The Cabinet Member confirmed that this would be the case.

- A Committee Member requested assurance that library services would be maintained and possibly expanded across Norfolk, citing local experience in the King's Lynn area. The Cabinet Member gave assurances that services would be maintained across all 46 libraries in Norfolk. There was a work programme to create multi-use communities hubs following a pilot scheme in the Great Yarmouth area, with plans in place to expand it into Hunstanton and King's Lynn.
- A Committee Member asked how long term risks were identified and mitigated in the budget setting process to build resilience. The Cabinet Member stated that prudential treasury management was at the centre of the Council's financial management. Sustainable savings were required for long-term funding decisions to be taken. The Council had secured borrowing at a time when interest rates were much lower than at present. Borrowing at a 1.8% rate was naturally a different order of magnitude than borrowing at current rates. It was the intention that the Council would not make any further borrowing in the 2024 calendar year.
- A Committee Member commented that a General Election was due to be held later in 2024 and asked the Cabinet Member what would be requested from a new government post-election, The Cabinet Member expressed hopes that resources would be allocated towards implementing a multi-year settlement for local government funding, a sustainable fair funding programme, and an updating of the relative needs formula. In addition, a reform of the council tax system would be well received, to tackle inequalities in the current system and to recognise the additional costs of providing services in rural areas.
- A Committee Member affirmed there was a fundamental issue with the council tax system when it came to rural areas, as these were disadvantaged by inadequate funding and their location. The Cabinet Member stated it was important to deliver a balanced budget and that the County Deal would have a significant impact on the amount of funding that could be delivered for rural areas.
- A Committee Member mentioned there had been 260 responses in total for the whole budget consultation, which meant only 0.03% of the county's population had responded. The Committee Member requested clarification regarding the consultation process and what was being done to improve response rates. An officer and the Cabinet Member acknowledged that the response rate was disappointing. Practices learned from the County Deal consultation were incorporated into the budget consultation, as there had been a high response rate. Ways of providing residents with more access to officers and different methods of capturing data were also considered. The Committee Member commented that a broad review of the consultation process across the Council was required, as there appeared to be a degree of opacity about how information was being fed back into the process. It was also unclear if there were

certain percentages of responses required before the Council would take notice. The Chair intervened at this point, stating that a consultation review would need to be incorporated on the Scrutiny Committee's forward work plan.

- The Chair requested clarification regarding the social care market and how its transformation programme would tackle issues raised in the report. An officer stated that the Council worked closely alongside its partners and providers in the care market. Support was being offered to improve recruitment and retention, with progress already being seen in this area. The Care Quality Commission (CQC) were currently behind with their inspections. To assist the CQC, officers had written to them with a list of providers who were believed to now pass the threshold of being good or outstanding. Commissioning would shape how the social care market would look in future, but the Council would have to work with the market to effect changes. More nursing care and improvements in quality across the board were planned. The Chair commented that there appeared to be nothing in the transformation programme to address that Norfolk had been assessed as "poor quality" in this area, along with financial impacts. An officer stated that it was possible to bring another report to a future Select Committee or Scrutiny Committee meeting to illustrate how Adult Social Care was working to achieve these goals; however there were no "silver bullet" solutions available to improve the situation.

#### 6.14 **Capital Strategy and Programme 2024-25**

6.15 The Committee received the annexed report (6B).

6.16 The Cabinet Member for Finance introduced the report, which presented the proposed capital strategy and programme, including information on the funding available to support the strategy. The report also summarised the development of the proposed capital programme, including proposed new schemes, and a summary of forecast capital receipts.

6.17 The following points were discussed and noted:

- A Committee Member stated that the cost of borrowing had become prohibitively expensive over the past 18 months, commenting that the Council had previously taken the view to borrow when interest rates were low to fund capital projects. It now appeared the official position was that there would be no further borrowing in the 2024/25 financial year. The Committee Member asked if the Council was still able to utilise existing cash balances or apply for external funding, while querying the prioritisation strategy for capital projects should no external funding be forthcoming. The Cabinet Member for Finance estimated that borrowing would not increase during 2024, but the possibility remained that it could increase. The rise in interest rates had meant there was a fundamental shift in the way Council allocated capital. This involved screening, plus a Capital Review Boardp which was chaired by the Cabinet Member. Capital projects would continue to be scrutinised carefully, to see if they could be deferred or potentially removed from the programme if necessary. Confidence was expressed that the headline borrowing number of £50m per year would be met through

the screening process. The Committee Member asked if the Cabinet Member envisaged any project in the capital programme being scrapped. The Cabinet Member stated that no projects were expected to be scrapped.

- A Committee Member observed that the Council's external debt now stood at £822m, pondering if this was a cause for concern for the Cabinet Member and if there were any forecasts as to whether the debt level would fluctuate over the next two to three years. The Cabinet Member remarked that he was not relaxed about the situation but expressed confidence that the debt level was manageable. Robust treasury management was key to this. At present the interest level was 7%, meaning that 10% of the Council's net budget was spent on servicing interest. The Cabinet Member stressed that debt was being closely watched by officers.
- The Chair asked how the County Deal would impact the capital strategy, given that it had previously been remarked that the extra £20m funding per year could be used to finance the interest on capital projects. The Cabinet Member stated that the additional funding was ringfenced for additional infrastructure projects to benefit the Norfolk economy and not to plug gaps in the Council's budget. In theory, the opportunities that the County Deal could bring were unlimited.
- A Committee Member queried the Council's borrowing limit, asking officers if it would remain at £1.06bn or would reduce to reflect the lower level of borrowing at present. Officers explained how the cap was set, based on the additional borrowing planned by the Council while subtracting repayments already made. Projects in the capital programme were also taken into consideration. The cap was reviewed each year and tended to increase as the Council was borrowing more than it repaid. This was not an abnormal situation due to the inflation rate and the number of new schemes added to the capital programme.
- A Committee Member queried the minimum revenue provision, which was now estimated at £3.2m for 2024/25, given that the Council had paid £32m in interest on the capital programme in 2023/24. The Committee Member asked what the level of interest payments would be with the additional £3.2m. An officer confirmed that the minimum revenue provision increased each year, as it was an amount of money set aside to ensure debt repayments could be serviced. The provision increased as the capital programme was funded by borrowing. Officers had to work within a framework determined by government legislation to achieve this.

6.18 The Scrutiny Committee **RESOLVED** to **CONSIDER** and **COMMENT** on the suite of 2024-25 budget reports presented to Cabinet on the 29 January 2024, with particular focus on the Cabinet recommendations to County Council in relation to:

- The Norfolk County Council Revenue Budget 2024-25 and Medium Term Financial Strategy 2024-28
- The Capital Strategy and Programme 2024-25

## 7. Annual Investment and Treasury Strategy

7.1 The Scrutiny Committee received the annexed report (7).



- 7.2 The Cabinet Member for Finance introduced the report, which provided an overview of the Annual Investment and Treasury Strategy 2024-25 and associated Cabinet papers. The plans formed part of Norfolk County Council's Policy Framework.
- 7.3 The following points were discussed and noted:
- The Vice-Chair noted that the criteria for overseas investments stated that the Council required an AA+ credit rating for any country where investments were held, which appeared restrictive as other local authorities had substantially lower thresholds for investment. The Vice-Chair asked officers if they could provide advice regarding the criteria and whether this was due for review. An officer confirmed that the criteria was reviewed each year. A cautious and prudent approach to lending was followed, shaped by lessons learned from the 2008 global financial crisis. The criteria could be reduced in future; however this would expose the Council to greater levels of risk.
- 7.4 Having considered the proposed Annual Investment and Treasury Strategy 2024-25, the Scrutiny Committee **RESOLVED** the following:
1. **PROVIDED** comments and recommendations where appropriate.
  2. **ASKED** officers to produce a report to the Leader and Cabinet Member on behalf of the committee in accordance with section 11b of the Norfolk County Council Constitution (Budget and Policy Framework Procedure Rules), providing feedback and recommendations where appropriate.

## 8. Scrutiny Committee Forward Work Programme

- 8.1. The Scrutiny Committee received the annexed report (10), which set out the current forward work plan for the Committee.
- 8.2 A report on the Council's Climate Change strategy had been added to the work plan for consideration in March. Due to the next Scrutiny Committee meeting featuring representatives from Anglian Water, officers suggested the 20 March meeting be extended, or for an additional meeting to be scheduled. On a show of hands, Committee Members **AGREED** that the March meeting be extended to cover all business.
- 8.2 The Scrutiny Committee **RESOLVED** to **NOTE** the current forward work programme.

The meeting concluded at 13:03

**Cllr Steve Morphew, Chair  
Scrutiny Committee**

**Scrutiny Committee 14 February 2024****3. Public Question Time****3.1 Question from Anne Landamore**

What is the criteria the Cabinet is using for there to be sufficient impact on people who have disabilities so that it would not consider going ahead with the cuts to the Minimum Income Guarantee (MIG)? If there isn't any criteria the consultation is pointless.

**3.2 Response from the Chair:**

Thank you for your question, which ideally requires a response from a Cabinet Member. I am grateful to Cllr Andrew Jamieson, the Cabinet Member for Finance, for providing a written response.

**3.3 Response from the Cabinet Member for Finance:**

The principles of consultation are not based around a fixed criteria to inform decisions, unlike for example a more rigid decision making process for such as a procurement exercise. The purpose of the consultation is to better understand the issue and to seek a broad range of views and impacts – including from people with lived experience. In reaching a decision, Cabinet will need to consider what people have said about the impact of any changes, and any mitigation for the impact. Alongside this, Cabinet will take into account other factors including the local and national context for both Adult Social Services and the council as whole.

# Scrutiny Committee

Item No: 8

**Report Title: Climate Policy for Norfolk County Council**

**Date of Meeting: 20 March 2024**

**Responsible Cabinet Member: Cllr Eric Vardy** (Cabinet Member for Environment & Waste)

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

## Executive Summary

The appended report (appendix A) provides members with a copy of the Climate Policy for Norfolk County Council. The policy would form part of the Norfolk County Council Policy Framework, which requires a scrutiny process to take place in accordance with part 11B of the NCC constitution. Consequential deletions would need to be made to the Environmental Policy, to be replaced by cross-references to the new Climate Policy. These are shown in Appendix B.

## Recommendations

The committee is asked to:

- 1. Consider the proposed Climate Policy for Norfolk County Council, providing comments and recommendations where appropriate.**
- 2. Ask officers to produce a report to the Leader and Cabinet Member on behalf of the committee in accordance with section 11b of the Norfolk County Council Constitution (Budget and Policy Framework Procedure Rules), providing feedback and recommendations where appropriate.**

### 1. Background and Purpose

- 1.1 The appended Cabinet paper (Appendix A) sets out NCC's proposed Climate Policy. The Policy sets out how the council can address its own carbon footprint as well as its role in supporting Norfolk's low carbon development and green growth. Consequential amendments to the environmental policy are shown at Appendix B.

- 1.2 At Cabinet on 4 March 2024, members received the appended report and were asked to approve and recommend to Full Council that Norfolk County Council adopt the Climate Policy, approving a governance route through to Full Council approval.
- 1.3 The minutes and agreed recommendations from the 4 March 2024 Cabinet Meeting can be found [here](#).
- 1.4 It is anticipated that a more fundamental review of the Environmental Policy will be required in due course to reflect the significant regulatory and other change that has occurred since it was published in 2019. This would follow on from the planned development of a new Environment Strategy later this year.
- 1.5 The Scrutiny Committee has a clear role in providing challenge to any refresh or amendment to items that make up the policy framework. This is set out in part 11B of the NCC constitution, alongside guidelines around communication with members and the process leading to Full Council approval. The item must be considered by the Scrutiny Committee in good time, and the Committee are asked to provide a report to the Leader of the Council outlining a summary of discussions and any recommendations put forward by the Scrutiny Committee. The report will be produced by officers based on discussions at the meeting and signed off by the Chair and Vice-Chair of the committee to ensure accuracy. It will include details of any minority views expressed as part of the debate at the Scrutiny Committee. Having considered any report from the Scrutiny Committee, the Leader or Executive will agree proposals for submission to the Council and report to Council on how any recommendations from the Scrutiny Committee have been taken into account.

## 2. Recommendations

The committee is asked to:

1. **Consider the proposed Climate Policy for Norfolk County Council, providing comments and recommendations where appropriate.**
2. **Ask officers to produce a report to the Leader and Cabinet Member on behalf of the committee in accordance with section 11b of the Norfolk County Council Constitution (Budget and Policy Framework Procedure Rules), providing feedback and recommendations where appropriate.**

### 3. Background Papers

- 3.1 Appendix A: Climate Policy for Norfolk County Council.  
Appendix B: proposed amendments to Environmental Policy

#### Officer Contact

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

**Officer name: Peter Randall, Democratic Support and Scrutiny Manager**

**Telephone no.: 01603 307570**

**Email: [peter.randall@norfolk.gov.uk](mailto:peter.randall@norfolk.gov.uk)**



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

## Cabinet

**Item No:**

**Report Title: Climate Policy for Norfolk County Council**

**Date of Meeting: 4<sup>th</sup> March 2024**

**Responsible Cabinet Member: Cllr Vardy** (Cabinet Member for Environment & Waste)

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

**Is this a Key Decision? Yes**

**If this is a Key Decision, date added to the Forward Plan of Key Decisions: 22 January 2024**

### **Executive Summary**

In June 2023, Norfolk County Council launched its Climate Strategy. The strategy sets out how the council can address its own carbon footprint as well as its role in supporting Norfolk's low carbon development and green growth. The strategy received widespread support for its detailed coverage of how the council can help shape Norfolk's response to climate change in line with the local context and priorities. Moreover, the council's approach to climate was independently ranked second among the UK's county councils in the 2023 Council Climate Action Scorecards.

This paper introduces a Climate Policy that reflects the main elements of the Climate Strategy in a more concise policy format. It also uses the Climate Policy as an opportunity to restate the council's countywide commitment, seeking better alignment with the UK's 2050 net zero target and the ambitious trajectory set out in the national carbon budgets. Finally, it proposes a timeline for the Climate Policy to progress to Full Council for consideration in March 2024.

## **Recommendations**

The Cabinet is asked to:

- 1. Review and comment on the proposed Climate Policy, including the new statement of the council's county-wide net zero commitment.**
- 2. Endorse the Climate Policy's progression for Full Council's consideration via Scrutiny Committee in accordance with part 11b of Council's Constitution.**
- 3. Agree that a related amendment to the Environment Policy also be put to Full Council to align its wording on our overarching climate commitments with the Climate Policy.**
- 4. Endorse bringing an annual report to Select Committee and Cabinet on progress of the Climate Policy.**

# 1 Background and purpose

- 1.1 Norfolk County Council's policy relating to climate change has to date been stated within its Environmental Policy. Published in 2019, this policy articulated the council's ambition to reach net zero for its estate by 2030 and to work with partners towards carbon neutrality county-wide.
- 1.2 Given the scale and complexity of this issue, the council launched a detailed Climate Strategy in June 2023. The strategy sets out seven focus areas that guide how the council could best apply its powers and influence towards addressing climate change:
- Reducing our estate emissions
  - Reducing our indirect emissions
  - Addressing Norfolk's county-wide emissions
  - Promoting a green economy for Norfolk
  - Climate adaptation
  - Ensure nature has space to recover and grow
  - Engage and collaborate.
- 1.3 The council's ambition and comprehensive approach to climate change has been recognised in the 2023 Council Climate Action Scorecards, where Norfolk County Council was independently ranked second among the UK's county councils for its climate action approach and initiatives.
- 1.4 Having this clear strategic vision alongside our reputation as a reliable delivery partner helps to set apart Norfolk County Council as a good investment when government makes funding decisions for low carbon initiatives. This is demonstrated through the council's recent success in securing funding to bring seventy zero emissions buses to Norwich in 2024 and nearly £6.5m earmarked for expanding electric vehicle chargepoint infrastructure through 2024 and 2025.
- 1.5 When Cabinet endorsed the strategy, it approved a further recommendation to develop a policy that would reflect the strategy within the council's policy framework. A Climate Policy for Norfolk County Council is now presented in this paper, which seeks to meet this commitment.

## 2 Proposal

### Policy structure

- 2.1 The full Climate Policy being proposed is attached to this paper for review. An overview of the policy's structure is as follows:



1. A brief introduction setting out the background to the policy and its overarching ambitions relating to our estate and the county.
  2. A subsequent section for each of the seven focus areas set out in the Climate Strategy, with a brief introduction followed by their respective strategic priorities.
  3. References to where the climate policy aligns with a primary policy for that theme (for example the Local Transport Plan).
- 2.2 By following this structure, the policy seeks to offer a concise summary of the key aspects of the Climate Strategy so that close alignment is maintained between them.

### **County wide commitment**

- 2.3 The council's approach to addressing climate change looks beyond simply its own estate to also encompass how it can support low carbon development across Norfolk.
- 2.4 In its Environment Policy, the council commits to working towards carbon neutrality for Norfolk by 2030. This statement set a clear tone of ambition when it was drafted in 2019 to anchor focus on the need for action across the county.
- 2.5 With more clarity on area-wide emissions trajectories now available, it is apparent that working towards 2030 climate neutrality is not a practical ambition (for Norfolk or any other part of the country). Furthermore, the term 'carbon neutrality' that was used does not match with the UK's legal commitment to net zero, which can be a source of confusion.
- 2.6 This paper proposes that the Climate Policy includes an update to this county wide statement, using the following wording:
- “Norfolk County Council commits to using its powers, influence and partnerships towards supporting the county's low carbon development in line with the UK-wide target to reach net zero by 2050. We will look to keep Norfolk in step with the ambitious trajectory set out in the national carbon budgets of a 78% reduction in emissions by 2035 relative to 1990 levels, whilst recognising the vital role of Norfolk's agricultural sector in UK food security and the implications for its land use emissions in the national context.”
- 2.7 This updated statement aligns to both the target and the language of the UK as a whole. Moreover, it recognises the need for an ambitious but practical trajectory towards net zero that maintains a focus on acting now - which is what the carbon budgets set by the government represent by setting a path towards a 78% reduction in emissions by 2035 relative to 1990 levels.

- 2.8 The wording also gives reference to Norfolk as key food-producing part of the country to properly recognise how its contribution to land use emissions is also a reflection of its important role in UK food security.
- 2.9 If this restatement is agreed, a related amendment of the council’s existing Environmental Policy wording will be required – with agreement from Full Council – so that it aligns with the new wording for the county-wide climate ambition set out in the Climate Policy.

**Proposed timeline**

- 2.10 As set out in recommendation 2, the Climate Policy is to be included as part of the NCC Policy Framework. Adoption of the strategy will therefore require both Full Council approval, and a pre-scrutiny process held in accordance with the procedures and guidance set out in part 11b of the NCC constitution. Cabinet are therefore asked to approve the following governance route for the Climate Change Strategy:

<i>Date</i>	<i>Meeting</i>
<i>Monday 4<sup>th</sup> March</i>	<b>Cabinet</b> – endorsement of proposed Climate Policy, and referral to Full Council via the Scrutiny Committee
<i>Wednesday 20<sup>th</sup> March</i>	<b>Scrutiny Committee</b> – scrutiny of proposed Climate Policy.
<i>Tuesday 26<sup>th</sup> March</i>	<b>Full Council</b> – the Climate Policy to be put to Full Council for debate and approval. Full Council will also receive a report from the Scrutiny Committee detailing discussions and associated recommendations.

- 2.11 The related amendment to the Environmental Policy wording can be brought to the same meeting so it can be agreed alongside the Climate Policy to ensure they align.

**Progress reporting**

- 2.12 Corporate Select Committee reviewed the Climate Policy at its January 2024 meeting, and in endorsing the policy carried a motion for an annual report on the policy’s progress. Cabinet is therefore asked to endorse this approach of annual progress reporting, which can be linked with the annual review cycle that has been agreed for the council’s Climate Action Plans.

**3 Impact of the proposals**

- 3.1 The proposed policy ensures that the council’s approach to climate change, as comprehensively set out in its Climate Strategy, is formally reflected in the policy framework.

## 4 Evidence and Reasons for Decision

- 4.1 The Climate Policy fulfils a commitment made in May 2023 by Cabinet to reflect the Climate Strategy in the council's policy framework. This ensures it is effectively integrated as a policy governing how the council is run.

## 5 Alternative Options

- 5.1 The council could choose not to pursue a Climate Policy. This would leave a gap in the council's governance around this issue and mean not fulfilling the public commitment made by Cabinet in May 2023 to reflect the Climate Strategy in the policy framework.
- 5.2 In relation to its county-wide commitment, the council could choose to stick with its current wording in the Environment Policy. This would maintain the strong tone of ambition in working towards 2030 carbon neutrality for Norfolk, but it will not reflect a practical emissions reduction pathway for the county.

## 6 Financial Implications

- 6.1 The proposed Climate Policy does not introduce new financial implications for the council as it substantively reflects the existing Climate Strategy as a policy document. The financial viability of specific initiatives that are introduced towards meeting the policy goals will have to be reviewed on a case-by-case basis to ensure they can be budgeted for and are financially sustainable. Key to successful delivery of initiatives related to the policy will be ongoing success in securing government grants. However, it will also require exploring wider channels of funding including leveraging in private sector investment and enabling community investments in local priorities.

## 7 Resource Implications

- 7.1 **Staff** – no new implications beyond what has been recognised through the Climate Strategy. Delivery of the initiatives that relate to the Climate Policy will be through existing staff resource or additional resource secured from partnerships or external funding sources. Furthermore, staff engagement is currently underway to build awareness of the council's Climate Strategy and seek direct input on ways the council can become more sustainable.
- 7.2 **Property** – no new implications. An initial £22.5 million capital budget has been agreed by Cabinet for investing in a 'future ready' programme of building improvement works on the council's freehold building estate.
- 7.3 **IT** – no new implications
- 7.4 **Implementation capacity** – no new implications

## 8 Other implications

- 8.1 **Legal implications** – introducing a Climate Policy into the policy framework will mean it that it is integrated one of the policies that governs how the council should be run.
- 8.2 **Human rights implications** – no new implications resulting from the Climate Policy
- 8.3 **Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA)** – no new implications beyond the existing Climate Strategy. For example, residents and visitors who are older, disabled, pregnant or have young children are likely to be especially affected by the impacts of climate change – particularly extreme heat, flooding and increased occurrence of disruptive events. There may also be opportunities to reduce inequalities through climate action, for example with more accessible and modern public transport and better designed infrastructure to encourage active travel including for those with mobility aids such as wheelchairs. The effect will need to be considered on a scheme-by-scheme basis.
- 8.4 **Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA):** no impact identified.
- 8.5 **Health and Safety implications:** No new implications of the policy. Climate change increases risks from flooding, heat-related health impacts and other causes. Playing our part in mitigating it reduces these risks. More directly, investing in buildings which are better-adapted to the changing climate – through being better insulated, having properly maintained fabric, and where appropriate other adaptations – and adapting services to changed conditions mitigates health and safety risks.
- 8.5.1 **Sustainability implications** – the Climate Policy directly contributes to strengthening the governance around the council's climate action.
- 8.6 **Any other implications** – no new implications

## 9 Risk Implications/Assessment

## 10 Select Committee Comments

- 10.1 The Climate Policy was reviewed by Corporate Select Committee on 15 January 2024.
- 10.2 Cllr Price proposed that there was an annual report to a Select Committee that would note the progress of the Climate Policy. The proposal was seconded by Cllr White and following a vote, the recommendation was carried.
- 10.3 The Select Committee endorsed the Climate Policy's progression for Cabinet's consideration

## 11 Recommendations

11.1 The Cabinet is asked to:

1. Review and comment on the proposed Climate Policy, including the new statement of the council's county-wide net zero commitment.
2. Endorse the Climate Policy's progression for Full Council's consideration via Scrutiny Committee in accordance with the process set out in part 11b of Council's Constitution.
3. Agree that a related amendment to the Environment Policy also be put to Full Council to align its wording on our overarching climate commitments with the Climate Policy.
4. Endorse bringing an annual report to Select Committee and Cabinet on progress of the Climate Policy.

## 12 Background papers

12.1 [Cabinet Report \(10 May 2023\) 'Norfolk County Council Climate Strategy'](#)

12.2 [Climate strategy - Norfolk County Council](#)

12.3 [Environmental policy - Norfolk County Council](#)

## Officer contact

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

**Officer name:** Jonathan Franklin      **Tel No.:** 01603223372

**Email address:** [jonathan.franklin@norfolk.gov.uk](mailto:jonathan.franklin@norfolk.gov.uk)



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

## **Appendix B**

### **Norfolk County Council's Environmental Policy**

#### **Proposed Amendments**

This is Norfolk County Council's new Environmental Policy. It takes as its starting point the Government's own 25-year Plan published in 2018 and is structured to reflect the key environmental concerns embodied in that plan. In addition, it is framed to reflect the increasing importance that climate change has on all aspects of the environment, whether the landscape itself, the species within it, or the rich cultural heritage that occupies it.

This policy reflects the areas that the Council sees as key to protecting and maintaining the health of Norfolk's distinctive environment and its occupants. The Policy itself signposts to overarching activity that spans a range of environmental interactions that the Council is involved with, including those where it already has its own statutory environmental responsibilities.

As reflected in our current six-year business plan – 'Together for Norfolk', we will put at the centre of our efforts, an approach that ensures that the development of Norfolk's economy is socially inclusive, while championing innovative and sustainable development. It will support investment in green jobs and infrastructure, while ensuring that we both protect and enhance the environment.

We will champion resource efficiency in how we conduct our own operations, setting stringent environmental targets, and we will work within the County at large to deliver against the targets set in our Climate Policy. ~~ensure it goes beyond the expectations of national government, as far as the national 'net zero' carbon target is concerned.~~ In this we will ~~align~~ cooperate with our partners in the region.

We will continue to ensure that the distinctive Norfolk environment is cared for, both for current and future generations, and that we will continue to explore new ways to make our countryside and coast as accessible as possible, whilst respecting the sensitivities around certain natural landscapes and sites. By continuing to operate a proactive and evidence-based approach, we will ensure that a net improvement ('net gain') to biodiversity and habitat creation is the norm.

From now on this Environmental Policy will guide all the Council's future decision-making.

#### **Goals**

We fully support the Goals the Government has stated for its Environmental Plan and have used them as the basis for framing this policy. These are:

- Clean air for the population
- Ensuring a clean and plentiful water supply
- Encouraging a thriving plant and wildlife community

- Reducing the risk of harm from environmental hazards such as flooding and drought
- Using resources from nature more sustainably and efficiently
- Enhancing beauty, heritage and engagement with the natural environment
- Mitigating and adapting to climate change
- Minimising waste
- Managing exposure to chemicals
- Enhancing biosecurity

## **Policy**

- in enacting these goals, the supporting key policy aims are:

### Using and managing land sustainably

- Creating and embedding in our strategic planning a more holistic approach to address climate change, particularly within the local planning frameworks
- Embedding an ‘environmental net gain’ principle for development, including housing and infrastructure
- Improving soil health
- Focusing on woodland to maximise its many benefits for the environment and our communities
- Working with key partners to ensure an adequate water supply, including exploring water harvesting initiatives
- Reducing risks from flooding and coastal erosion where possible
  - Expanding the use of natural flood management solutions
  - Putting in place more sustainable drainage systems
  - Working to make ‘at-risk’ properties more resilient to flooding

### Recovering nature and enhancing the beauty of landscapes

- Protecting and recovering nature
  - Publishing a Norfolk 25-year Environmental Strategy for nature
  - Recognising that Norfolk is losing biodiversity, particularly insect populations. Therefore, a Pollinator Action Plan will be produced as a key element of our Environmental Strategy
- Conserving and enhancing natural beauty
  - Providing support for designated sites, including the Norfolk & Suffolk Broads, and the Norfolk Coast Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, Natura 2000 sites and species, and County Wildlife Sites
- Respecting nature in how we use water
  - Working to incentivise greater water efficiency, with users, and supporting water companies

### Connecting people with the environment to improve health and wellbeing

- Helping people improve their health and wellbeing by using green spaces ○ Promoting the opportunities to enhance health and wellbeing that are available through exposure to the natural environment
- Encouraging children to be close to nature, in and out of school
  - Working with schools to make the most of their green spaces
- Greening our towns and cities
  - Supporting the creation of green infrastructure in our key urban areas
- Planting more trees to improve biodiversity and as a potential mitigation measure for climate change in appropriate locations
- Working with County Farms tenants to move to higher level stewardship and greater biodiversity
- Supporting the community to make sustainable travel choices
  - Working to support alternatives to car travel including promoting sustainable public transport and initiatives that utilise the growing cycling and pedestrian improvements within the County
  - Encouraging sustainable travel on all new developments within the County, through the appropriate planning agreements
  - Helping to develop integrated transport hubs across the County and maximising the opportunities presented through schemes such as Transforming Cities

### Increasing resource efficiency, and reducing pollution and waste

- Maximising resource efficiency and minimising environmental impacts at end of life
  - Achieving zero avoidable plastic waste in operations ○ Reducing the impact of waste generally in our operations through working with the supply chain regarding single use products
  - As part of our statutory function, continue to explore opportunities for improving the management of residual waste
  - Working with partners to maximise the opportunities for recycling waste
  - Addressing the impacts that our own use of energy has on the environment ~~by developing an Energy Strategy that takes account of all greenhouse gases produced, whilst exploring opportunities to generate energy on our own estate~~ in accordance with the council's Climate Strategy.
  - Working with our supply chain wherever possible to reduce the environmental footprint created
- Reducing pollution



- o Supporting initiatives that lead to clean air, such as developing new proposals within the forthcoming Local Transport Plan and its supporting strategies

#### Securing clean, healthy, productive and biologically diverse seas and oceans

- Working with key agencies to ensure that our offshore areas and coastline contributes to the network of well-managed Marine Protected Areas (MPAs)
  - o Focusing on delivering on the statutory duties with respect to the Wash, and North Norfolk European Marine Site

#### Protecting and improving our global environment

- Reflecting the significance of climate change and the need to both mitigate and adapt, the council has adopted in addition to this Environmental Policy a separate Climate Policy. ~~Understanding that the consequences of the decisions we take can have global significances and developing a greater awareness of the complex network of inputs and outputs of our actions, all of which have a local, national and international consequences. In this area, our activity will focus on the following:~~
  - o ~~Working with those sectors of the community that have the greatest carbon footprint to help them mitigate their impact~~
  - o ~~Working with a wide range of partners including academia, the business community, local authorities within Norfolk and our neighbouring authorities where appropriate, as well as with the community themselves~~
  - o ~~Embedding the ethos and practice of supporting ‘clean growth’ within the economy, including investigating opportunities which help to develop the green/renewable energy sector~~
  - o ~~Ensuring that each project the Council undertakes is assessed for the contribution it will make towards achieving our environmental targets~~
  - o ~~Working, where possible, with our partners to plan, resource and implement measures that together achieve the overall targets for Norfolk, underpinned by a robust approach to monitoring, measuring and reporting on the outcomes~~

~~Striving to meet this collective global challenge, we will work with our neighbours within the region, specifically Suffolk County Council and the Broads Authority, to collectively achieve ‘net zero’ carbon emissions on our estates by 2030, but within our wider areas, work towards ‘carbon neutrality’ also by 2030.~~

# Scrutiny Committee

Item No: 9

**Report Title:** Scrutiny Committee Forward Work Programme

**Date of Meeting:** 20 March 2024

## Executive Summary

This paper sets out the current forward work programme for the Scrutiny Committee, outlining committee dates and agreed items.

## Recommendations

Members of the committee are asked to:

1. Note the current Scrutiny Committee forward work programme and discuss potential further items for future consideration.
2. Receive a verbal update from officers regarding the establishment of a Task and Finish Group on the topic of Domestic Abuse.

## 1. Background and Purpose

- 1.1 Members of the Scrutiny Committee took part in a work programming session held on the 22 April 2023, discussing proposed items for the Committee to consider through until May 2024.
- 1.2 The work programme attached is amended frequently to better reflect officer pressures and changes to the Cabinet forward plan of decisions.
- 1.3 All topics are subject to change, with the committee remaining flexible to ensure the ability to adapt to emerging and urgent topics for consideration.

## 2. Proposal

- 2.1 Members are asked to note the attached forward programme of work (**Appendix A**) and discuss potential further items for consideration.

## 3. Impact of the Proposal

- 3.1 Maintaining the proposed work programme will ensure that the Scrutiny Committee has a full schedule of work, and officers are well prepared to present to the committee.

## 4. Financial Implications

4.1 None

## **5. Resource Implications**

### **5.1 Staff:**

None

### **5.2 Property:**

None

### **5.3 IT:**

None

## **6. Other Implications**

### **6.1 Legal Implications:**

None

### **6.2 Human Rights Implications:**

None

### **6.3 Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) (this must be included):**

None

### **6.4 Data Protection Impact Assessments (DPIA):**

None

### **6.5 Health and Safety implications (where appropriate):**

None

### **6.6 Sustainability implications (where appropriate):**

None

### **6.7 Any Other Implications:**

None

## **7. Risk Implications / Assessment**

7.1 None

## **8. Select Committee Comments**

8.1 None

## **9. Recommendations**

Members of the Scrutiny Committee are asked to:

1. Note the Scrutiny Committee forward work programme and discuss potential further items for future consideration.

## **10. Background Papers**

10.1 **Appendix A** – Scrutiny Committee Forward Programme of Work

### **Officer Contact**

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

**Officer name:** Peter Randall

**Telephone no.:** 01603 307570

**Email:** [peter.randall@norfolk.gov.uk](mailto:peter.randall@norfolk.gov.uk)



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

## Scrutiny Committee Forward Work Programme

## Appendix A

Date	Report	Further notes/Comments	Better Together for Norfolk - Strategic Goal(s)*	Cabinet Member	Lead Officer
20/03/24	Combined Sewer/Storm Overflows – update from Anglian Water	Agreed by the Scrutiny Committee at the meeting held on 23 March 2023	- A Greener, More Resilient Future	Cllr Eric Vardy, Cabinet Member for Environment and Waste	Grahame Bygrave, Interim Executive Director of Community and Environmental Services
	Climate Policy for Norfolk County Council	Policy Framework Item	- A Greener, More Resilient Future	Cllr Eric Vardy, Cabinet Member for Environment and Waste	Grahame Bygrave, Interim Executive Director of Community and Environmental Services
24/04/24	Performance Review Panels – Quarterly Update	Standard quarterly item	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Better Opportunities for Children and Young People</li> <li>- Healthy, Fulfilling and Independent Lives</li> </ul>	Cllr Alison Thomas, Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care & Cllr Penny Carpenter, Cabinet	Debbie Bartlett, Executive Director of Adult Social Care & Sarah Tough, Executive Director of Children’s Services

				Member for Children's Services	
	Promoting Independence – Adult Social Care Strategy	Policy Framework Item	- Healthy, Fulfilling and Independent Lives	Cllr Alison Thomas, Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care	Debbie Bartlett, Executive Director of Adult Social Care

*\*The 'Better Together for Norfolk – County Council Strategy 2021-25' outlines five strategic priorities. These are:*

- *A Vibrant and Sustainable Economy*
- *Better Opportunities for Children and Young People*
- *Healthy, Fulfilling and Independent Lives*
- *Strong, Engaged and Inclusive Communities*
- *A Greener, More Resilient Future*

*When scheduling items for the work programme the committee should consider, where applicable, the item contributes to the above strategic goals and overall delivery of the County Council's strategy for 2021-25.*