

# Infrastructure and Development Select Committee

Minutes of the Meeting Held on Wednesday 13 March 2024  
10.00am, held at County Hall, Norwich

**Present:**

Cllr James Bensly - Chair

Cllr David Bills  
Cllr Graham Carpenter  
Cllr Brian Long  
Cllr Rob Colwell  
Cllr Jim Moriarty

Cllr William Richmond  
Cllr Chrissie Rumsby  
Cllr Robert Savage  
Cllr Tony White  
Cllr Martin Wilby  
Cllr Jamie Osborn

**Also Present:**

Cllr Eric Vardy  
Cllr Kay Mason Billig

Cabinet Member for Environment and Waste  
Leader of Norfolk County Council and Cabinet Member for  
Strategy and Governance

**Also Present:**

David Allfrey  
Wendy Brooks  
Grahame Bygrave  
Al Collier  
Helen Corina  
David Cumming  
Marina Ebbage  
Jack Griffiths  
Andrew Hollis  
Nicola Ledain  
Sophie Leney  
Karl Rands  
Sarah Rhoden  
Chris Starkie  
Steve Miller  
Roberta Wilner

Interim Director of Highways, Transport and Waste, Community  
and Environmental Services (CES)  
Head of Environment, CES  
Interim Executive Director of Community and Environmental  
Services  
Director of Procurement and Sustainability, CES  
Transport Planner, Strategy and Transformation  
Strategic Transport Team Manager, Strategy and  
Transformation  
Procurement Specialist (Policy), CES  
Strategic Contracts Manager, CES  
Project Officer, CES  
Committee Officer, Democratic Services  
Head of Trading Standards,  
Assistant Director Highway Services, CES  
Director of Community Information and Learning, CES  
Director of Growth and Investment, Strategy and Transformation  
Director of Culture and Heritage, CES  
Head of Economic Development, Strategy and Transformation

The Committee agreed to change the order of the agenda, with Item 12 - Countywide Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan and Item 13 - Norfolk Walking, Wheeling, and Cycling Strategy 2024 being swapped.

**1. Apologies and substitutions**

1.1 Apologies received from Cllr Chris Dawson, Cllr Catherine Rowett, Cllr Vic

Thomson (substituted by Cllr Brian Long, Cllr Graham Carpenter and Cllr Jamie Osborn respectively). Apologies were also received from Cllr Claire Bowes and Cabinet Member Cllr Margaret Dewsbury.

- 1.2 Having received apologies from the Vice Chair, Cllr Vic Thomson, the Committee duly elected Cllr Brian Long as Vice Chair for this meeting,

## **2. Minutes**

- 2.1 The minutes of the meeting held on Friday 23 February 2024 were agreed and signed by the Chair subject to the following amendments:

Point 8.4 should be re-written as follows.

“Members suggested the £80 million figure which had been quoted previously for flood improvements across Norfolk was now out of date and should be reviewed. It was essential that the amount quoted and considered was correct and up to date. Officers explained that the Norfolk Strategic Flood Alliance strategy was also being reviewed as well as the programme for the rest of the year, so it was expected for this to all be updated soon.”

## **3. Declarations of Interest**

- 3.1 There were no interests declared.

## **4. Items of Urgent Business**

- 4.1 There were no items of urgent business.

## **5. Public Question Time**

- 5.1 There was one public question received which had been published and circulated. A response had also been sent to the member of public and this was attached at appendix A.

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

- 6.1 There were no member issues or questions.

## **7. Integration of the New Anglia Local Enterprise Partnership Function into Norfolk County Council**

- 7.1 The Committee received the annexed report (7) from the Executive Director of Strategy and Transformation which informed the Committee of the progress of the integration of the LEP functions into Norfolk County Council.
- 7.2 Members commented that the integration would be an opportunity for those in the community to have a voice on the economy. There were already some models in existence that worked effectively, and Cllr Rumsby would share these with the Officers. It was also noted that more direct engagement with communities and more public participatory processes should be part of all consultations from NCC for communities to share ideas from the start of an initiative.
- 7.3 In answering a question about the progress to net zero by the three main sectors of transport, land use and housing, the Committee heard that the LEP had carried out some effective work and programs such as the Clean Growth Taskforce and various

other programs regarding the development of renewal energy and those programs would be transferred across. There had also been a programme in operation which was funded by Norfolk County Council which reviewed industrial carbonization. In terms of transport, most work to progress to net zero would be conducted by Transport East or by Norfolk County Council. With regards to land use, as part of the Agri-Tech Industry Council, the manufacturing taskforce which looking at reducing emissions in agriculture would continue. All programmes which currently existed within the LEP were transferring across and continuing.

- 7.4 Officers reported that recruitment for the Norfolk Business Board would start around Easter and continue over Spring / Summer. It was hoped that the Board would commence, potentially in a shadow form, late Summer. The terms of reference were currently being worked through. Whilst other counties such as Suffolk had already started their recruitment process, Norfolk wanted it to be robust and had prioritised developing the Economic Strategy first.
- 7.5 The Committee heard that there were several loans that had been transferred in line with Government's guidance regarding what should transfer into upper tier authorities. Commercial units which were currently being built in West Norfolk were a joint venture between King's Lynn and West Norfolk Borough Council (KL&WN) and the LEP. The LEP had lent money towards the building of the units which were still under construction, and there were tenants waiting. KL&WN would own the assets, but NCC would receive a return for as long as it took for the loan to be repaid. NCC would be interested in the principle of developing further units subject to the financial arrangements.
- 7.6 Officers reassured the Committee that there was no negative debt being passed to NCC. The LEP had received funding from Government which they had passed onto other organisations for various projects. The LEP were being repaid for those projects, and it was confirmed that this was what NCC would inherit.
- 7.7 Having considered the information in the report on the work being done to implement the Norfolk integration plan, the Committee **ENDORSED** the integration of the LEP functions into the County Council with effect from 1 April 2024.

## 8. Economic Strategy

- 8.1 The Committee received the annexed report (8) from the Executive Director of Strategy and Transformation which outlined the process being undertaken to develop a new economic strategy for Norfolk.
- 8.2 Members were pleased to see coastal and market town communities included in the Strategy however there was little mention of the Greater Norwich area. Officers advised the report details the approach taken in developing the strategy. The Greater Norwich area, in addition to the other district areas in Norfolk, will be included in the draft strategy. It was also hoped that there would be engagement from all Members into the Strategy to ensure that all economic views were considered. Officers reported that stakeholder workshops were being held across Norfolk and there would be plenty of opportunity for all to attend and engage. The dates for the next round of the workshops would be circulated to the Committee.
- 8.3 Inclusive growth was recognised within the Strategy and was a theme that ran through. The areas of deprivation were acknowledged within the county and NCC

would have the levers to address them through the adult education budget, as well as devolution enabling those levers to be long term sustainable changes.

- 8.4 Officers reported that as part of the feedback received in the stakeholder workshops, the quality of low paid jobs in sectors such as tourism, education and healthcare needed to improve. The Strategy would help inform the design of programmes that would influence that change. .
- 8.5 Officers reported that there was a summary of the first round of the workshops, and this would be circulated.
- 8.6 The Committee heard that MetroDynamics had been commissioned to help with the stakeholder engagement events, to assist with the first draft of the Strategy and to offer best practice from other parts of the Country. They wouldn't be remaining involved in the Strategy, but they had been helpful in offering an impartial external view.
- 8.7 There had been a presentation of the outline plan made to the Member Engagement Working Group and regular updates would be reported on key themes and priorities. This would be an appropriate vehicle for Members to be able to feed into the Strategy.
- 8.8 Having considered the approach being taken to develop a new economic strategy for Norfolk, the Committee **AGREED** to receive the draft economic strategy for comment and endorsement later in the year.

## 9. Climate Action Plans – Tranche 3

- 9.1 The Committee received the annexed report (9) from the Interim Executive Director of Community and Environmental Services which covered tranche three of the Climate Strategy. These actions covered council initiatives relating to commercial and industrial sectors, climate adaptation, transport, our companies, and our staff.
- 9.2 Part of the aim of the lower carbon pathway work would identify the split of electric vehicle uptake and the mode shift. Once consultants had carried out the work, it would be clearer what was needed but inevitably it would be a mixture of both. Officers also reported that there was little concern with the second-hand EV car market as EV cars seemed to be readily available. Consumer confidence in EV charging and increasing this was acknowledged. It was reported that the vast majority of people who owned a car owned a driveway and they acknowledged that the cheapest and easiest way to charge a car was on the driveway. For those areas where this was not possible, the action plan identified that on-street charging may be rolled out.
- 9.3 The Committee were pleased to receive the report. The Committee requested that as part of this plan, using the bus was made easier and inviting and encouraged officers to invest in Kings Lynn and the need for better bus shelters. Officers reported that part of the Bus Service Improvement Plan funding would be invested in bus shelters with live passenger information with some having additional facilities such as cycle racks. This was a 3-year rolling programme and had 18 months left in that programme for delivery.

- 9.4 The Committee noted that there had been the successful introduction of EV buses within Norwich and was there any plans to extend that to the King's Lynn or other areas. This would depend on successful future funding bids from government and private sector investment.
- 9.5 Whilst it was acknowledged by Members that more EV chargers were needed over Norfolk, it was necessary to install the correct type of chargers and specifically the fast-charging points. Officers stated that there should ideally be the appropriate charger in the appropriate place such as slower speed chargers for overnight charging at households, but the faster speed chargers at public places such as supermarkets.
- 9.6 With reference to the seaweed in East Anglia pilot project mentioned on page 37 of the agenda, Members asked if the pilot had factored in the planting of seagrass and the commercial propagation of oysters. This had recently been identified by the Wash in North Norfolk Marine Partnership as one of the best outcomes for the marine environment as they clean up the area that they exist in. It would be a sensible approach for the two initiatives to work together. Officers explained that as part of the pilot, it had an Algae Innovation Platform which involved hundreds of members and they would cross-reference to check if the Seagrass initiative was part of that.
- 9.7 The Committee asked, with reference to the transport actions starting on page 40 of the report if there was there an ongoing involvement of highways in the design of housing developments to ensure that they were public transport friendly. Officers explained that this was already part of the processes and procedures that NCC adhered to through various strategies and policies. In responding to applications, new developments had to take account of the network. It was also reported that NCC were currently waiting on the refreshed Local Transport Plan guidance from Government (with no expected timescale). The guidance should contain more information regarding carbon reduction schemes. Officers assured the Committee that NCC had an enhanced partnership with all bus operators and engaged with those when reviewing new housing developments alongside the planning teams.
- 9.8 Having reviewed the third tranche of actions, the Committee **ENDORSED** the actions to progress to Cabinet.

At this point in the meeting it was agreed that Item 11- Highways and Infrastructure Services Reprocurement would be discussed before item 10 - Trading Standards Service Plan 2024/25.

## **10. Highways and Infrastructure Services Reprocurement**

- 10.1 The Committee received the annexed report (10) from the Interim Executive Director of Community and Environmental Services which outlined the process and programme for the reprocurement in three elements; Highway Term Maintenance Works, Professional Services and Traffic Signals, Digital Innovation and Electrical Services contracts, for 1 April 2026.
- 10.2 The Committee commented that as other top performing authorities used the same mixed economy model, it seemed sensible to continue to use this model. It was also noted that the brochure showed to Members in the report was effective and pleasingly highlighted the major infrastructure projects such the Great Yarmouth Herring Bridge and the Long Stratton bypass.

- 10.3 In ensuring that the Council received the best outcomes for money that was invested, the Committee heard that as part of the mixed economy model there were NCC teams who would instruct works and would work through efficiently what needed to be instructed. Dialogue through the procurement process would include how the management of those instructions would take place. It would also involve ensuring that work that was undertaken carried a form of guarantee ensuring quality and that it didn't provide a future maintenance problem. This would include correct supervision and holding contractors to account.
- 10.4 Having reviewed the report, the Select Committee:
1. **Noted** the continued use of the mixed economy delivery model of the highway service.
  2. **Noted** the process and programme for the reprocurement in three elements; Highway Term Maintenance Works, Professional Services and Traffic Signals, Digital Innovation and Electrical Services contracts, for 1 April 2026.
  3. **Noted** the intention to renegotiate the Norse Highways SLA extension beyond 1 October 2024.

## 11. Trading Standards Service Plan 2024/25

- 11.1 The Committee received the annexed report (11) from the Interim Executive Director of Community and Environmental Services which described the Trading Standards Service Plan and associated sub-plans (as annexed to the main plan) that set out the service priorities for 2024/25, taking account of the service budget set in February 2024
- 11.2 Officers reported that the service had recently recruited an additional 8 apprentices. They had received 260 applications for those 8 positions. It had been recognised nationally that the role of a trading standards officer wasn't given the spotlight that it deserved and didn't capture the varied and diverse role that it was, and the professional institute was looking to undertake a piece of work to rectify this. The Head of Trading Standards also reported that the only way of encouraging the newly qualified staff to stay at Norfolk County Council was by following the corporate policy that they must repay the training costs if they left in a two-year period after qualification. However, it was noted that Norfolk was currently the training leader in England of trading standards officers, had been named checked at the Chartered Trading Standards Institute National Conference and the Head of Trading Standards had been asked to speak at the Association of Chief Trading Standards Officers. Norfolk had helped to develop the new Trading Standards professional apprenticeship and the trainees had been very complimentary about the apprenticeship and the on-the-job support that they are getting.
- 11.3 Thanks were given to the service for the enforcement that had been carried out in King's Lynn regarding enforcement of age restricted sales of vapes and the joint action with King's Lynn and West Norfolk District Council. Whilst re-opening another shop cannot be stopped after one had been closed, new legislation was due which would assist in giving on the spot fines and other penalties.
- 11.4 The new location of the Norfolk Calibration Centre from Hethel Engineering Centre was yet to be confirmed at this point as the move was in very early stages.

- 11.5 Due legislation would attempt to stop the selling of illegal vapes at source with the introduction of taxation changes in the recent Government's budget and with HMRC importation enforcement.
- 11.6 In answering a question regarding 'blue tongue', Officers reported that although the general control zone restrictions had been lifted, there were still restrictions in the county. There were currently one or two positive tests per week, and the Committee were reassured that testing measures were continuing.
- 11.7 Following the Committee's concern regarding the supply of Nitrous Oxide, the Head of Trading Standards reported that as of November 2023 the legislation had changed, and it was now considered as a Class C drug and was illegal to possess for the purposes of illegal inhalation and regarded a police offence. It was also an offence to sell for illegal inhalation knowingly or recklessly. The service already worked closely with the police on knife sales to ensure that sellers were storing them correctly and not selling to underage individuals, but Officers assured the Committee that they would explore further work with the police on nitrous oxide.
- 11.8 The Committee heard that 'no cold calling' zones were still operating. The service was still receiving requests for zones to be set up. If the neighbourhood met the criteria, residents would be helped to install a 'no cold calling' zone. It was also reported that the older zones were being reviewed following the probable change of householders within them and a likely loss of knowledge on the protection afforded by the zones. It was also noted that reputable businesses would not knock door-to-door within the zones so they would always act as a deterrent.
- 11.9 Having reviewed the report, the Committee **NOTED**.
1. the Trading Standards Service Plan 2024/25 (Appendix 1) including:
    - a. Annex I: Enforcement of Age Restricted Sales and Illegal Tobacco and Nicotine Inhalation Products Plan 2024/25 (Appendix 2 to this report)
    - b. Annex II: Food & Feed Law Enforcement Plan 2024/25 (Appendix 3 to this report), and
    - c. Annex III: Delivery of Animal Health & Welfare Framework 2024/25 (Appendix 4 to this report)
- prior to consideration by Cabinet.

## **12. Norfolk Walking, Wheeling, and Cycling Strategy 2024**

- 12.1 The Committee received the annexed report (12) by the Executive Director of Strategy and Transformation summarised the outcome of the recent consultation on the draft Norfolk Walking, Wheeling, and Cycling Strategy. The draft Strategy came to Select Committee in September 2023 to receive comments before consultation. Results of the consultation can be viewed in Appendix A of the report.
- 12.2 Officers acknowledged that the size, volume, and speed of vehicles influenced the decision to cycle. Having reported that 20mph roads in Norwich had seen fatalities, Members asked what arrangements NCC had with the police to share that information. Officers reported that there was a partnership arrangement with the Constabulary which would be a mechanism for raising this with them.
- 12.3 The Committee asked whether the target for 50% of journeys to be taken by walking, wheeling or cycling by 2030 was achievable. Officers reported that Government figures received had indicated that 46% of people nationally chose to walk or cycle

in urban areas. NCC were requesting that those figures were broken down into county level to identify what Norfolk's percentage was. The 50% target of journeys to be taken via walk, wheel, or cycle by 2030 was acknowledged to be an ambitious target and would need the continuous successful track record of drawing down funding.

12.4 The Committee expressed disappointment that there had been only 9 people under the age of 24 who had responded to the consultation. More so as this was a large cohort of those who would walk, wheel or cycle on a journey. Officers reported that they had engaged with Colleges and Universities to encourage response to the consultation.

12.5 The Select Committee

1. **NOTED** the public consultation results.

2. **NOTED** the proposed amendments to the draft Norfolk Walking, Wheeling, and Cycling Strategy before adoption.

### **13. Countywide Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan**

13.1 The Committee received the annexed report (13) from the Interim Executive Director of Community and Environmental Services which summarised the Countywide Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP), which builds on LCWIPs already adopted for King's Lynn, Greater Norwich, and Great Yarmouth (April 2022).

13.2 Having asked a question if there was similar guidance for designing walking and wheeling networks as there was for designing cycling networks as referred to in the report, Officers agreed to provide a written response to Members.

13.3 Members expressed their support in the scheme as outlined in the report. In expressing concern regarding some specific schemes, Officers reported that each scheme was in the very early stage of developments and the next stage was to secure funding for a feasibility study. The routes identified indicated two points which as part of the feasibility study, would consider how to travel between them in a safe manner. This would involve crossing difficult junctions and accessing green spaces. There were also opportunities to review individual schemes that Members had concerns about.

13.4 In reviewing engagement that was carried out regarding the schemes, there had not been any evidence which suggested that there was demand for a wider connectivity between King's Lynn and Swaffham.

13.5 Officers welcomed input from any Members regarding the schemes in their divisions.

13.6 Having considered the Countywide Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan before it was finalised and considered for adoption by Cabinet in April 2024, the Committee **RECOMMENDED** that Cabinet adopt the Countywide Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan or agree any changes that the Committee would want to recommend that Cabinet adopt.

### **14. Forward Work Programme**



- 14.1 The Committee received the annexed report (14) by the Interim Executive Director of Community and Environmental Services, which set out the Forward Work Programme to enable the Committee to review and shape.
- 14.2 Officers confirmed that the report on the Forward Work Programme titled Planning Obligations Standards did not include how Norfolk County Council responded to planning applications as the highway's authority consultee. It would contain information regarding the obligations placed on developers.
- 14.3 The Select Committee **agreed** the Forward Work Programme for the Select Committee, as set out in Appendix A.

The meeting closed at 1.15pm

**James Bensly, Chair**



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