



## Corporate Select Committee

Minutes of the Meeting Held on 11 September at  
10:00 am in Council Chamber, County Hall, Martineau Lane Norwich NR1 2DL

### Present:

Cllr R Oliver (Chair)  
Cllr A Birmingham  
Cllr D Bills  
Cllr D Roper  
Cllr A White  
Cllr B Price  
Cllr V Thomson  
Cllr W Nunn (Vice Chair)  
Cllr L Hemsall  
Cllr S Clancy  
Cllr G Carpenter

### Substitute Members Present:

Cllr B Jones

### Also Present:

Cllr Greg Peck	Deputy Cabinet Member for Finance
Cllr Jane James	Cabinet Member for Corporate Services and Innovation
Al Collier	Director of Procurement and Sustainability
Sam Pittam-Smith	Director of Strategy, Design & Delivery
Deborah Carr	Discovery Lead, Strategy and Performance
Paul Cracknell	Executive Director of Strategy and Transformation
Maisie Coldman	Trainee Committee Officer

### 1. Apologies for Absence

1.1 Apologies were received from Cllr Smith and Cllr Jermy (substituted by Cllr Jones).

### 2. Minutes

2.1 The minutes of the meeting held on 10 July 2023 were agreed as an accurate record and signed by the Chair.

2.2 The committee's previous request for information on the cost and funding of the third-party resource in respect of constitutional work with regards to a potential devolution deal would be followed up.

- 2.3 The chair asked for an update on the motion agreed by the committee on the exploration of a four-day working week. The committee heard that a paper regarding this was underway and would come to the committee in due course.
- 2.4 It was confirmed, in relation to information agreed to be provided at the previous meeting, that Cllr Price has received a response to the Motion agreed in the July 2022 meeting.
- 2.5 Members of the committee used this opportunity to ask the following questions:
- Members asked for assurance that following Birmingham City Council's notification of the Section 114 notice, Norfolk County Council (NCC) was reviewing lessons learned and its governance. The committee heard that this was the case, and that insights and learning were being gained from other authorities and organisations.
  - In response to a member's question about whether any Norfolk County Council buildings were known to have Reinforced Autoclaved Aerated Concrete (RAAC) and the financial implications of this, the committee heard that no cases of RAAC had been identified. Thus, there are currently no financial implications.

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

- 3.1 There were no declarations of interest.

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

- 4.1 There were no items of urgent business.

### **5. Public Question Time**

- 5.1 There were no public questions.

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

- 6.1 There were no member issues/questions.

### **7. Smarter Working**

- 7.1 The committee received the report which was introduced by Cllr Jane James, Cabinet Member for Corporate Services and Innovation.
- 7.2 Deborah Carr, Discovery Lead, Strategy and Performance, presented an overview of the report to the committee. She highlighted that the programme of work looked at how the improvement, efficiency and delivery of services can be achieved and identified the four programmes of work. These included Hybrid

Working, County Hall car parking, County Hall Ground Floor Space and Business Mileage.

7.3 The following points were noted during discussion and in response to questions from the committee:

- Members of the committee were keen to understand how the Smarter Working Programme would enhance the customer experience. The committee heard that for services where hybrid working isn't suitable, there would be no changes to the customer experience. Additionally, the move towards implementing hybrid working arrangements within the call centre service, for example, improves resilience and flexibility which therefore improves the customer experience.
- A member of the committee asked whether Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) existed to ensure that progress towards achieving this could be monitored. In response, officers said that productivity, in relation to hybrid working, could be measured amongst other things by reduced travel time and cost. More generally, there is consideration of wider productivity which can be measured in the context of cost inputs, outputs, and outcomes. Productivity measures were being considered more broadly and a wider piece of work on productivity would be completed in the coming year. It was generally felt by members that KPIs on the customer experience needed to be more specifically included.
- Officers clarified that the Office for Local Government (Oflog) data and its measures were being reviewed and best value indicators and comparison between authorities was happening at a service-specific level. The outcomes of this benchmarking could be shared with the committee in due course.
- Staff turnover was c12 percent, which was typical in comparison to benchmarking available from sources such as the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development which typically identified 10-15% as a typical range. When staff leave, there are exit interviews and questionnaires to better understand the circumstances: this information was then shared with managers. A member of the committee asked if the findings could also be shared with the committee. The difficulties with recruitment varied between professions. For example, some social care and specialised roles were noted as more difficult to recruit to. This was not a specific problem specific to NCC. NCC was offering incentive schemes to aid recruitment in some circumstances.
- The last 12 months of recruitment data indicate that 13 percent of roles were filled by staff from outside of Norfolk. A member queried whether staff who lived outside of Norfolk, who were required to work in person, would travel in working time. Officers shared that normal commute to a work base, regardless of where a person lived, were confirmed as not being on work time.

- Regarding Business Mileage, the committee heard that a piece of work would be carried out to understand why the emissions from employee/other vehicles were increasing compared to the immediate post-Covid period and to explore alternative ways of working and/or travelling to reduce emissions.
- Members were assured that in the case of any large changes to the County Hall Ground Floor, a business case would be produced and would follow the appropriate processes for approval. The opportunity for smaller tactical changes, that require fewer resources, would also be explored.
- The desk utilisation figures needed to be better understood to ensure the best use of NCC properties and to give assurance of the best use of money. Members of the committee questioned if there were any plans to mandate a minimum requirement of office days per week. Officers said that there were no current plans to require this.
- It was noted that there were no plans to implement parking charges at County Hall as a mechanism for income generation to fill a savings gap.
- Whilst there was no specific data on the usage of the top deck car park at County Hall, there was data on the usage of the car park more generally that could be shared with members.
- In response to a question about whether staff get grants for equipment, the committee heard that staff could request necessary equipment which would be made available to them whilst there was a business need.
- Following a request from a member, officers would see if data was available to make a comparison about the amount of annual leave taken in August compared to previous years.

Cllr Oliver proposed a recommendation that the committee receive the number of full-time staff (not including teachers or teaching staff) at all future committee meetings so members could see month by month staff numbers and any emerging trends. This data would cover the 5 years prior to the committee meeting to allow for context in the dataset. This was seconded by Cllr Clancy and following a vote, the recommendation was **agreed**.

- 7.3 Cllr Hemsall proposed the recommendations noted in the Smarter Working report. This was seconded by Cllr White and following a vote, the Select Committee **agreed** to **approve** the strategic roadmap and the 4 programmes.

## 8. Norfolk County Council Procurement Strategy 2023- 2026

- 8.1 The committee received the report, which was introduced by Cllr Greg Peck, Deputy Cabinet Member for Finance.

8.2 Al Collier, Director of Procurement and Sustainability, provided members with a presentation (appendix A). He highlighted the goals, priorities, and enablers of the Procurement Strategy, offering examples of best practice.

8.2 The following points were noted during discussion and in response to questions from the committee:

- Members of the committee congratulated the Procurement Team for their work and the savings they were able to make.
- Cabinet committed in November 2021 to requiring Carbon Reduction Plans of large suppliers through the implementation of the procurement policy note, PPN06/21. Targets have been set for scope one and two reductions. Scope three emissions will be picked up category by category when there is an opportunity to reprocur. There was no period review of the implementation of PPN0621. The specific details of carbon reduction would be covered in climate action plans which would be reviewed by the Infrastructure and Development Committee. The Procurement Strategy doesn't offset out the detailed approach to carbon reduction.
- Following a member's question on how opportunities are publicised, the committee heard that all procurement opportunities are uploaded to Contracts Finder, a free Government tool. Engagement with the market continues. Some of this s sector-specific, for example through the Norfolk and Suffolk Care Association, but some of it was more general. A pipeline of upcoming contacts is advertised to attract bidders in advance and NCC has successfully encouraged new bidders, displacing former monopolies.
- There was a general feeling that local contractors, suppliers, and small and midsize enterprises (SMEs) should be encouraged to tender for NCC work. Currently, there is a term written into many large contracts that encourages the prime contractor to seek local subcontractors. Additionally, the committee heard that changes to the Local Government Act were being consulted on which would allow sub-threshold contracts to be reserved for local suppliers. It was hoped that this would become law by October 2024 and work was already happening establish areas of work that might be reserved for local businesses.
- In response to a member's question about expiring contracts and whether there was a mechanism to ensure that enough time was given to renegotiate the details of the contacts, members of the committee heard that large contracts that are due to expire in the next three years (if it was a smaller contact it may expire in a year or less) or have a scheduled break point, are added to the pipeline process. The pipeline would go to Cabinet in April, noting the contracts that would be tendered that year or needed to be renegotiated. There are, on occasion, exceptions to this process.

- It was confirmed that there was a significant analytical resource available to ensure that the correct data was available when reprocurring a contract and to make evaluations relating to the improvement and performance of the contract throughout its duration. Additionally, the tender evaluation incorporates the knowledge of the contract management team and the procurement team. Together they would decide the importance of specific aspects (cost, policy, environmental impacts) of the project.
- Assurance was sought that the policy was going through a period of oversight before implementation. Mr Collier clarified that the Procurement Strategy has been seen by the Commercial Board before going through the Member process. If implemented, Cabinet would receive periodic reporting on the Procurement Strategy.
- Furthermore, it was a requirement that there are three lines of defence, as part of the Commercial Continuous Improvement and Assessment Framework (CCIAF). The committee heard that the first and third lines of defence are good and that updates would be made to policy in relation to the second line of defence.
- It was confirmed that social value was already monitored and was a requirement set out in contacts; the strategy would bring this monitoring into one place.
- Evidence was being collected for benchmarking as part of the CCIAF. The outcome of this would be the implementation of a Continuous Improvement Plan. It was for the Audit and Governance Committee to decide which aspects of procurement to review
- In response to a member's question about whether the contacts awarded to Norse were done automatically because they are a wholly owned subsidiary, officers stated that many of the contacts awarded to Norse are under the Teckal provision, but some contracts are won through competitive tendering (in an approximately 80:20 split). Awarding contacts to Norse occurred for reasons beyond the price, it was felt to offer social value and resilience. Value for money was required to be shown through benchmarking and breaking down costs for scrutiny.

Cllr Clancy proposed a motion that the committee receive a list of the gold contacts, their strategy, performance, and durations in the November meeting. This was seconded by Cllr Price, and following a vote, was **agreed**.

- 8.3 Cllr Oliver proposed the recommendations noted in the Procurement Strategy report. This was seconded by Cllr Hemsall, and following a vote, the Select Committee **agreed** to **endorse** the Procurement Strategy's progression for Cabinet's consideration.

## 9. Forward Work Plan 2023

- 9.1 The committee resolved to **agree** the forward work programme.
- 9.2 Members of the committee **agreed** to request that the following items are added to the Forward Work Plan:
- Review arm's length companies,
  - Net zero updates to include full costing,
  - KPIs and productivity metrics on a sector-by-sector basis.

Meeting concluded at 11:50.

**Rhodri Oliver Chair**  
**Corporate Select Committee**



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# Procurement Strategy

Briefing for Corporate  
Select Committee



## Context

To provide a clear, strategic direction for procurement at Norfolk County Council, supporting the delivery of the organisation's vision and strategic priorities as laid out in *Better Together, for Norfolk*.

Structured around goals and priorities for the medium term, and the enablers to ensure that these are delivered against.



Norfolk County Council  
Procurement Strategy 2023-2026



# Goals

1. To achieve value for money from the goods, services and work we procure
2. To ensure that contracts deliver what is expected – in terms of costs, time, specification and social value
3. To build long-term, innovative relationships with strategic suppliers
4. To effectively manage risks associated with our commercial activity, including inflation, supplier solvency, modern slavery, supply chain resilience, cyber risks and supplier performance.
5. To build social value considerations into the planning and delivery of all procurement activity – especially net zero and other environmental objectives, local skills and employment, and apprenticeships - in order to make Norfolk a better place to live, work and study.
6. To exploit our position as one of the public sector bodies with the strongest spend data to drive our procurement and commissioning decisions.
7. To comply with national legislation and the council's organisational policies, strategies, and regulations.



## Medium term priorities



Savings



Legislative change (Procurement Bill and Provider Selection Regime)

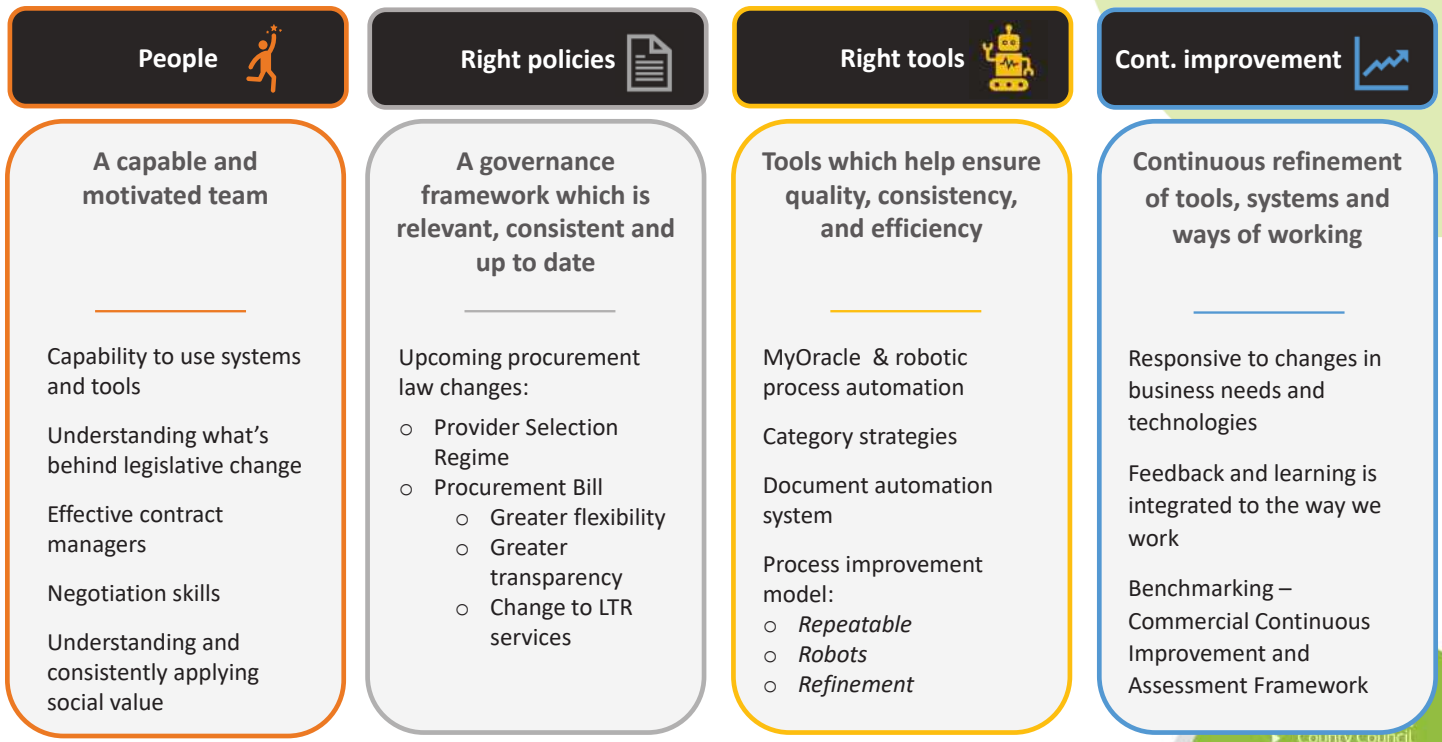
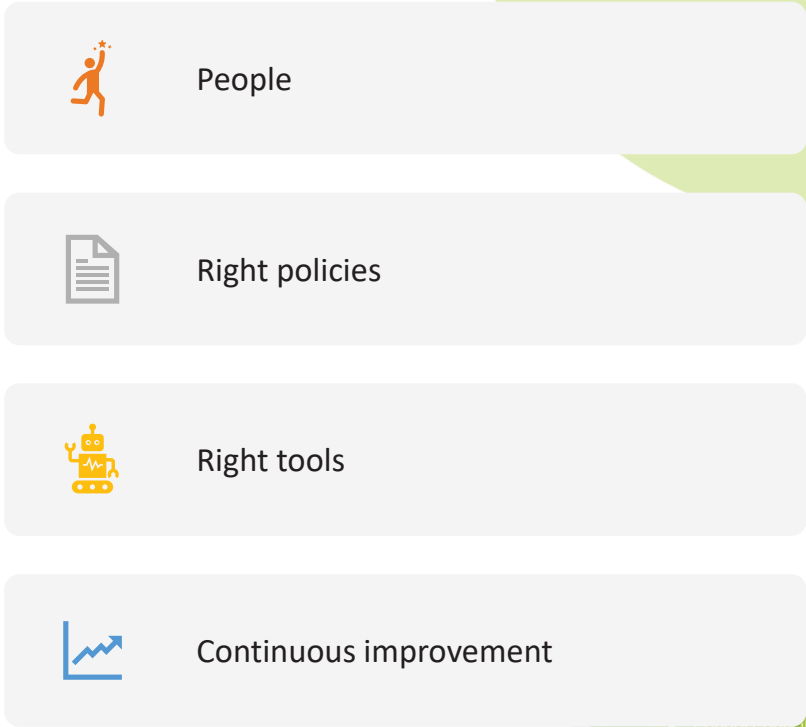


Contract and supplier relationship management

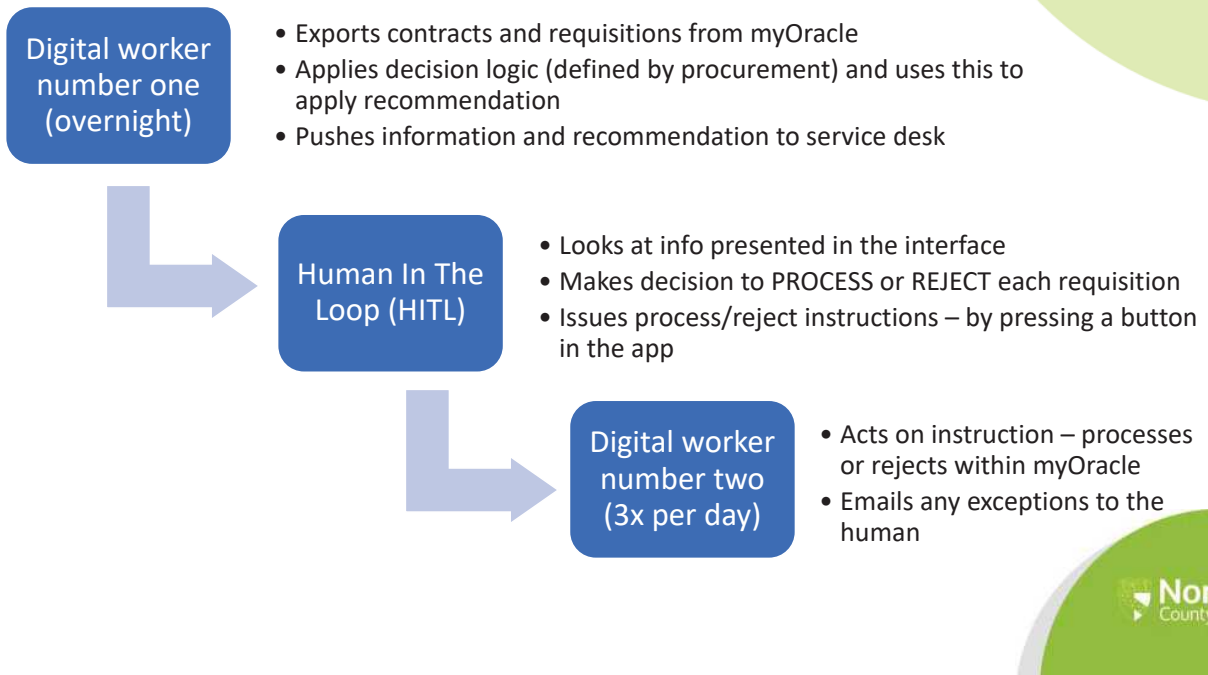


Net zero and social value

# Enablers



# Using digital workers



## Social value through major projects – Herring Bridge

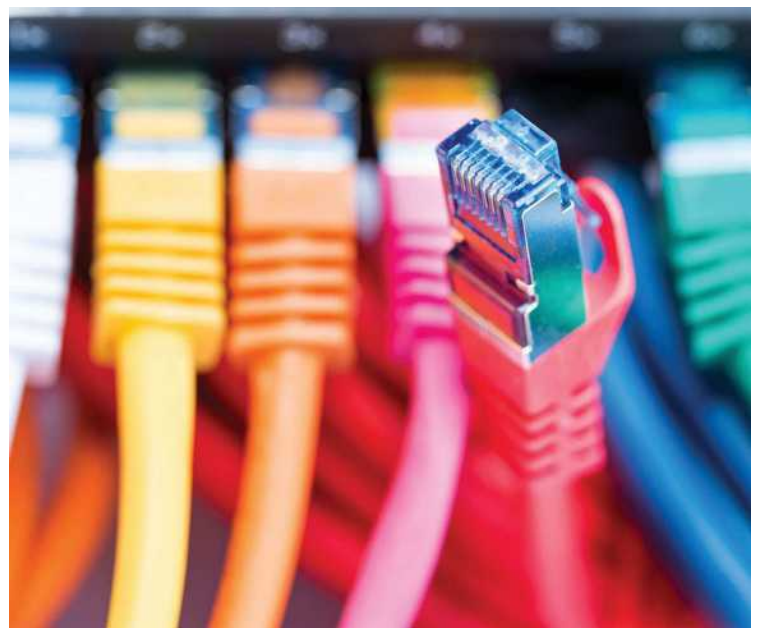
Local spend (30 miles)	£17M
Local jobs	124 FTE
Engagement with schoolchildren	2397 children
Apprenticeship weeks	272 weeks
Work experience weeks	161 weeks



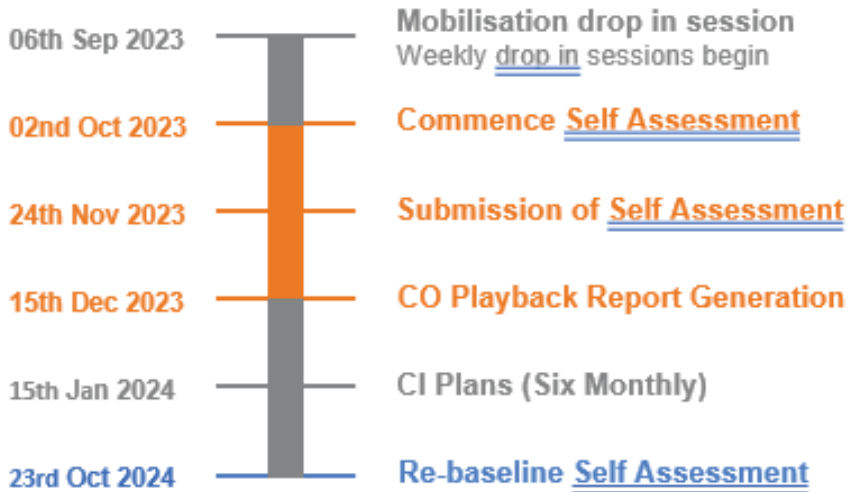
# Driving environmental improvements through evaluation criteria



- £4.5m per annum reduction in telecoms spend compared to BT contract
- Further £400,000 per annum saving on latest procurement
- Minimum £400,000 saving next year through software rationalisation
- £238,000 per annum mobile phone savings from next FY



# Commercial Continuous Improvement and Assessment Framework



Discussion ...