

Cabinet

Minutes of the Meeting held on Monday 8 August 2022 in the Council Chamber, County Hall, at 10am

Present:

Cllr Andrew Proctor	Chairman. Leader & Cabinet Member for Strategy & Governance
Cllr Graham Plant	Vice-Chairman and Cabinet Member for Growing the Economy
Cllr Margaret Dewsbury	Cabinet Member for Communities and Partnerships
Cllr John Fisher	Deputy Cabinet Member for Children's Services
Cllr Tom FitzPatrick	Cabinet Member for Innovation, Transformation & Performance
Cllr Andrew Jamieson	Cabinet Member for Finance
Cllr Greg Peck	Cabinet Member for Commercial Services and Asset Management
Cllr Eric Vardy	Cabinet Member for Environment and Waste
Cllr Martin Wilby	Cabinet Member for Highways, Infrastructure and Transport

Executive Directors Present:

Paul Cracknell	Executive Director of Transformation and Strategy
Helen Edwards	Monitoring Officer and Director of Governance
Simon George	Executive Director of Finance & Commercial Services
Tom McCabe	Executive Director of Community and Environmental Services
Sara Tough	Executive Director of Children's Services

Cabinet Members and Executive Directors introduced themselves.

1 Apologies for Absence

- 1.1 Apologies were received from the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, Public Health and Prevention and the Executive Director of Adult Social Services (Director of Strategy and Transformation, Adult Social Services, substituting)

2 Minutes from the meeting held on Monday 4 July 2022.

- 2.1 Cabinet agreed the minutes of the meeting held on Monday 4 July 2022 as an accurate record.

3 Declaration of Interests

- 3.1 No interests were declared.

4 Matters referred to Cabinet by the Scrutiny Committee, Select Committees or by full Council.

- 4.1 None.

5 Items of Urgent Business

5.1 The Chairman gave an announcement on UK 100

- On 4 April 2022, Cabinet agreed that Norfolk County Council would be a member of UK100, an organisation who coordinated action on climate change.
- The Council could now sign the Membership Pledge and would do so after the Cabinet meeting.
- The elements of this pledge were: “we will continue to lead the UK’s response to climate change”, “we will continue to lead the UK’s response to climate change”, “we pledge to understand our impact on climate change, prioritise where action needs to be taken and monitor progress towards our goals” and “we are closer to the people who live and work in our communities, so we have a better understanding of their needs”.
- These aims would help address the impact of humans on the environment.

6 Public Question Time

6.1 No Public questions were received.

7 Local Member Questions/Issues

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

7.2.1 Cllr Alexandra Kemp asked a supplementary question:

- Cllr Kemp stated that she did not agree with the answer provided to her substantive question; she felt that the Carnegie project could not be robust as no-one at County Hall could say how much the Council intended to put into it. The Council had said that the multi-user hub would have a 30/40-year lifespan but the current building had around a 120-year lifespan.
- Cllr Kemp noted that there were some residents in Clenchwarton and South Lynn who were isolated due to not being able to drive or not owning computers and she felt it was wrong that the Council should put millions into vanity projects while taking money away from those who need it. She therefore asked the Cabinet Member to reassess the proposal to review the mobile library service.

7.2.2 The Cabinet Member for Communities and Partnerships replied that this proposal was out for consultation. What happened in each area would be based on the responses to the consultation.

8. Customer Experience Programme

8.1.1 Cabinet received the report outlining an element of the scope of the Customer Experience Transformation Programme and the business case relating to the technology required for consideration by Cabinet and seeking approval to proceed with procurement of a replacement customer experience platform, within existing revenue and capital budgets.

8.1.2 The Cabinet Member for Communities and Partnerships introduced the report to

Cabinet:

- The Customer Experience Strategy 2021- 26 was approved by cabinet in April 2021. The “One Customer, One Council” programme was devised to deliver the strategy to reduce costs by using more effective technology while providing a good service to residents.
- The cost of the procurement would be covered within the existing capital and revenue budget and improve customer experience of interacting with the Council, as well as improving efficiency and reducing costs.
- The Cabinet Member for Communities and Partnerships moved the recommendations as set out in the report.

8.2.2 The Cabinet Member for Innovation, Transformation and Performance gave a further introduction of the report to Cabinet:

- The cost of procurement implementation would be £1.1m which could be met within the existing capital and revenue budgets and would be recovered within 4 years and cashflow savings thereafter.
- Use of technology building from the digital strategy would give a better service for customers.
- Existing systems were becoming out of date, impacting costs for maintenance and the ability to develop and update so improvements were needed
- Competitive procurement would take place with an aim to award in 2023.

8.3 Cabinet **RESOLVED**:

1. To agree to proceed with a procurement exercise to purchase a replacement customer experience platform in line with the previously agreed Customer Experience Strategy
2. To delegate award of new contract(s), up to £6m over a period of 5 years (and within existing revenue and capital budgets), to the Director of IMT and Chief Digital Officer and Director of Community, Information and Learning in collaboration with the Cabinet Member for Innovation, Transformation and Performance and the Cabinet Member for Communities and Partnerships

8.4 **Evidence and Reasons for Decision**

- The current platform is old, complex, and expensive to maintain and improve
- A newer, modern platform will enable us to better support the council's Customer Experience Strategy
- There is a savings opportunity through purchasing an alternative Customer Experience Platform
- Costs can be met within existing IMT revenue and capital budgets

8.5 **Alternative Options**

Remaining on the platform we currently use, though this is costly, difficult to develop and would pass up savings opportunities

9. **Forum Trust**

9.1.1 Cabinet received the report setting out proposals by the Trustees of the Forum Trust to update the Project Purpose, developed as part of the initial funding bids for the project, requiring the agreement of the original partners - Norfolk County

Council, Norwich City Council, and the Millennium Commission (now the Big Lottery).

- 9.1.2 The Executive Director for Community and Environmental Services discussed that the Forum was one of the more successful Millennium projects. Devising projects with a similar model as this for other areas such as Kings Lynn and Great Yarmouth would be beneficial.
- 9.1.3 The Cabinet Member for Communities and Partnerships introduced the report to Cabinet:
- The Forum was built 20 years ago and had no debts or regular public subsidy.
 - The Forum had a board of Trustees in place, who felt that the Project Purpose needed updating. The report showed the proposed new wording for the Project Purpose and proposed strategic pledges, shown on page 53 of the report.
 - The Cabinet Member for Communities and Partnerships moved the recommendations as shown in the report
- 9.2 The Cabinet Member for Innovation, Transformation and Performance noted that the Forum was a success story; it was a good destination for people to meet or get a coffee, and as such brought people into the building to use other facilities such as the library.
- 9.3 The Chairman noted the benefit of creating a similar focal point for communities in areas such as Kings Lynn and Great Yarmouth using a similar model.
- 9.4 Cabinet **RESOLVED** to:
1. Approve the revised Project Purpose for the Norwich Forum
 2. Offer comment and input on the key strategic pledges

9.5 **Evidence and Reasons for Decision**

The need to update the Purposes and the evidence for it is set out in the report.

9.6 **Alternative Options**

Doing nothing is an option but it would leave the Forum's public aims and charitable purposes lagging behind what is actually happening.

Radically changing the aims would be possible but it's clear to the Trustees that the Forum is both financially sound and independent and a popular success with the public. The aim is to continually develop the offer and the facilities at the site in line with the overall Purpose.

10. **Finance Monitoring Report 2022-23 P3: June 2022**

- 10.1.1 Cabinet received the report giving a summary of the forecast financial position for the 2022-23 Revenue and Capital Budgets, General Balances, and the Council's Reserves at 31 March 2023, together with related financial information.
- 10.1.2 The Cabinet Member for Finance introduced the report to Cabinet:
- Last month it had been reported that service pressures continued due to

the pandemic leading to demand led pressures and increased costs. The report showed that this had been most severe in Children's Services where home to school transport costs were now around £2m as the impact of the rise in fuel costs fed through, which was higher than estimated. The cost of children's social care placements had increased, costing an extra £3m

- Page 68 of the report showed that children's services continued to be subject to pressures outside of its control such as those discussed above, and a rigid approach from Ofsted. There would be a £1m mitigation through use of reserves leading to a departmental overspend of £4m. Significant savings would need to be found for 2023-24 for this department to minimise and mitigate these pressures.
- The rise in the cost of utilities and petrol had been offset by a number of financial underspends including the cost of borrowing being reduced.
- Due to a significant deficit in the high needs block in Norfolk as in other similar size counties Norfolk was working with the Department for Education's Safety Valve Programme to take advantage of its benefits
- Recommendation 1 related to an additional £52.146m to the capital programme coming from external sources. Table 4 on p87 of the report showed the extent to which capital expenditure on infrastructure was funded externally, however the County Council's own money must also be put into improving life improvements for communities.
- It was important for judgement on the level of debt to take into account the availability of funding from the public work loan board, the interest rate and debt servicing budgetary constraints. The average interest of cost of borrowing was 1.8% in 2021-22 and was now 3.3%.
- It was important to look at borrowing in the context of what the council's debt services cost as a percentage of total borrowing. Debt interest had risen from £25.67m in 2016-17 to £30.9m in 2021-22, but the net revenue budget rose from £339m to £439m over the same period. The percentage of net revenue budget represented by interest had fallen from 7.6% to 7% and would fall to 6.9% in 2022-2023. Interest paid as a percentage of the total had fallen from 4.9% to 3.6% and was predicted to drop further in 2022-2023.
- Of the total figure of £901m, 26% was spent on transport infrastructure and 33% was spent on buildings, mostly schools
- Recommendation 2 covered support for the development of a multi-user hub in King's Lynn. Most of the funding for this came from the Town Deal, but Norfolk County Council would contribute £3m and underwrite £2m contingency funding to ensure successful implementation of the scheme. This would be a vital community asset, providing access to vital facilities in the centre of the town including business support, career training, literary skills and IT facilities.
- Recommendation 2 also covered £201,000 for installation of 57 charging points across 19 Norfolk County Council sites to enable the fire service to lease electric emergency response vehicles
- The level of capital receipts was exceeding targets.

10.2 The Cabinet Member for Commercial Services and Asset Management noted that the target had been exceeded on capital receipts and that at the end of the year it was projected that there would be £55m in capital receipts.

10.3 The Vice-Chairman discussed development of the multi-user hub in King's Lynn.

King's Lynn town council were interested in the project as it would draw people into the town centre and provide greater footfall in the area as a whole, as well as providing services. The Vice-Chairman looked forward to this facility being built and seeing the benefits to the community.

- 10.4 The Cabinet Member for Children's Services discussed placement and transportation issues being seen in Childrens Services; pages 68 and 69 of the report set out the issues faced by the department. Past pressures had not eased in Norfolk or nationally with demand seen related to Special Educational Needs and inflation. A group was looking at how the department could reduce its transport costs and the department was also working with the DSG on reducing the deficit. Transformation work was being monitored and being seen to bring in the estimated savings.
- 10.5 The Chairman noted the massive financial pressures being faced by people's services.
- 10.6 The Cabinet Member for Innovation, Transformation and Performance noted the pressures brought about by inflation, Covid-19 and the war in Ukraine and thanked the finance team for keeping a grip on the council's finances. He pointed out that money was being invested for the benefit of residents and businesses in the county.
- 10.7 The Chairman noted the financing of the capital programme for the current financial year 2023-24 and how much funding was external. He noted that the debt had been taken on for good reason: to bring on assets and maintain them and develop projects such as the King's Lynn community hub and new roads such as the Norwich Western Link. Debt repayment was well understood by those dealing with it. The Chairman queried who else would be able to invest in these things if the Council did not.
- 10.8 Cabinet **RESOLVED:**
1. To recommend to County Council the addition of **£52.146m** to the capital programme to address capital funding requirements funded from various external sources as set out in detail in capital Appendix 3, paragraph 4.1 of the report as follows:
 - £27.292m Department for Education Basic Need Grant funding for 2022-2025
 - £19.321m Department for Education High Needs Grant funding for 2022-2024
 - £4.875m Department for Education Condition Grant Funding profiled into 2023-24
 - £0.989m Department for Education Schools Grant funding for 2022-23
 - Offset by £0.330m release of capital budget in Fire Services
 2. To recommend to County Council the addition of £0.201m to the capital programme to fund the installation of electric vehicle charging points across the Council estate as set out in the Capital Appendix 3 paragraph 4.4 of the report and £3m for the Kings Lynn Multi User Hub (Replacement Library Lyn LL1058) to fund the additional costs identified by the project team as set out in paragraph 4.5 of the report.
 3. Subject to County Council approval of recommendation 1 and 2 to delegate:

- 2.1) To the Director of Procurement authority to undertake the necessary procurement processes including the determination of the minimum standards and selection criteria (if any) and the award criteria; to shortlist bidders; to make provisional award decisions (in consultation with the Chief Officer responsible for each scheme); to award contracts; to negotiate where the procurement procedure so permits; and to terminate award procedures if necessary;
- 2.2) To the Director of Property authority (notwithstanding the limits set out at 5.13.6 and 5.13.7 of Financial Regulations) to negotiate or tender for or otherwise acquire the required land to deliver the schemes (including temporary land required for delivery of the works) and to dispose of land so acquired that is no longer required upon completion of the scheme;
- 2.3) To each responsible chief officer authority to:
 - (in the case of two-stage design and build contracts) agree the price for the works upon completion of the design stage and direct that the works proceed; or alternatively direct that the works be recompeted
 - approve purchase orders, employer's instructions, compensation events or other contractual instructions necessary to effect changes in contracts that are necessitated by discoveries, unexpected ground conditions, planning conditions, requirements arising from detailed design or minor changes in scope
 - subject always to the forecast cost including works, land, fees and disbursements remaining within the agreed scheme or programme budget.
 - That the officers exercising the delegated authorities set out above shall do so in accordance with the council's Policy Framework, with the approach to Social Value in Procurement endorsed by Cabinet at its meeting of 6 July 2020, and with the approach set out in the paper entitled "Sourcing strategy for council services" approved by Policy & Resources Committee at its meeting of 16 July 2018.
4. To recognise the period 3 general fund revenue forecast of a £4m overspend, noting also that Executive Directors will take measures to reduce or eliminate potential over-spends where these occur within services;
5. To recognise the period 3 forecast of 100% savings delivery in 2022-23, noting also that Executive Directors will continue to take measures to mitigate potential savings shortfalls through alternative savings or underspends;
6. To note the forecast General Balances at 31 March 2023 of **£23.840m**, assuming the Council will mitigate the overspends reported in P3.
7. To note the expenditure and funding of the revised current and future 2021-26 capital programmes.

10.9 Evidence and Reasons for Decision

Three appendices are attached to the report giving details of the forecast revenue and capital financial outturn positions:

Appendix 1 of the report summarises the revenue outturn position, including:

- Forecast over and under spends
- Changes to the approved budget
- Reserves
- Savings

Appendix 2 of the report summarises the key working capital position, including:

- Treasury management
- Payment performance and debt recovery.

Appendix 3 of the report summarises the capital outturn position, and includes:

- Current and future capital programmes
- Capital programme funding
- Income from property sales and other capital receipts.

Additional capital funds will enable services to invest in assets and infrastructure as described in Appendix 3 section 4 of the report.

10.10 **Alternative Options**

To deliver a balanced budget, no viable alternative options have been identified to the recommendations in this report. In terms of financing the proposed capital expenditure, no further grant or revenue funding has been identified to fund the expenditure, apart from the funding noted in Appendix 3 of the report.

11. **Disposal, acquisition and exploitation of property**

- 11.1.1 Cabinet received the report setting out proposals aimed at supporting Norfolk County Council priorities by exploiting properties surplus to operational requirements, pro-actively releasing property assets with latent value where the operational needs can be met from elsewhere and strategically acquiring property to drive economic growth and wellbeing in the County.
- 11.1.2 The Cabinet Member for Commercial Services and Asset Management introduced the report to Cabinet:
- There was a typo on page 95 of the report. The final sentence of paragraph 2.2 should read “An application to renew this permission has been registered with *Broadland* District Council”
 - The first set of proposals covered Blofield Primary school which had no capacity to meet further pupil demands. Search for sites for a new school had identified a preferred site on the east of Plantation Road which was in the freehold of Norfolk County Council as part of the County Farms Estate, however not farmed for some time. Discussions had been held to bring forward the school on a single site, and this was covered under recommendations 1-6.
 - The second proposal in the report was a new school project in Gayton to provide accommodation for a 210-place school and nursery. The site in question was owned by Norfolk County Council, previously owned by the County Farms Estate and appropriated for use by Children’s Services.
 - The third proposal related to the letting of a house and garden at Money Hill to a County Farms Tenant
 - The fourth proposal in the report related to declaring land at Terrington surplus to Norfolk County Council requirements; County Farms Estate deemed it no longer required for operational use.
 - The Cabinet Member for Commercial Services and Asset Management moved the recommendations as set out in the report.
- 11.2 The Cabinet Member for Children’s Services was pleased to note the good use of council resources to accommodate new schools, as finding new sites for schools could be difficult.
- 11.3 Cabinet **RESOLVED:**

1. To formally declare part of the site named Land at Plantation Road, Blofield (5009/105) (hatched red on plan), amounting to approximately 0.52 hectares, surplus to County Council requirements and instruct the Director of Property to dispose of the property. In the event of the disposal receipt exceeding the valuation figure the Director of Property in consultation with the Executive Director of Finance and Commercial Services and Cabinet Member for Commercial Services and Asset Management is authorised to accept the most advantageous offer.
2. To agree to the appropriation of part of the site named Land at Plantation Road, Blofield (5009/105) (edged red on plan) amounting to approximately 1.2 hectares to Children's Services (from the County Farms Estate).
3. To formally declare Blofield Primary School site, North Street NR13 4RH (5009/011) (edged blue and hatched blue on plan) surplus to County Council requirements.
4. To instruct the Director of Property to agree terms and dispose of part of the Blofield Primary School site, North Street NR13 4RH (5009/011) property (edged blue on plan) amounting to approximately 0.91 hectares to Blofield Parish Council. In the event of the disposal receipt exceeding the valuation figure the Director of Property in consultation with the Executive Director of Finance and Commercial Services and Cabinet Member for Commercial Services and Asset Management is authorised to accept the most advantageous offer.
5. To instruct the Director of Property to dispose of part of the Blofield Primary School site, North Street NR13 4RH (5009/011) (hatched blue on plan) amounting to approximately 0.41 hectares. In the event of the disposal receipt exceeding the valuation figure the Director of Property in consultation with the Executive Director of Finance and Commercial Services and Cabinet Member for Commercial Services and Asset Management is authorised to accept the most advantageous offer.
6. To approve the acquisition of the additional land north of Farman Way, (shaded pink on plan), amounting to approximately 1.3 hectares on terms agreed and instruct the Director of property to implement the acquisition.
7. To consent to the transfer of the freehold of the new Gayton Primary School building and hard play area shaded pink/orange on plan at nil consideration to the Norwich Diocesan Board of Finance Ltd in return for the proceeds of the sale of the existing school site.
8. To agree to the letting of the house and garden at Money Hill Farmhouse, Deopham Road, Hingham NR9 4NL (7055/100) to Tenant RB on the terms agreed as detailed in Appendix A of the report (exempt).
9. To formally declare the Land at Terrington Fern House Estate (part), Terrington St Clement (2078/108A) (edged red on plan) amounting to 0.93 hectares surplus to County Council requirements and instruct the Director of Property to dispose of the property. In the event of the disposal receipt exceeding the valuation figure limits the Director of Property in consultation with the Executive Director of Finance and Commercial Services and Cabinet Member for Commercial Services and Asset Management is authorised to accept the most advantageous offer.

11.4 Evidence and Reasons for Decision

Declaring the sites and land holdings surplus to County Council use means that the Corporate Property Team can consider options for the disposal and exploitation of these sites.

In respect of the County Farms Estate lettings the existing tenants can retire with dignity

11.5 Alternative Options

Declaring sites and land holdings surplus is a result of the sites no longer being required for service delivery. The alternative would be to retain resulting in incurring holding costs for an asset that is not contributing to service delivery.

12. Reports of the Cabinet Member and Officer Delegated Decisions made since the last Cabinet meeting

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

13 Exclusion of the Public

13.1 Cabinet **RESOLVED not** to exclude the public from the meeting.

14 Disposal, Acquisition & Exploitation of Property: Exempt Annex

14.1 Cabinet did not discuss the exempt appendix.

The meeting ended at 10:40

Chairman of Cabinet

Cabinet
8 August 2022
Local Member Questions

	Local Member Issues/Questions
7.1	<p>Question from Cllr Jamie Osborn</p> <p>Last year at the Scrutiny Committee, the New Anglia Local Enterprise Partnership stated that they were not proactively working on a retrofitting strategy for Norfolk, thereby failing to take a lead on the requirement to decarbonise the 23% of carbon emissions that come from domestic energy use. Given the need to insulate homes and install renewable energy to reduce fuel bills and cut carbon emissions, does the Cabinet Member agree that it is time for Norfolk County Council to take a lead on a proactive retrofitting strategy for the county?</p> <p>Response from the Cabinet Member for Environment and Waste</p> <p>It can be agreed that there is a need to proactively address reducing and decarbonising domestic energy use in homes across the whole of Norfolk. We believe that District Councils are best placed to take a lead on this matter given their responsibility for housing, and for Norfolk County Council to support District partners through our involvement with the Norfolk Climate Change Partnership (NCCP) and through the wider skills agenda.</p> <p>This is an important topic which I am happy to discuss at the Environmental Policy cross party Member Oversight Group, to seek common agreement on how we can best play our part in helping to deliver a retrofitting strategy for the county.</p> <p>Second question from Cllr Jamie Osborn</p> <p>The county council has announced it will run a pre-planning consultation on the Norwich Western Link. This is despite having no indication that the DfT will approve the OBC and provide the required funding of 85% of the cost. How is the risk of not receiving DfT approval being mitigated?</p> <p>Response from the Cabinet Member for Highways, Infrastructure and Transport</p> <p>Cabinet agreed at its meeting on 4 July 2022 to progress with the non-statutory pre-planning application consultation, the start of which has now been confirmed as 15 August 2022. It is very normal for such project delivery activities to be undertaken in parallel with the business case approvals processes. The details of the business case process and implications were set out in the 4 July 2022 Cabinet report.</p>
7.2	<p>Question from Cllr Steve Morphew</p> <p>When Norwich City Council maintained verges, flower beds, shrubs and roundabouts in the city they were generally well looked after. Since Norfolk County Council took back sole control of highways in 2020 many have become neglected, unkempt or abandoned. The county council is even denying responsibility for some areas that have been maintained for decades. Why has this happened and what urgent steps will you take to clear up the mess and return the verges, flowerbeds, roundabouts and shrubs in mine and other divisions in Norwich to their former well maintained condition?</p> <p>Response from the Cabinet Member for Highways, Infrastructure and Transport</p>

	<p>Norfolk County Council are responsible for verge cutting within the extent of the highway within the City. These verges are cut 4 times per year.</p> <p>Within the City there is a mixture of responsibility relating to planted areas within the highway between Norfolk County Council (NCC) and Norwich City Council depending on where it is positioned and what its purpose is (ie part of a traffic calming scheme or aesthetics). NCC has recently provided £30,000 to the City Council in order to help manage the green estate within the highway. NCC will continue to liaise with the City Council to explore further ways to improve verge maintenance.</p> <p>Second question from Cllr Steve Morpew</p> <p>Some people who take pride in their area and are disgusted at the state the county council has left their verges and flower bed in have taken to tidying those areas themselves. What is the legal position for those doing that work, who bears the risks in the event of damage or injury and will the cabinet turn a blind eye or enforce against these informal and unauthorised acts of desperation by those who want to see the soft landscaping in their community kept well?</p> <p>Response from the Cabinet Member for Highways, Infrastructure and Transport</p> <p>It is acknowledged that some communities would like to maintain verges and flower beds to higher standards.</p> <p>Legislation allows us to permit only other Councils or adjacent property owners or occupiers to look after planted areas and verges. However, if people wish to maintain these areas, and can do so without endangering themselves or other users, then we are unlikely to pursue the matter.</p> <p>The County Council do have existing delegation agreements in place with several Parish and Town Councils.</p>
7.3	<p>Question from Cllr Julie Brociek-Coulton</p> <p>How many residents complained of tar melting on their roads in Norfolk during the really hot days recently and why did we take so long to respond to redress the roads in question? One melted so badly that a resident got her shoe stuck to her peddle in the car due to the hot tar. Thankfully there wasn't an accident but what is being done to stop this happening in the future?</p> <p>Response from the Cabinet Member for Highways, Infrastructure and Transport</p> <p>During the hot period, we received 17 reported highway defects across the county, (10 report were online and 7 phone calls). There were 41 works orders completed to treat roads during the high temperatures, 29 of these were priority B orders (to be attended to within 4 days), and 12 priority C orders (to be attended to within 35 days).</p> <p>In terms of complaints, NCC received none during this period.</p> <p>The average time from report to attendance days was 2.02 for all 41 jobs, with the PB orders taking an average of 1.21 days and PC taking 4 days.</p>

	<p>Road surface temperatures are monitored each day throughout the summer season. Where forecasted temperatures meet intervention levels (over 40°C), the process is initiated to ensure treatment of affected roads takes place across the county. In the period 16th to 22nd of July 2022, 78 sites were treated, and the road surface temperature was in excess of +53c.</p> <p>The sites continued to be monitored and it was necessary to treat some sites more than once. Over the hot period, there were 435 treatments undertaken on the 78 sites.</p> <p>Our road surface temperature (RST) monitoring and proactive dusting will continue to be undertaken when RST's exceed intervention temperatures.</p>
7.4	<p>Question from Cllr Mike Smith-Clare Can the cabinet member outline the summer schedule of building repairs on Norfolk schools?</p> <p>Response from the Cabinet Member for Children's Services Most Summer building projects and maintenance activity is led by Governing and Trust Boards. The larger building projects run by NCC have been emailed to Cllr Smith-Clare as a member of Capital Priority Group on 7 July 2022. They include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completion of Ormiston Academy and Sprowston Community Academy expansions • Holly Meadows modular replacement scheme • St Mary's Beetley modular replacement scheme • Sidestrand modular replacement scheme • Easton new special school ongoing programme • Drake SRB • Various smaller condition schemes <p>Second question from Cllr Mike Smith-Clare With families experiencing extreme poverty and financial difficulties, what is the cabinet member doing to address the exorbitant and unnecessary cost of school uniforms and other 'school specific' items?</p> <p>Response from the Cabinet Member for Children's Services Thank you for the question. As a cabinet member I understand the concern and I also know many schools and academies in Norfolk are actively working to address this issue. It is a matter for individual schools to resolve and I'm aware that most schools have schemes designed to support families experiencing hardship.</p>
7.5	<p>Question from Cllr Colleen Walker Now the sale of Holt Hall has fallen through will cabinet use this as an opportunity to work with the community to keep this much loved asset as a valuable resource for young people in Norfolk instead of selling to the highest bidder for a use that would see Holt Hall lost to the community?</p> <p>Response from the Cabinet Member for Commercial Services and Asset Management Council has discussed this at length and a decision was made on the future of Holt Hall and has declared it as surplus to our use for Outdoor Education.</p>

	<p>The site is covered by the Asset of Community Value legislation, which will guide the next steps.</p>
7.6	<p>Question from Cllr Chrissie Rumsby Our Fire and Rescue service did a brilliant job under extreme pressure during the recent hot weather. What went right, what went wrong, what lessons have been learnt and where can we find the details of any changes required to ensure we are ready for predicted future incidents on a similar or larger scale?</p> <p>Response from the Cabinet Member for Communities and Partnerships I agree that the response in Norfolk to what was an extremely challenging time both locally and nationally was outstanding. It is a testament to the dedication and actions of our whole Fire and Rescue Service, support staff, stakeholders, partners and communities that no lives were lost.</p> <p>The volume and type of incidents we faced were significant and stretched our capacity and capability to the limit, which is why we declared a major incident, as did many other services across the country. This was a unique set of circumstances that we faced and everyone worked as hard as they could; we tested the service to its limit. Our operational crews praised the performance of our new technical response vehicles which provided easier access to fires and misting capabilities reducing the amount of water required. Our drones also proved essential in providing birds-eye views of the fires. Whilst there may be lessons to learn, I do not think it would be appropriate to say that anything 'went wrong'. Everyone did the very best that they could.</p> <p>The process to reflect on the major incident to capture what went well and what we can learn to improve for the future is underway. We have commissioned our operational assurance function to complete an immediate Strategic and Tactical Review that will involve all fire staff and key stakeholders. The focus is on building on what worked well and identifying where we could improve or further enhance our approach. I would be happy to bring our findings from this to our Strategic Development Oversight Group, of which you are a Member, to ensure that we can understand the findings and the actions being taken forward as a result.</p> <p>More generally, as you will know from our discussions at the Strategic Development Oversight Group, our work to develop a new Community Risk Management Plan is well progressed. This plan considers the risks we face and sets out the steps we will take to allocate resources to best mitigate or meet these risks. This is a significant piece of work and the draft Plan will be reviewed by the Infrastructure and Development Select Committee in September and Cabinet in October, before starting a public consultation on its findings and proposals. The Plan will include an assessment of the effectiveness of our specialist appliances and capability for responding to the wildfire risk in Norfolk.</p>
7.7	<p>Question from Cllr Matt Reilly While I welcome the departure from the practice of recent years under this administration of asking council to agree budgets before revealing what cabinet intends to do to meet the huge budget gap they have created, why is the administration only consulting Norfolk on the implementation of a cut to the mobile</p>

	<p>library budget they have already decided to make rather than asking Norfolk if residents value the service enough to want the budget maintained?</p> <p>Response from the Cabinet Member for Communities and Partnerships With such significant financial pressures facing the County Council it's inevitable that difficult decisions will need to be made. The budget reductions relating to mobile libraries are proposals at this stage and no final decisions will be taken until we have completed a full consultation with the public. The consultation was launched on the 22nd July and will run for 8 weeks allowing plenty of time for people to give us their views. It contains a range of questions designed to help understand the elements of the service that residents most value, as well as how additional offers might be incorporated, such as wider use of digital offers.</p>
7.8	<p>Question from Cllr Terry Jermy Could the Cabinet Member for Finance confirm how much money was received in the last financial year from DIY waste charges introduced in 2017? and how much income is factored into the budget for this in the 22/23 financial year?</p> <p>Response from the Cabinet Member for Finance: The County Council's pay as you throw charges at its 20 recycling centres across Norfolk are set at rates to cover the costs of dealing with waste it does not have to accept for free, and are not set to generate a profit.</p> <p>For the 2021/22 financial year the income from these charges was £317,622 for construction and demolition type DIY waste, and £9,398 for tyres.</p> <p>For the 2022/23 financial year the total income from pay as you throw charges is budgeted as £292,000 and there is not a breakdown that separates budgeted income for construction and demolition type DIY waste from tyres.</p> <p>Second question from Cllr Terry Jermy Could the Cabinet Member for the Environment confirm the estimated total number of visits to Norfolk's Household Waste Recycling Centres on Wednesdays during the last financial year?</p> <p>Response from the Cabinet Member for Environment and Waste Wednesday is one of the quietest days in the week at Norfolk's recycling centres, with around 11% of visits taking place on Wednesdays, which equates to around 110,000 visits a year.</p>
7.9	<p>Question from Cllr Paul Neale The Holt Hall sale has fallen through as the highest bidder could not fulfil their over-ambitious offer in a timescale required by the Council. There were other bidders but as they were lower the Cabinet decided to chase the money and accept the offer of a property developer not, subject to secretary of state approval, a sound educational development proposal. It seems to me the Cabinet knows the price of everything but the value of nothing.</p> <p>Now we are in this position is it not now time the Cabinet reconsider their approach and the value of education for our children by accepting more appropriate offers.</p>

Response from the Cabinet Member for Commercial Services and Asset Management

As the bidding process and bidders are covered by commercial confidentiality (and as the bids have not been shared with Cllr Neale), I am not able to comment on any the various 'statements' made.

The site is covered by the Asset of Community Value legislation, which will guide the next steps, however as Norfolk County Council has previously advised, bids are assessed on a variety of criteria.

Second Question from Cllr Paul Neale

Frontline staff working with people in crisis are reporting that a shortage of beds in adult mental health services means that often people are unable to access the crisis care that they need. What steps is the county council taking to reduce pressure on mental health service beds by supporting early intervention so that people do not reach the stage where they need crisis care?

Response from the Deputy Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, Public Health and Prevention

Thank you for your question.

The Council works in partnership with the Integrated Care Board who have the primary responsibility for Mental Health Services. The Integrated Care Board has funded a range of crisis support services, such as a mental health practitioner in the ambulance car, crisis house, and Julian Support rapid response service to support people get help in a crisis. The aspiration is for these services to reduce the need for admission to hospital beds as people access support earlier. Other initiatives through community support for people getting help at their GP to prevent escalation to a crisis. These includes MIND recovery workers and Norfolk and Suffolk Foundation Trust (NSFT) mental health practitioners in Primary Care Networks and Wellbeing hubs in East, West and Norwich with out of hours availability.

Norfolk County Council has representation on relevant groups as well as leading the delayed transfers of care workstream, and we're actively involved with the Norfolk and Waveney Integrated Care System Mental Health Transformation, which is co-Chaired by James Bullion, Executive Director, Adult Social Care. The Public Health Team fund mental health support, including a £515,200 grant (2021-25) to Norfolk Community Foundation to provide the allocation of grants to community-based groups in the voluntary and community sector around prevention and wellbeing. Public Health also provides funding for the Norfolk County Council Library service 'read my mind' (£155,000 (2022-25)) which is a tailored intervention for men's wellbeing through coordination of a mental health literacy programme. There is an ongoing mental health promotion campaign based on the [Five Ways to Wellbeing](#) which gives simple advice on things you can do to make yourself feel good, including being active, connecting with others, and learning, more details can be found on our webpages: [Mental wellbeing - Norfolk County Council](#).

The Mental Health Social Care service is supporting in a number of other ways that avert or respond to crises. These include:

- Assisting with Admission avoidance or Transfer of Care from hospitals.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing the Approved Mental Health Professional (AMHP) service provide robust triage for any requests for Mental Health Act assessments to ensure all community options have been explored to support the person. • Community social care staff arrange, review and manage packages of care and closely liaise with NSFT mental health teams to seek alternative to hospital treatment where appropriate. • Social care staff signpost service users to appropriate community support using the Living Well model, including the new Integrated Care Board funded crisis services and the Wellbeing hubs.
7.10	<p>Question from Cllr Maxine Webb</p> <p>Given the importance of improving co-production and communication with families of children and young people with SEND and now that the Council is part the DfE's 'Safety Valve' programme to address our significant deficit with the High Needs Block, could the cabinet member outline how the council is involving parents, carers and children and young people in this work?</p> <p>Response from the Cabinet Member for Children's Services</p> <p>We are committed to working working with families and young people regarding all of our SEND developments and have been doing so throughout all of our SEND improvement work over the past 18 months or more. The DfE have recognised this improvement through our Written Statement of Action ahead of the anticipated re-visit by Ofsted/CQC this autumn.</p> <p>The Safety Valve programme is being directed by the DfE and is very different to other SEND improvement work, in the sense that the approach is prescribed by the DfE and is a process of negotiation which has not yet concluded.</p> <p>However, we have ensured that high level briefings regarding the Safety Valve programme have occurred via the People & Communities Select Committee and Schools Forum (public domain reports) and also via the Norfolk SEND Multi-Agency Steering Group (NASMA) which is co-chaired by Family Voice Norfolk. Therefore, we are ensuring that the Parent Carer Forum are kept informed of the ongoing negotiation with DfE and we will, as with Schools Forum and Committee, provide more details when this is possible within the DfE scheme.</p>
7.11	<p>Question from Cllr Sharon Blundell</p> <p>Family carers have told me that while they appreciated the wellbeing packs during the main covid pandemic, they are totally inappropriate in today's climate and if the council wishes to thank carers, they would prefer a £30 voucher which would be of a better benefit to them, will you listen to carers and provide vouchers instead?</p> <p>Response from the Deputy Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, Public Health and Prevention</p> <p>Thank you for your question.</p> <p>We appreciate the feedback we have had from carers on the Carers Wellbeing Packs, which has been very positive from some carers who received them, and others who found them less valuable. Carers were involved throughout the development of the project to try and ensure the packs were helpful and beneficial for carers.</p>

	<p>The 7,000 packs we have provided were delivered by Caring Together with funding secured by Norfolk County Council. Funding was from the Department of Health & Social Care Infection Control Fund (ICF), so the funding was specifically for that purpose and couldn't be used for solely distributing non-ICF related support, such as a voucher scheme.</p> <p>Infection control and having suitable PPE was something many carers had been very concerned about given the vulnerable nature of the people many of them care for, and the potential impact if the carer themselves fall ill. Aside from the direct benefit of receiving a pack it has also helped identify more carers and therefore able to help them get other support and led to people across a range of organisations being more proactive in identifying carers.</p> <p>This project is now coming to an end as national funding was time limited, however if we have an opportunity to run a similar project in the future, we will definitely take into account all of the feedback we have had from carers about the Carers Wellbeing Packs Project.</p>
7.12	<p>Question from Cllr Steff Aquarone Can you tell us of your analysis of by how much social isolation will be increased by a substantial reduction in mobile library routes and how much in additional costs this is likely to cost Adult Social Care?</p> <p>Response from the Cabinet Member for Communities and Partnerships Alongside the public consultation, the Library and Information team will be reviewing a range of data to ascertain the impact of any changes to the service and its users. An EqlA will also be carried out to ensure that due consideration has been given to the needs of residents. Norfolk Library Service is committed to reducing social isolation in the county and has been a national leader in developing offers like "just a cuppa" within branch libraries. The service also works closely with Adult Social Care to provide community-based services that promote wellbeing and independence.</p> <p>Second question from Cllr Steff Aquarone Will the county council put the substantial deposit that the 'winning' bidder paid into helping the new owner establish outdoor education provision at Holt Hall?</p> <p>Response from the Cabinet Member for Commercial Services and Asset Management As the bidding process and bidders are covered by commercial confidentiality (and as the bids have not been shared with Cllr Aquarone) , I am not able to comment on the 'statement' made.</p> <p>It will be up to any future bidders to propose their intended use for the site.</p>
7.13	<p>Question from Cllr Rob Colwell If the energy costs reach the anticipated levels that are predicted in the national press with the average bill cost potentially hitting £4,000 how many people are you anticipating will be pushed into poverty and severe poverty in Norfolk as a result of these increases?</p>

	<p>Response from the Leader and Cabinet Member for Governance and Strategy</p> <p>The County Council has developed a comprehensive hardship offer, making full use of the Household Support Grant provided by central government, as well as allocating additional funding locally. The Norfolk Assistance Scheme is able to provide help with energy costs and we have worked proactively with partners public and voluntary sector to identify need and target support</p>
7.14	<p>Question from Cllr Saul Penfold</p> <p>Will you urgently organise an emergency cost of living summit in Norfolk to bring together people and organisations on the front line of dealing with local poverty including Citizens Advice, Food Banks, Local Trades Unions, and Chambers of Commerce so you can look at ways the Council can help people in Norfolk who will be affected?</p> <p>Response from the Leader and Cabinet Member for Governance and Strategy</p> <p>The County Council is already working proactively with a range of partners to address the cost of living crisis. We are represented on the Nourishing Norfolk board, organised by the Norfolk Community Foundation to create an affordable food network, and we have a wide range of offers in place to support our residents both directly and indirectly.</p>
7.15	<p>Question from Cllr Lucy Shires</p> <p>We are hearing from Food Banks across the county that they are increasingly struggling with the expanding demand for their services. What more can the council do to help them?</p> <p>Response from the Leader and Cabinet Member for Governance and Strategy</p> <p>See response to 7.14</p> <p>In addition, we have invested £0.5m into the Nourishing Norfolk initiative as well as providing additional grant funding for grass roots organisations working with local communities.</p>
7.16	<p>Question from Cllr Brian Watkins</p> <p>How much extra funding do you think the Norfolk Fire and Rescue Service needs to achieve the significant improvement that the Inspectorate seeks so that Norfolk can have an adequate service?</p> <p>Response from the Cabinet Member for Communities and Partnership</p> <p>The HMICFRS inspection was carried out in Autumn last year, which is some time ago. Since that time, we have already committed significant additional funding for the service. As part of the budget setting process for this year, the revenue budget for the service was increased by £1.7m to address some known pressures and also to provide additional funding for key areas of the service. This included significant additional revenue funding for our prevention service which has enable additional resource to be put in place. The revenue budget was also increased in 2021/22. In addition, there is a significant agreed capital programme for the service which enables investment in new equipment and facilities. Over the next</p>

	<p>three years the capital programme for the service exceeds £20m, which is on top of the investments already made.</p> <p>Some areas of the service where we have already made capital investment were key to our successful response to wildfires recently. In particular, the 4 x 4 vehicles were invaluable in quickly accessing fires on fields where larger appliances may become stuck, and our drone capability was also essential in being able to quickly and safely gain situational awareness at some larger incidents.</p> <p>Work is underway to assess the detailed findings of the HMICFRS inspection report and develop a plan to address areas for improvement identified. This plan will be presented to Cabinet in September. It is possible that we may need to make further investment in our service to successfully deliver the improvements that we all wish to see, and we will consider this as opportunities arise. Equally, we may need to change processes and priorities without the need for investment to enable our improvement journey to continue. In addition, as highlighted in the report, we need to ensure that we make best use of the resources already available to us, for example in the wider county council.</p>
7.17	<p>Question from Cllr Dan Roper</p> <p>Many of my residents are very disappointed that plans for a cycle route on the A140 between Broadland Northway and Norwich Airport have again been shelved due to NCC receiving a lower award than expected from the Active Travel Fund. Does the Cabinet Member recognise the enormous benefits that such a cycle route would bring and can he advise of any future funding possibilities that could turn this into a reality?</p> <p>Response from the Cabinet Member for Highways, Infrastructure and Transport</p> <p>Following a successful bid to the Infrastructure Delivery Fund in 2022, we have successfully got funding for an extension to the yellow pedalway. The proposal will be to link the Broadland Northway to Middleton's Lane alongside the A140 on a new facility. This is currently in design and will be delivered as part of the wider Transforming Cities programme.</p>
7,18	<p>Question from Cllr Alexandra Kemp</p> <p>Norfolk Fire Rescue Service Inspection found insufficient resource for Protection, leading to slow building assessment turnaround; no face-to-face Safe-and-Well Checks or Home Fire Safety Visits in person since the pandemic; and inadequate Prevention. While starving the Fire Service, Cabinet wants to waste £3 million – even more via underwriting - on an expensive vanity project for a new prefab replacement library with a short-term life, not value for money or needed, as Lynn has an excellent fully accessible library; NCC will cut the valuable Mobile Library Service, a lifeline to vulnerable residents, by half.</p> <p>Can Cabinet ditch the vanity project and fund the Fire Service and Mobile Library?</p> <p>Response from the Cabinet Member for Communities and Partnerships</p> <p>The HMICFRS inspection was carried out in Autumn last year, which is some time ago. Since that time, we have already committed significant additional funding for the service. As part of the budget setting process for this year, the revenue</p>

	<p>budget for the service was increased by £1.7m to address some known pressures and also to provide additional funding for key areas of the service. This included significant additional revenue funding for our prevention service which has enable additional resource to be put in place. The revenue budget was also increased in 2021/22. In addition, there is a significant agreed capital programme for the service which enables investment in new equipment and facilities. Over the next three years the capital programme for the service exceeds £20m, which is on top of the investments already made.</p> <p>Many face to face activities were paused during the pandemic to ensure that we were able to keep staff and communities safe, particularly during lockdown and subsequent restrictions. During that time, our focus was on maintaining operational response. Some prevention activity continued where it was safe to do so, e.g. telephone assessments for individuals at the highest risk. We also worked with blue light partners to put new areas of activity to support Norfolk communities in place, for example our work with the Ambulance Service.</p> <p>I am pleased that our protection and prevention visits resumed some months ago and activity has almost returned to pre-pandemic levels</p> <p>The development of a new Multi-User Community Hub in King's Lynn is predominantly funded by external Town Deal funding, with additional capital input from Norfolk County Council, who will own the asset following the build. The investment is a capital expense and could therefore not be used to support ongoing revenue costs associated with the mobile library service. The investment in the building is backed by a robust business case and there are no indications that the building will have a short life-span. The current library, which will be relocated to the new multi-user hub, is not of sufficient size to meet the requirements of King's Lynn and surrounding areas and is also not in the optimal location.</p>
7.19	<p>Question from Cllr Ben Price</p> <p>The recent inspection report on Norfolk's fire service stated that the service is "inadequate" in preventing fires. Given that extreme heat is making fires more likely and more damaging, will the Cabinet Member immediately institute an emergency plan to identify how the risks of fires can be reduced?</p> <p>Response from the Cabinet Member for Communities and Partnerships</p> <p>The service is already working with key stakeholders and partners to identify areas where the risks of wildfires can be reduced and working together to mitigate these risks. This includes reminding the public of the simple steps that we can all take to help prevent fires happening in the first place. We have already invested additional revenue funding in this area of the service and have been able to increase our resources as a result.</p> <p>Looking forward, our work to develop a new Community Risk Management Plan is well progressed. This plan considers the risks we face and sets out the steps we will take to allocate resources to best mitigate or meet these risks. This is a significant piece of work and the draft Plan will be reviewed by the Infrastructure and Development Select Committee in September and Cabinet in October, before starting a public consultation on its findings and proposals. The Plan will include</p>

an assessment of the effectiveness of our specialist appliances and capability for responding to the wildfire risk in Norfolk. A review of our recent major incident response is also underway to enable us to capture learning.

Second question from Cllr Ben Price

The heatwave and associated fires in July, and the upcoming drought, are yet again showing the damage that climate change is causing to our county. Will the Cabinet Member agree that climate change should be a key item in the council's corporate risk register?

Response from the Cabinet Member for Environment and Waste?

The Council is currently undertaking a routine review and refresh of its corporate risk register, to ensure that the most significant risks to the Council continue to be addressed and treated appropriately.

Climate change is being considered as part of this review, with any associated risk(s) deemed corporately significant, and that are within the Council's control to mitigate, to be added to the corporate risk register. This will be reported as part of the risk management report to Cabinet in October 2022.

Norfolk County Council has been reporting regularly on the many projects and programmes already under delivery as part of our new Environmental Policy, and most recently we produced a new digital dashboard to show our progress towards Net Zero across the County Council's estates by 2030, as well as data on the county's wider emissions. Cabinet has also supported the creation of a new Climate Change Plan for the county as part of the work of the Norfolk Climate Change Partnership (NCCP).