

Cabinet
Minutes of the Meeting held on Monday 4 April 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 Bill Borrett	Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, Public Health and Prevention
Cllr Margaret Dewsbury	Cabinet Member for Communities & Partnerships.
Cllr John Fisher	Cabinet Member for Children's Services
Cllr Tom FitzPatrick	Cabinet Member for Innovation, Transformation & Performance.
Cllr Andy Grant	Cabinet Member for Environment and Waste
Cllr Andrew Jamieson	Cabinet Member for Finance.
Cllr Greg Peck	Cabinet Member for Commercial Services & Asset Management.
Cllr Martin Wilby	Cabinet Member for Highways, Infrastructure & Transport.

Executive Directors Present:

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

The Chairman read a statement:

"A lot has been said in recent days about what Norfolk County Council is not doing to help all those we can who are in need instead of recognising what we have done, are doing and will continue to do.

Having led much of Norfolk's efforts to support people during the pandemic, we fully understand how the increased cost of living is hitting many people hard now.

We're grateful that Government has given a further £500m across the country to support the next 6 months of hardship funding. As we have done with past money we will target the Government's new hardship funding on those in greatest need – families, people with disabilities and pensioners to name but some.

This is a much wider support mechanism than before in recognition of the impact of additional costs on such a wide range of people in the country and our county. So to us in taking this forward it's about making it count for everyone.

Over the last two years the council has used Government money to fund various packages

of support. We have worked effectively with partners, including district councils and the voluntary sector, to ensure that funding reaches the broadest elements of society we can, those which may find themselves in difficulty.

This has included in the last 6 months alone:

- £1.2m to increase capacity within our Norfolk Assistance Scheme (NAS), which provides emergency funding to help with living costs
- £1.4m to district councils for community support
- £475,000 for the Norfolk Community Advice Network to provide more advice and £167,000 to help partner organisations access the Network's system
- £1m of support targeted to more than 100 voluntary and community groups, to apply for vouchers for groceries and household essentials for those in need
- £2.4 million for free school meals at Christmas and February half term, with an extra payment at Christmas for 30,000 children. This scheme ended last month, with all of Norfolk's funding allocation spent
- Examples of some of the groups we supported include:
 - the Benjamin Foundation, to help 200 households in hardship
 - the NR5 Community Hub with food vouchers and fuel top up cards
 - the Charles Burrell Centre, to support 300 households, 240 of which include children and young people aged under 19

We did all this for the best of reasons. We did a lot with that money that other areas didn't do.

We know that people want to retain their dignity and ability to choose when facing financial hardship, which is why we have joined the Norfolk Community Foundation programme "Nourishing Norfolk" and have invested £250k to enable a network of community supermarkets to be established across the county.

In addition, we have continued to run our holiday activity scheme, the Big Norfolk Holiday Fun Programme, which will provide support and healthy food for 4,000 five to 16-year-olds this Easter. It is receiving up to £2.6 million of Government support this year.

Following the Chancellor's recent announcement of the further funding I referred to, we are developing a new scheme with the £6.7m we have been allocated that will have the depth and flexibility to reach a much broader range of people facing hardship.

At the end of last week, the Government confirmed the detailed criteria. It shows that we must reach out to that wider element of society – regardless of any campaigns urging us to do something else.

As Leader of the Council I have a responsibility to help as many people as I can who are facing financial hardship.

This will of course include support for children and families eligible for free school meals, but also children and families facing hardship but not in receipt of free school meals, families with younger children, pensioners, people with disabilities, unpaid carers and other vulnerable households in Norfolk.

That's the depth and breadth of our new scheme and we are already working hard to put it into effect as soon as we possibly can.

Let me be clear – support is available for those in urgent need, including children and families who have previously benefited from food support during the school holidays.

I would urge families who are struggling to feed their children, afford heating bills or have other financial worries to get in touch with the Norfolk Assistance Scheme.

For the duration of the Easter holidays, we will prioritise their calls. The number is 0344 800 8020.”

Cabinet Members and Executive Directors formally introduced themselves.

1 Apologies for Absence

- 1.1 Apologies were received from the Executive Director of Adult Social Services.

2 Minutes from the meeting held on Monday 7 March 2022.

- 2.1 Cabinet agreed the minutes of the meeting held on Monday 7 March 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 Fostering Review

- 4.1.1 Cabinet received the report and addendum report outlining the recommendations from Scrutiny Committee to Cabinet following consideration of the call-in of the Cabinet decision of 7 March 2022 at Scrutiny Committee on 23 March 2022.

- 4.1.2 The Cabinet Member for Children’s Services introduced the report to Cabinet:
- The Cabinet Member for Children’s Services thanked Scrutiny Committee for their consideration of the report and thanked officers for their work producing the reports to this Cabinet meeting.
 - The Cabinet Member for Children’s Services went through the five recommendations to Cabinet from Scrutiny Committee:
 - **Recommendation 1: “any reassessment of a child’s needs should not adversely affect the payments to the foster carer by reduction of need”.** Children’s Services felt the additional costs could be incorporated in the Children’s Services budget. It was accepted that a drop in payments could act as a dis-incentive for carers to work with children and work to achieve a higher level, so this recommendation would be taken on board. The financials covering this were included in the addendum report in the supplementary agenda.
 - **Recommendation 2: “All existing placements that would be adversely impacted by the new policy should continue at the same level of payment until the placement ends to provide certainty for the foster carer”.** The Cabinet Member for Children’s Services remained of the view that the rationale for introducing the new fee structure for new placements and phasing out the accreditation-based framework was fair and equitable so no changes to this aspect

of the proposals would be suggested.

- **Recommendation 3: “The new proposals should be re-examined by either an in house or independent legal team to ensure nothing has been missed or overlooked to ensure Norfolk County Council’s position as an innovator of progressive change is robust”.** The Cabinet Member for Children’s Services thanked the legal team for their work over the last week to reassess the consultation process. From this reassessment they were happy that the consultation process was suitable.
- **Recommendation 4: “To consider an informal peer review by other relevant local authorities to help spot or advise on unforeseen consequences or changes that would need to be addressed”.** The Council had asked CoramBAFF to look at the process and proposals and carry out a peer review. They had responded to this request and provided a written statement (see appendix A), saying they believed the process had been transparent and open and the proposals were in line with other fostering agencies. They liked the child focussed approach and felt the proposals would improve the local offer for looked after children, increase family-based placements and promote recruitment of foster carers. They also felt the proposals were innovative and followed best practice.
- **Recommendation 5: “To establish a rolling programme of review so that fosters carers are aware of when and how changes to fees and allowances are considered and implemented. The programme should also address the governance framework of the review and clearly set out the consultation process and the governance components that would be involved”.** A review of the process was planned to go through People and Communities Select Committee in 2 years’ time.
- The Cabinet Member for Children’s Services proposed the addition into the proposals of “any assessment of a child should not adversely impact on payments to foster carers”.

4.2 The Vice-Chairman noted that the CoramBAFF report (see appendix A) stated that the proposals would increase recruitment and retention of in-house carers. Lots of work had been put into these proposals with outside, independent input and they would reward foster carers for the work they put into supporting more challenging children.

4.3 The Chairman noted the detailed addendum report in the supplementary agenda which gave commentary on the points raised by Scrutiny Committee and reassurance from the legal team that the consultation and other aspects of the proposals were sound. The CoramBAFF report would be appended to the minutes (see appendix A) so their views could be properly reflected.

4.4 Cabinet **RESOLVED** to add into the proposals of the Fostering Review report agreed at Cabinet on 7 March 2022 that “any assessment of a child should not adversely impact on payments to foster carers”.

5 Items of Urgent Business

5.1 No items of urgent business were discussed.

6 Public Question Time

- 6.1 The list of public questions and the responses is attached to these minutes at Appendix B.
- 6.2.1 Peter Offord asked a supplementary question:
- Thank you for your answer about Norfolk County Council taking practical steps to meet net zero; last year chief advisor Sir David King said that what do over the next 5 years will determine what we do for humanity for the next millennium, leaving 5 years to reduce our Carbon Dioxide emissions. Transport is the biggest cause of Carbon Dioxide emissions. What are you doing about this?
- 6.2.2 The Cabinet Member for Highways, Infrastructure and Transport replied that the council was doing a lot regarding transport to lower emissions across Norfolk. For example, a successful ZEBRA funding bid had been received to bring electric busses into Norwich, which would be in place by 2024. Active travel schemes were being delivered across the county as well as many other travel schemes.
- 6.3.1 Willem Buttinger asked a supplementary question:
- The Council appears to accept the climate and ecological emergency, but do you accept it in your hearts? You support the building of new roads for example.
- 6.3.2 The Cabinet Member for Environment and Waste replied that he believed there was a necessity to get things done and go as fast as possible and he believed the council was doing this. The Government could make more rapid changes if it wishes. The council could make faster progress, but this would require national legislation changes.

7 Local Member Questions/Issues

- 7.1 The list of Local Member questions and the responses is attached to these minutes at Appendix C. A written supplementary question was received; the written supplementary question and the response to this is attached to these minutes at appendix D.
- 7.2.1 Cllr Julie Brociek-Coulton asked a supplementary question:
- What about the 25,000 children there isn't an activity space for? Why has one school told me they didn't receive information about the Holiday Activities and Food (HAF) programme and were not told about the Easter vouchers until two days before the Easter holidays? Is it fair to put responsibility on schools when families are struggling?
- 7.2.2 The Cabinet Member for Children's Services replied that he didn't know why the school was not informed and would look into this. Regarding the activity schemes, spaces were made available for as wide a selection of children as possible, however sometime the places were not taken up or children did not turn up. The department was looking at how to improve attendance.
- 7.3.1 Cllr Emma Corlett asked a supplementary question:

- It was anticipated that facilities would be self funded on a commercial basis aimed at operators to provide statutory breaks. She felt it was too soon to say income would not cover costs as no business case had been examined and asked if The Cabinet Member for Highways, Infrastructure and Transport would discuss this with her, as haulage workers using ditches and laybys as toilets was causing an ongoing cost.

7.3.2 The Cabinet Member for Highways, Infrastructure and Transport was happy for Cllr Corlett to contact him to discuss this.

7.4.1 Cllr Mike Smith-Clare asked a supplementary question:

- Cllr Smith-Clare thanked The Chairman for the response to his letter requesting submission of a 2000 signature petition being taken as urgent business at the meeting. He was disappointed that this had not been taken as urgent business but was interested to hear the Chairman's statement. For families who felt unsupported and uncared for and had campaigned to ensure their petition reached 2000 signatures, Cllr Smith-Clare asked when the Chairman would be willing to accept their petition and show he was genuine in listening to their views.

7.4.2 The Chairman replied that the petition could be left with Democratic Services and reminded Cllr Smith-Clare that in his statement he urged families who were struggling to feed their children or heat their homes or with other financial worries to get in touch with the Norfolk Assistance Scheme which was successful and had helped a lot of families. They had agreed to prioritise people in this situation over the Easter holidays. The number to call was 0344 800 8020.

8. Flourishing in Norfolk

8.1.1 Cabinet received the report introducing Flourish as the shared ambition of Norfolk's Children and Young People Strategic Alliance, together with the Strategic Alliance's partnership strategy 'Flourishing in Norfolk'.

8.1.2 The Executive Director for Children's Services stated that the Flourish partnership strategy and outcomes framework had been informed by Children and Young People.

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

- The report laid out a thorough way forward covering issues recognised during the pandemic, a way forward for apprenticeships and the whole remit of children's services
- Flourish stood for families and friends, learning, opportunity, understood, resilient, individual, safe and secure and healthy.
- The Cabinet Member for Children's Services moved the recommendations as set out in the report.

8.2 The Vice-Chairman noted, referring to page 140, that there was an ambition that "all children and young people in Norfolk will flourish" and that this supported "the vision of the Joint Health and Wellbeing Board Strategy 2018 – 2022". There were key links to the integrated care system and children were at the heart of communities.

8.3 The Cabinet Member for Innovation, Transformation and Performance noted that

the framework took into account what parents and young people had said and supported the proposals set out in the report

8.4 The Chairman noted the strong links in the report to Better Together for Norfolk, and commended the work carried out to bring this work forward across a number of partners and partnerships.

8.5 Cabinet **RESOLVED** that

1. Cabinet formally commits to adopt the Children and Young People Strategic Alliance's shared ambition that Norfolk is a place where all children and young people can flourish.
2. Cabinet endorses departments embedding Flourish within the County Council's activities where these impact on children and young people and requests an annual update on progress.
3. Cabinet commends the progress made through the Children and Young People Strategic Alliance to develop a children and young people's partnership strategy: Flourishing in Norfolk

8.6 **Evidence and Reasons for Decision**

See section 4 of the Cabinet report.

8.7 **Alternative Options**

None are being proposed

9. **Trading Standards Service Plan 2022/23**

9.1.1 Cabinet received the report setting out the Trading Standards Service Plan and its associated annexes, and the Trading Standards Business Services Policy for adoption by Cabinet following review.

9.1.2 The Cabinet Member for Communities and Partnerships introduced the report to Cabinet:

- Trading standards covered many services which kept people safe. These services continued to be impacted by the pandemic. There were four new enforcement areas.
- Trading Standards had been working to raise awareness of scams working with the Norfolk Against Scams Partnership.
- In the past year they had dealt with avian flu outbreaks, prosecuted 8 rogue traders and implemented 27 new no cold caller zones.
- There were 6 trading standard officer vacancies. There was a national shortage of qualified officers, so the service was looking to take on trainees to cover the vacancies and train them in-house. The money from unspent salaries would be used to fund these posts. A minimum of 3 years training was needed to become a trading services officer.
- The service had been working with HR and EDI (Equality, Diversity and Inclusion) teams to increase the diversity of the workforce. So far, 98 applications had been received for the 10 posts.
- The Cabinet Member for Communities and Partnerships commended the innovative and industrious workforce and moved the recommendations as set out in the report.

- 9.2 The Cabinet Member for Innovation, Transformation and Performance noted that the trading standards department carried out valuable work for the council. He noted the work of the Norfolk Against Scams Partnership to help protect vulnerable people in the county.
- 9.3 The Cabinet Member for Children's Services welcomed the initiative to train new staff in-house.
- 9.4 The Chairman referred to page 211, paragraph 3.1 of the report, which stated the service plan would ensure resources were targeted, and highlighted on page 213, paragraph 6.2 of the report, that the service had secured new enforcement burdens funding from Government. He noted the excellent work of the department.
- 9.5 Cabinet **RESOLVED**
1. To agree and adopt the Trading Standards Service Plan and associated Annexes set out in Appendices 1 to 4 of the report.
 2. To agree and adopt the Trading Standards Business Services Policy set out in Appendix 5 of the report.

9.6 **Evidence and Reasons for Decision**

The Trading Standards Service Plan, inclusive of Annexes I, II and III of the plan (Appendices 1 to 4 of the report), is considered to be the most effective way to demonstrate how the service intends to fulfil its regulatory/statutory responsibilities taking into account the available intelligence, resources and the Better Together, for Norfolk priorities we are seeking to support.

The Business Services Policy (Appendix 5 of the report) was approved in 2016. It has been reviewed and continues to reflect the business offer provided by the Trading Standards service.

9.7 **Alternative Options**

The proposed Plan and associated documents are considered to set out the most effective approach and best fit with the strategic direction of Norfolk County Council. Alternative approaches could be taken, but these would require further work to develop and may result in a need to secure additional funding to deliver.

10. Changing Places

- 10.1.1 Cabinet received a report providing an update on the prioritised locations for further Changing Places in Norfolk following feedback from engagement with disabled people and their families.
- 10.1.2 The Executive Director for Community and Environmental Services stated that district councils had been awarded £660,000 to deliver more facilities and the Government have opened up another round for funding to provide Changing Places facilities. The council would work with districts to ensure a good spread of facilities across the county.
- 10.1.3 The Cabinet Member for Communities and Partnerships introduced the report to Cabinet:

- There were already 17 Changing Places facilities in Norfolk, but they were not evenly spread. After funding was agreed by Council in 2020 to provide a further 5 places, contact had been made with 53 groups representing people with disabilities. The information gained from this was used to plan the locations of the new Changing Places and the information had also been shared with districts to help them plan in their areas now that they had access to funding.
- The five new Changing Places would be located in Acle, Wroxham, Gressenhall, Dereham and either Brancaster or Morston.
- These facilities increased quality of life and allowed people with disabilities to venture further afield for days out and other events which other people took for granted.
- The council was encouraging communities to apply for money from the Norfolk Social Infrastructure Fund to provide even more facilities, to ensure equal access..
- The Cabinet Member for Communities and Partnerships moved the recommendations as set out in the report.

10.2 The Cabinet Member for Innovation, Transformation and Performance noted that the facilities allowed people to go about their daily life with dignity and was pleased that these were being provided by the council and now could also be provided by district councils.

10.3 The Cabinet Member for Finance was pleased that district councils now had funding to provide these facilities and that one of the council's facilities would be in a National Trust Estate, helping increase their inclusion.

10.4 The Chairman noted that it was positive to hear about the extra money coming in through districts and the money committed by council would help improve these facilities across the county.

10.5 Cabinet **RESOLVED** to

1. Note the feedback from the engagement
2. Note progress to date on identifying priority locations for proposed sites for new Norfolk County Council Changing Places facilities set out in section 2.1 of the report.
3. Agree our proposals to encourage applications to our Norfolk Social Infrastructure Fund for Changing Places facilities as set out in section 2.3 of the report.

10.6 **Evidence and Reasons for Decision**

Evidence for our priorities come from the principles we agreed to follow and the feedback we received, as outlined in the report.

10.7 **Alternative Options**

To await formal confirmation of the District Council Government funding bids. However, this will delay the implementation of any new facilities and further disadvantage people with disabilities who live in or visit Norfolk

11. **Net Zero and Natural Norfolk Progress Update**

- 11.1.1 Cabinet received the report providing an update on progress towards delivery of commitments relating to the Environmental Policy, which were set out in the November 2021 cabinet paper “Natural Norfolk: Progress on delivering the Environmental Policy”.
- 11.1.2 The Cabinet Member for Environment and Waste introduced the report to Cabinet:
- The council was currently in the preparatory stages to decarbonise its buildings with a substantial tranche of studies due. 44 more electric charging points would be installed at County Hall and the Fire Service were due to lease 35 plug in hybrid vehicles and 6 electric emergency response vehicles. An assessment was underway for changing the infrastructure to enable a full roll out of an electric vehicle fleet.
 - The council also had a plan in place to enhance walking and cycling across Norfolk and had been successful in receiving Government funding.
 - Street lighting was being upgraded, and so far, over 70% had been upgraded to LED, with full completion due in July 2023.
 - Progress had been made on the one million trees planting scheme, through giveaways and partnership working including with district councils.
 - Work was in place to extend the network of roadside nature reserves and Pollinator Action Plan through the Greenways to Greenspaces overarching strategy
 - It was important to transform the things the public don’t see; the report highlighted many of these areas such as supply chains, IT systems and procurement framework to help achieve net zero commitment
 - The public was interested in the council’s work towards addressing climate change work and progress towards reaching net zero. The council could now set in place a climate action plan which would help to facilitate greater public engagement and member oversight because careful and targeted actions had been taken to deliver a realistic and inclusive policy. It would provide a clear framework to provide a member review of progress.
 - The council would strive to do more through the proposed membership in the UK100 Network of councils.
 - The Cabinet Member for Environment and Waste welcomed the ambitious work carried out so far, as shown in the report.
 - The climate action plan for Norfolk was the next phase for this piece of work, working with partners across the county including the Norfolk Climate Change Partnership, Local Enterprise Partnership, businesses, residents
 - The Cabinet Member for Environment and Waste moved the recommendations as set out in the report
- 11.2 The Cabinet Member for Finance spoke about the report
- The basis on how net zero was included on calculations had been changed when reviewing and delivering contracts.
 - The Norfolk Local Nature Recovery Strategy, called “Natural Norfolk Map”, had important baseline calculations to make to deliver the Nature Recovery Strategy.
 - The Natural Capital Plan for Norfolk and Suffolk was important as it had two key areas of focus: the protected landscape of the Norfolk coast

including the AONB (Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty) and marine site; and the Greater Norwich Growth Area to balance housing expansion with nature enhancement. The Cabinet Member for Finance welcomed the inclusion of the AONB as Chair of the Norfolk Coast Partnership, and would be working with colleagues in environment, highways and public health to ensure a comprehensive strategy was in place.

- The Cabinet Member for Finance welcomed the Norfolk Climate Change Partnership working with districts and the climate action plan to demonstrate what the Council is doing and help assist parish and town councils with their climate plans.

- 11.3 The Cabinet Member for Highways, Infrastructure and Transport welcomed the progress made shown in the report and the information about electric vehicles in the Norfolk County Council fleet. £3.3m ZEBRA bus funding from the Department for Transport and funding from First had been received to provide 15 electric buses and supporting infrastructure in Greater Norwich by 2024. Funding would continue to be sought to bring more electric vehicles to the county. Many local communities had accessed tree planting through the one million trees scheme.
- 11.4 The Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, Public Health and Prevention endorsed the report and the range of information provided in it. He noted the Climate Action Plan would be a key part of this work and help show the range of work being carried out to move towards being a greener authority. All residents could also support this plan through what they bought, how they travelled and via their property for example by installing insulation. The council would be showing leadership in this area and member oversight would allow progress to be reviewed.
- 11.5 The Cabinet Member for Communities and Partnerships noted that supporting net zero was something all departments could support in different ways; the Fire Service had bought 6 electric vehicles, for example. Gressenhall Farm & Workhouse was developing a new learning centre - the Gressenhall Environmental Hub - to help local residents learn what they could do to create positive changes in their own communities.
- 11.6 The Vice-Chairman supported the report and noted the roadside nature reserves and development of the pollinator action plan including pollinator friendly verge cutting approach. Local cycling and walking plans were important to encourage people travelling short distances to walk or cycle.
- 11.7 The Cabinet Member for Innovation, Transformation and Performance noted that the proposals in the report showed the council was actively carrying out actions to make progress towards becoming greener
- 11.8 The Cabinet Member for Children's Services noted that getting all of Norfolk involved in the work would be important. There were a number of schools in Victorian and 1960s buildings and discussions had been held with Norse to look at how these could be made more energy efficient.
- 11.9 The Cabinet Member for Commercial Services and Asset Management noted that a lot of work had been carried out to reduce the carbon of the council's building estate, including to County Hall and receipt of Salix funding to

decarbonise the estate. Trees or hedgerows were being planted on county farms where possible.

11.10 The Chairman pointed out that the details in the report showed how Norfolk County Council was responding positively to climate change and requested other Cabinet reports included references and implications related to this piece of work and the Climate Action Plan, noting that it linked to Better Together for Norfolk and was an overarching strategy.

11.11 The Cabinet Member for Environment and Waste highlighted that this piece of work was a fundamental change, with all departments thinking green at the heart of everything. He noted that since Covid-19, changes had been made in the way staff thought about working such as making Teams calls rather than making a journey into an office for a short meeting. The Council was showing it was being ambitious, which was a key factor for achieving funding.

11.12 Cabinet **RESOLVED** to

1. Acknowledge the progress being made as set out in this paper in relation to net zero and Natural Norfolk.
2. Commission the Executive Director for Community and Environmental Services to produce a Climate Action Plan for Norfolk.
3. Agree for Norfolk County Council to become a member of the UK100 Network. Membership will be reviewed on a biannual basis to ensure that Norfolk County Council are contributing, collaborating and benefitting from the network.
4. Approve the set-up approach for delivery of Norfolk's Nature Recovery Strategy through a Natural Norfolk Map, which will use demonstrator initiatives such as the AONB, Marine Site and National Trails, to better integrate geospatial data analysis into nature recovery networks.
5. Approve the Norwich, Great Yarmouth and King's Lynn Local Cycling and Walking Plan documents.
6. Acknowledge that a further paper will be required which outlines how the Environment Bill will require Norfolk County Council to act in the future.

11.13 **Evidence and Reasons for Decision**

The recommendation to commission a Climate Action Plan will align the council to standard practice among local authorities in the country in relation to net zero, with over 80% having a published action plan. Given that this is a topic which attracts public interest, an action plan would enable the council to demonstrate the work being done to tackle climate change. Furthermore, a Climate Action Plan can provide a useful framework for members to review what is a wide-ranging programme of activities across the organisation.

The evidence and reasons for the recommendation of Norfolk County Council to become a member of the UK100 Network can be found in Appendix A of the report.

The evidence for the recommendation for Norfolk's Nature Recovery Strategy comes from DEFRA's England-wide system of spatial strategies that will establish priorities and map proposals for specific actions to drive nature's recovery and provide wider environmental benefits.

11.14 **Alternative Options**

Cabinet could decide not to commission a Climate Action Plan and continue with updates in the current format. This would result in a continuation of our work in a way that is less systematically set out and less transparent than it would be with a published Climate Action Plan.

Cabinet could decide not to become a member of UK100 and continue with business as normal. This would result in Norfolk County Council missing out on resources and insights from the UK100 Network which could help with the transition to net-zero and reduction in county-wide emissions.

12. **Strategic Review**

12.1.1 Cabinet received the report setting out proposals to review a number of aspects of the design of Norfolk County Council.

12.1.2 The Chairman introduced the report to Cabinet:

- Norfolk County Council delivers a diverse range of services but there had been changes to the public sector landscape and funding regimes
- The council had an ambition to be one of highest performing counties in the country
- During a meeting with Baroness Vere looking at progress of the Great Yarmouth River Crossing, she commented how many projects the Government were dealing with from Norfolk County Council.
- Unprecedented financial challenges were seen and needed to be responded to and it was important to ensure the council was match fit and able to deliver the services that people relied on.
- This was the first time such a comprehensive review had been proposed for over 10 years. It was proposed in order to remove areas of duplication, reduce management layers, improve organisational design and improve effectiveness of roles.
- It was important to move quickly to reduce cost, align with wider system changes such as the launch of the Integrated Care System and potential development of a county deal and to promote a digital first capability in the way the services were delivered and provided. The review would lead to lower cost operational arrangements with the right people, structures, processes and skills in place
- It would be important to ensure that changes were sustained, and risks managed properly, requiring more collaboration and innovative working to address funding challenges and allow better partnership working.
- The proposed review was not about cutting frontline services but about being efficient and effective.
- The Chairman moved the recommendations as set out in the report

12.2 The Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, Public Health and Prevention noted that requirements for organisations changed over time, therefore it was important to undertake periodic reviews to ensure the council was in the right form to face challenges. He noted the commitment of staff who worked for the council during the pandemic and that this review would provide staff with the freedom to do their jobs well and allow adult social services to meet challenges seen by the department and meet the needs of the population who were now living longer.

- 12.3 The Cabinet Member for Innovation, Transformation and Performance agreed that this was the right approach to take given the challenges being seen by the council and would highlight areas of excellence in the organisation and reduce areas of duplication, allowing the council to adapt to meet requirements.
- 12.4 The Cabinet Member for Children's Services pointed out paragraph 2.4 and 2.32 which highlighted the involvement of senior managers in this review and that the redesign should support wider objectives and help to attract and retain the best people. He welcomed this piece of work.
- 12.5 The Cabinet Member for Finance noted the comments made by the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, Public Health and Prevention and the Cabinet Member for Children's Services, agreeing that the review would be empowering and a way to attract the best talent. It was now an appropriate time to consider this piece of work moving on from focussing on the pandemic.
- 12.6 The Vice-Chairman noted that paragraph 1.2 of the report pointed out the challenge for all local authorities to create a sustainable funding model. Page 316, paragraph 5.3 of the report, noted that cabinet could resource internally however Executive Directors felt there was not capacity to carry out a project of this scale internally at this time. A provider would be chosen who aligned with the council's wider transformation initiatives.
- 12.7 Cabinet **RESOLVED**
1. To agree the Council's broader ambition to prepare the organisation for significant future transformation.
 2. To progress a review, with an initial focus on the role and number of management layers and spans of control, to identify areas of duplication, simplification of role design and identify and deliver any resulting savings.
 3. To delegate to the Head of Paid Service, in consultation with the Director of Procurement and the Leader, the decision to award a contract to provide external support to this transformation activity.
 4. To direct the Head of Paid Service to ensure the necessary internal resources are secured in order to successfully implement the review and to ensure that ways of working are established that enable effective knowledge transfer from, and partnership working with, the external provider.
- 12.8 **Evidence and Reasons for Decision**
- This review proposes a detailed analysis of the organisation's structures aligned to clear organisational design principles. This should create a simpler and more cost-effective operating model which enables effective service delivery, decision making, clarity of role and outcome.
- 12.9 **Alternative Options**
- Refer to section 5 of the Cabinet report.
13. ***Better Together, for Norfolk 2021-2025 – delivering our strategy***
- 13.1.1 Cabinet received the report seeking Cabinet's approval of the 2022/23 the Corporate Delivery Plan, and to provide an update on the progress being made on the Communications and Workforce strategies.

13.1.2 The Chairman introduced the report to Cabinet:

- The key priorities of the strategy were set out in the report at paragraph 2.1.
- At its meeting on 31 January 2022, Cabinet laid the foundations for the draft Corporate Delivery Plan and confirmed the approach to finalising the Corporate Delivery plan; since this time there had been workshops looking at the delivery plan and the approach to be taken towards the County Deal.
- There was a planning framework consisting of a number of strategic documents to ensure alignment across the organisation as set out in section 3 of the report.
- The business planning cycle was the process for confirming content and coordination of the different levels and products and was underway.
- The Corporate Delivery Plan would describe significant and priority actions and support the focus on delivery through enabling accountability and performance management structured around the 5 key priorities.
- The paper gave an update in section 6 on how the chances of successful delivery would be increased through reviewing the performance framework to monitor the operational performance and transformation duty and progress towards the council's strategic ambitions
- The new strategy would inform development of 2 key supporting strategies set out in section 7 of the report. Significant work and analysis was underway on the Workforce Strategy and the draft strategy would be taken to Corporate Select Committee in May 2022.
- Section 8 of the report set out an update in progress towards the Communication Strategy which would create meaningful communication with stakeholders, members, staff and residents. The process would inform staff and members as it set a positive internal culture. This was scheduled for the first quarter of 2023 but would be taken to Corporate Select Committee in May 2022.
- Action delivery plans were living documents to show what was being done and how and to demonstrate outcomes.
- The Chairman moved the recommendations as set out in the report.

13.2 The Cabinet Member for Children's Services noted the key priority "better opportunities for children and young people" linked to Flourish (item 8) and requested amendments to the wording in the report: on page 349 of the report he noted use of the term "the Covid generation" which he believed was a negative term and a way of labelling children and asked for officers to consider whether this was a suitable term; on page 355 of the report under the activity "Implement the Norfolk Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Written Statement of Action Plan" the Cabinet Member for Children's Services asked that parents were included as people worked closely with. The Chairman suggested that, regarding the Cabinet Member for Children's Services' first point, this statement be removed and suggested a statement such as "we do not wish to see children adversely labelled" be included; Cllr Fisher felt that use of this phrase should be phased out by the end of the year. Regarding the second point, the Chairman **agreed** to addition of this point.

13.3 The Cabinet Member for Finance noted that the report showed that the administration had a sense of the necessary priorities and a delivery plan to get things done working together with partners; the Corporate Plan included working

with others which was important.

- 13.4 The Vice-Chairman noted that the key priority “a vibrant and sustainable economy” covered many headings, as shown in the report. He noted the inclusion of space technology as an area of development in Norfolk by exploring the market and attracting new businesses working with LEP.
- 13.5 The Cabinet Member for Innovation, Transformation and Performance spoke about the key priority “strong, engaged, and inclusive communities”; he noted that the pandemic lead local communities to rise to challenges and it was important that local authorities listened to local communities as this plan showed that Norfolk County Council were. Using technology would help get better results, through work with national Government to get improved infrastructure to help communities take part in enterprises and bring forward new businesses.
- 13.6 The Chairman agreed that it was important to bring others into this piece of work through partnership working.
- 13.7 Cabinet **RESOLVED** to
1. Approve the 2022/23 Corporate Delivery Plan.
 2. Provide feedback on the work being done to develop the Communication and Workforce strategies, and the proposed timescale for delivery.
- 13.8 **Evidence and Reasons for Decision**
- N/A
- 13.9 **Alternative Options**
- N/A
- 14. Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 and Investigatory Powers Act 2016**
- 14.1.1 Cabinet received the report detailing the use of RIPA and the IPA by the Council for 2021 and seeking approval of the current policies, which have been reviewed and slightly amended (RIPA policy only).
- 14.1.2 The Executive Director for Community and Environmental Services thanked colleagues from nplaw who worked closely on this report and noted that the powers outlined in the report were used sparingly.
- 14.1.3 The Cabinet Member for Communities and Partnerships introduced the report to Cabinet:
- Two corporate policies were outlined in the report which were only used by trading standards when needed, and had only been used four times in the past year
 - The policies were taken to committees regulatory for review and update; the policies had recently been reviewed and the RIPA had been slightly updated to include reference to the Covert Human Intelligence Sources (Criminal Conduct) Act 2021, incase use of this act was needed in future.
 - The Cabinet Member for Communities and Partnerships moved the recommendation in the report

**These minutes were amended by Cabinet at its meeting of 3 May 2022. Please view the minutes of that meeting to view the amendment made.*

- 14.2 The Cabinet Member for Innovation, Transformation and Performance noted how little these powers were used, and only when necessary.
- 14.3 The Cabinet Member for Environment and Waste noted the amount of paperwork required to undertake surveillance on someone, only being undertaken when required.

- 14.4 ***Cabinet RESOLVED**
1. To note the use of RIPA and the IPA by the Council for 2021, as set out in Appendix A of the report; and
 2. To approve the revised policy documentation provided at Appendix B and Appendix C of the report.

14.5 **Evidence and Reasons for Decision**

The two Acts, the associated Regulations and Codes of Practice set out expectations for local authorities in relation to the oversight of RIPA authorisations for directed surveillance and CHIS and for the acquisition of communications data under the IPA. The recommendations set out in this report meet the requirements of the legislation. There are no other reasonably viable options to the recommendations in the report.

14.6 **Alternative Options**

These corporate policies are considered to be the most effective way to ensure the Council fulfils its legal responsibilities, when using covert investigatory techniques to gather intelligence for the purposes of one of its regulatory functions.

15. Strategic and financial planning 2023-24

- 15.1.1 Cabinet received the report setting out the framework for how the Council will approach budget setting for 2023-24 and should be read in conjunction with the reports Better Together, for Norfolk – delivering our strategy and Norfolk County Council – Strategic Review earlier on the agenda. Taken together, these three reports represent key elements that will contribute to setting the strategy and direction for the Council over the next few years.
- 15.1.2 The Cabinet Member for Finance introduced the report to Cabinet:
- The 2023-24 financial year would be challenging as funding used to help fight the pandemic was no longer available.
 - The report was a starting point for the budget process, this time starting early.
 - The spring statement had a limited impact on the council's thinking but some measures such as the extension of the Hardship Support Fund were welcome.
 - Savings would come via a series of meetings with spending departments however now that it was assumed that the pandemic was in the "rear view mirror" these would be carried out through more subtle lenses than before.
 - The review was coming quickly; strategic and financial planning should be seen as set alongside the Strategic Review and the paper outlining the administration's next strategy of Better Together for Norfolk.
 - It was important to develop and maintain services across Norfolk while supporting vulnerable people in an affordable and efficient way.

- With normal services resumed, it was possible to return to the task set when Cabinet was reintroduced to redesign the way services are delivered. The Strategic Review would lead to major reshaping of some departments where too many layers of management had built up leading to greater empowerment and reduced bureaucracy.
- Operating room models could remain rigid in some areas and duplication in some departments was significant; technology could support with this and upgrade services were delivered.
- Table 9 of the report set out the proposed timeframe with 3 budget challenge sessions with spending departments from May to September 2022. The effect of this was shown in table 10 setting out savings sought by departments split into 2 phases. £15m was to be found early and would be consulted on in July 2022. Second a £45m target would be sought, broadly from transformation, with £20m from internal staff reorganisation and the balance from transformation programmes, in part flowing from this reorganisation.
- Unforeseeable significant cost pressures in 2022-23 from covid impacts remained and a lack of long-term financials settlement to deal with changing Government policies around the role and nature and responsibilities of local government.
- It was too early to discuss the levels of council tax as it was a year until it needed to be set.
- A County Deal was on the cards; demand that it came with some layers risked an additional attack on Norfolk's collective pocket.
- Known risks had been analysed as much as possible with the analysis shown in table 3 of the report and the effect of assumptions in table 4.
- Each budget proposal would be risk and impact assessed before coming to Cabinet so there would be clarity on the financial and emotional implications.
- At the end of the process the organisation would be match fit with proper use of tech to deal with people better, quicker and cheaper, maximising the value of each pound spent.
- The Cabinet Member for Finance moved the recommendations as set out the report

15.1.3 The Executive Director for Finance and Commercial Services pointed out that table 7 of the report set out council tax assumptions. Assuming a 1.99% increase in general council tax and a 1% increase in adult social care precept over the next 4 years. Should Government give discretion to increase council tax more than this the Executive Director of Finance and Commercial Services stated that it was his recommendation as section 151 officer that Council should take advantage of this.

15.2 The Chairman noted that this report linked the strategic review, Better Together for Norfolk and financial planning together; having dealt with similar challenges before he believed that the Council could do so again.

15.3 Cabinet **RESOLVED**

1. To consider the overall budget gap of £96.676m included in the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) set by Full Council in February 2022, and agree:
 - a) the gap of £59.927m to be closed for 2023-24; and
 - b) the extension of the MTFS by a further year (to 2026-27) and the resulting overall gap for planning purposes of £115.814m. (Section 4).
2. To review the key budget risks and uncertainties as set out in this report. (Section 4).

3. To consider the principles of the proposed approach to budget setting for 2023-24, noting that there may be a need for flexibility within both the process itself and the assumptions applied, and agree:
 - a) the process and indicative timetable set out in Section 5, including the proposed two stage consultation process for 2023-24 to support in the early securing of deliverable saving proposals.
 - b) the savings targets allocated to each Department to be found (Table 10), and that these will be kept under review through the budget process.

15.4 Evidence and Reasons for Decision

See section 7 of the Cabinet report.

15.5 Alternative Options

See section 8 of the Cabinet report.

16 Finance Monitoring Report 2021-22 P11: February 2022

16.1.1 Cabinet received the report giving a summary of the forecast financial position for the 2021-22 Revenue and Capital Budgets, General Balances, and the Council's Reserves at 31 March 2022, together with related financial information.

- 16.1.2 The Cabinet Member for Finance introduced the report to Cabinet:
- The focus of planning had moved onto 2023-24, the current Financial Monitoring Report laid the foundation for next year and it was important to ensure there were no unforeseen overspends in the final quarters of 2022-23. The Cabinet Member for Finance was pleased to report that as at the end of February a balanced budget was being forecast.
 - All departments were at or near budget due to the way emergency grant funding had been used over the past 2 years.
 - The Children's Services overspend was significant and the department continued to experience significant departmental measures as shown in paragraph 2.5 of the report. These overspends had been offset by savings in finance general but the Council was determined to ensure this department did not overspend in future. All other departments were in balance.
 - Table 3 of the report showed the forecast of departmental reserves and provision at £160.809m due in part to roll forward of the Covid reserve into the current financial year.
 - Provisions stood at £28.4m and were shown on page 468 of the report. Opportunities to reduce these provisions would be looked at in the coming months.
 - With the SEND green paper and school's white paper published by Government the Government also published the next iteration of its Safety Valve Programme through which Local Authorities with a negative dedicated schools grant reserve could seek to reduce or remove it. The overall quantum of the deficit and formula on which it is based need addressing.
 - The Cabinet Member for Finance moved the recommendations as set out in the report.

16.2 The Cabinet Member for Children's Services noted support from the Council to

offset the Children's Services overspend which was set out in paragraph 2.5 of the report. Some of these were linked to Covid 19 pressure. The department was now in a better position and able to anticipate pressures at an earlier stage. The Cabinet Member for Children's Services was pleased to be involved in the Safety Valve Programme.

16.3 The Chairman noted that the council was looking towards a balanced position at year end.

16.4 Cabinet **RESOLVED**

1. To recommend to County Council the addition of **£0.337m** 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 as follows:
 - £0.237m schools revenue contributions to the Schools Capital programmes partially offset by adjustments from DfE
 - £0.100 SiF Internal funding revenue contributions received for the Technology Improvement project
2. Subject to County Council approval of recommendation 1 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.

3. To recognise the period 11 general fund forecast revenue **of a balanced budget**, noting also that Executive Directors will continue to take measures to reduce or eliminate potential over-spends where these occur within services;
4. To note the COVID-19 funding available of **£100.452m**, including £28.353m brought forward from 2020-21;
5. To recognise the period 11 forecast of 90% savings delivery in 2021-22, 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 2022 of **£23.763m**.
7. To note the expenditure and funding of the revised current and future 2021-25 capital programmes.

16.5 Evidence and Reasons for Decision

Three appendices are attached to this 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
- Covid-19 grant income
- 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.

16.6 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.

17 Disposal, Acquisition & Exploitation of Property

- 17.1.1 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.
- 17.1.2 The Cabinet Member for Commercial Services and Asset Management

introduced the report to Cabinet:

- The Cabinet Member for Commercial Services and Asset Management outlined the 6 disposals and lettings set out in the recommendations and report.
- These would provide capital receipts to support the capital programme and service delivery.
- Properties on the County Farms Estate would have lifetime rights under the Agricultural Holdings Act 1896 removed from the land which would be re-let in accordance with Agricultural Tenancies Act 1995. allowing existing tenants to retire with dignity
- The Cabinet Member for Commercial Services and Asset Management moved the recommendations set out in the report.

17.2 Cabinet **RESOLVED**

1. To agree to the letting of the house at Council Farm, Church Road, Carleton Rode NR16 1RP (7023/100) to Tenant UJ on the terms agreed as detailed in Appendix A (exempt appendix to the report).
2. To formally declare the land at Priory Nursery Yard (Part), Great Yarmouth (6009/194) surplus to County Council requirements and instruct the Director of Property to dispose of the property to the adjoining owner.
3. To formally declare the land at Old Sunway, King's Lynn surplus to County Council requirements and instruct the Director of Property to dispose of the property to the adjoining owner. In the event of no agreement then the Director of Property is authorised to sell by auction or tender.
4. To agree to the letting of the bungalow and field at Nelson Place, South Walsham Road. North Burlingham Lingwood and Burlingham NR13 4EH (5014/100) to Tenant AI on the terms agreed as detailed in Appendix A (exempt appendix to the report).
5. To formally declare the Land at Wood Lane, Mautby (6013/104) surplus to County Council requirements and instruct the Director of Property to agree terms and dispose of the land to the adjoining owner. In the event of no agreement then the Director of Property is authorised to sell by auction or tender.
6. To agree to the letting of the house at Rodwell Farm, Mill Lane Whissonsett NR20 5SR (3111/100) to Tenant ID and Partner JD on the terms agreed as detailed in Appendix A (exempt appendix to the report).

17.3 **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.

17.4 **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.

18. **Reports of the Cabinet Member and Officer Delegated Decisions**

made since the last Cabinet meeting

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

19 Exclusion of the Public

- 19.1 Cabinet **RESOLVED NOT** to exclude the public from the meeting.

20 Disposal, Acquisition & Exploitation of Property: Exempt Annex

- 20.1 Cabinet did not discuss the exempt annex.

The meeting ended at 12:07

Chairman of Cabinet

Consultancy with Norfolk – Fostering Service Review paper for cabinet

Introduction and how the work was undertaken

CoramBAAF were approached by Norfolk Children's Services Fostering Service to carry out a one off consultancy exercise in relation to the Fostering Service review paper for cabinet. This involved reviewing the paper and then then meeting with Laura Gavrilu (Head of the Fostering Service) and Kate Dexter (Assistant Director Children's Social Care) on Friday 25 March 2022 to discuss their proposals.

Following on from this meeting the Director of Children's Services sought notes from the meeting prior to the Cabinet meeting on Monday 4th April. These notes are contained below.

Summary of feedback and discussion points from meeting on 25 March 2022

Initially we discussed the context in which the changes to fostering are being proposed now. This is primarily due to the sufficiency issue of foster carers and also the need to bring the fee structure more in-line with other local authorities. Currently the percentage of children and young people placed with in-house carers is 56%. This percentage will fluctuate.

These are ambitious proposals to implement, however, they are also essential and overdue. Fees to Norfolk foster carers have not been increased since 1993.

The current set of arrangements is that carers who have reached level five accreditation are paid considerably higher fees than their carer peers, who might be caring for a child with complex needs and behaviours. Unsurprisingly some level five accredited carers provided negative responses to the proposed changes. Their views were taken into account and amendments to the changes have been made accordingly, it is worth noting the perceived power afforded to these carers. However, careful deliberation was given to these amendments, the Fostering Service cannot afford to risk a number of experienced foster carers moving to a Fostering Agency, due to a drop in fees.

The Fostering Review paper has been undertaken in a collaborative way. This has involved consulting with foster carers. Reservations and concerns raised by foster carers have been acknowledged and referred to in the paper. This transparency is helpful.

The proposed change for carers to be paid the same level of fees for the first, second and third child they are caring for is good practice. This brings Norfolk carers in line with fee structures for carers across England. It is hoped this change will increase the capacity of carers taking on the care of a second or third child.

We discussed that if carers are paid according to the complexity of the child's needs this could be stigmatising for children. Kate and Laura gave assurances that the complexity of a child's needs is not recorded on a child's file in a way that would be visible to them should they request access to their records.

I questioned who carried out assessments of children and whether this was an additional task requiring an increase in resources. Kate and Laura explained this assessment is part of the "Valuing Care" tool which children's social workers use and has been in place for several years. This is therefore embedded in practice and so there is no increase in resource to complete assessments. The "Valuing Care" tool is a locally devised model to measure a child's needs.

Under the proposals, all children and young people will have six to eight week placement review meetings which is a joint piece of work with the child's social worker and the

supervising social worker. This is an area of promising practice for Norfolk and it will be helpful to measure whether these reviews reduce the need for placement stability or placement disruption meetings, over time.

There is a need to consider whether cost of living increases will lead to carers putting themselves forwards to care for children with more complex needs due to an increase in the fees they receive. Careful consideration and courageous conversations with carers will be required to explore motivations.

There are challenges when assessing whether a child has complex needs. Children whose behaviours might be outwardly and visibly challenging could be assessed as complex. However, children in care can also present as emotionally shut down, introverted or surviving via a heightened/ hyper vigilant state. Caring for these children and their specific needs can be as emotionally demanding as caring for children with frequent outbursts of distress and frustration.

Needs of children change frequently. We discussed how this would be addressed in terms of fluctuating fees to carers. Kate and Laura explained that once a child had been assessed as having complex behaviours and complex needs the carer would continue to receive the higher rate of fees until the child no-longer lived with them.

There is the potential for comparison conversations to take place amongst the Norfolk foster carers community. For example: if a sole carer is looking after a group of two or three siblings who are not assessed as having complex needs, they may be on similar fees to a two carer family caring for one child with assessed complex needs. This disparity in fees may build resentment or challenge from foster carers. The Fostering service will need to acknowledge these conversations will take place. There needs to be continued transparency regarding fee related decisions.

The question was asked if Norfolk fostering service were able to “fast forward” in time whether it was feasible that the new cohort of foster carers, who are caring for children assessed as having complex needs, will be deemed as having a higher status and therefore potentially be more powerful. The comparison was made as to the same way that current carers accredited to level five have evolved into this position? It is helpful to hold this potential hypothesis in mind so that it can be reviewed over the next 12 months.

We discussed the term, ‘harder to place’ child or young person and whether there were alternatives to this. Kate and Laura articulated that whilst the language might not be ideal, the emphasis of this term in practice is weighted towards the fostering service needing to identify the right family for the child. This is as opposed to a child needing to adjust to fit into a family setting.

The question was asked whether children characterised as having complex needs had to be age 11 plus, Kate and Laura explained this was a typo/ error that had been rectified and children under the age of 11 years could also be assessed as having complex needs.

The ambition of the transformation programme of the Fostering service is impressive and will likely have a positive impact on the care that is offered to children and young people. However, as the fee increases and additional support to carers are being introduced simultaneously it will be difficult to determine which of these changes contributes towards increased retention, recruitment and stability rates.

It was discussed whether money could be spent on support groups, therapeutic support to carers, retainers, respite arrangements and other mechanisms instead of fee increases? Kate and Laura explained that additional support was being rolled out to carers. There is an

understanding that to retain and recognise the value of their local authority carers, a two pronged approach is needed.

In terms of savings for children and young people it was asked whether consideration had been given to take savings at source for foster carers? Kate and Laura provided a robust and comprehensive explanation. Foster carers are being supported to make their own arrangements for savings, for the children and young people they are caring for. This is part of a wider cultural shift whereby carers are skilling up young people to develop their finance skill set, to promote independent living skills. This has been identified as a gap previously and this new expectation of carers is supporting this much needed change.

The fostering service have introduced excellent initiatives and rewards to their carers. This includes an activity voucher for a foster family after a child has lived with them for three months; a payment of £500 after one year; and, £500 for all subsequent years to celebrate and promote placement stability for children and young people.

Areas to reflect on going forwards:

Where is the voice of the child in the proposed changes? Is it necessary for children to know about fee changes?

Do carers feel more valued when they are paid higher fees? What else works to increase validation of foster carers role?

How will the fostering service review the impact of the fee structure changes?

Summary

As stated already, this piece of work is striving towards improving the retention and increasing the recruitment of in-house carers, for children and young people in care in Norfolk. A huge amount of dedicated and expert work has gone into these proposals.

My discussion with Kate and Laura was an open and authentic dialogue, they were able to consistently provide thoughtful and child-centred responses and sound rationale behind proposed changes. They were also able to identify the areas that are more challenging for the service to address.

Emma Fincham-Siley
Fostering Consultant, Policy, Research and Development Team
1st April 2022

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Cabinet
4 April 2022
Public & Local Member Questions

Agenda item 6	Public Question Time
6.1	<p>Question from Tina Johnson Many Councils throughout England have adopted the 50-point Climate Action Plan. A step-by-step plan that Councils and Local Authorities can use to guide how they tackle the climate and nature emergencies and coronavirus recovery. Why is Norfolk County Council not using this Climate Action Plan to underpin its Environmental Strategy?</p> <p>Response from the Cabinet Member for Environment and Waste We have been aware of the Friends of the Earth 50-point plan for some time. We feel we align already with much of what is listed, given previous efforts within the authority. Others we will align with where we can.</p> <p>The Net Zero and Natural Norfolk Progress Update Paper at this Cabinet meeting proposes the production of a Climate Action Plan. Officers will take account of the checklist in developing it.</p> <p>Supplementary question from Tina Johnson How is Norfolk County Council developing a clear and detailed strategic climate action plan, and how is it mainstreaming climate change mitigation and adaptation?</p> <p>Response from the Cabinet Member for Environment and Waste The Net Zero and Natural Norfolk Progress Update Paper at this Cabinet meeting outlines some of the work the County Council are doing on climate change mitigation, including building decarbonisation, business travel and reducing our emissions within our supply chains. Regarding climate change adaptation, this work covers a number of strands across a wide range of services. For example, as the Lead Flood authority, the County Council has a role to ensure that major risks, such as from flooding and extreme weather events are addressed. . The Climate Action Plan proposed in the Net Zero and Natural Norfolk Progress Update Paper, would bring together these climate change mitigation and adaptation efforts into one public facing document.</p>
6.2	<p>Question from Sarah Burston Has Norfolk County Council reviewed its investment strategy, supply chains and procurement models to give due consideration to climate change impacts?</p> <p>Response from the Cabinet Member for Environment and Waste Climate risk is a significant focus for governments and society.</p> <p>In respect of investment: The Norfolk Pension Fund (of which Norfolk County Council is the Administering Authority) treats this risk as a serious concern for the future sustainability of the Fund and the ability to maintain pension payments in the future.</p> <p>The Pensions Committee considers a detailed climate risk analysis of its public equity holdings every six months as part of its regular investment review and a summary is published on the Fund's website.</p>

	<p>The Fund's equity holdings have been consistently less carbon intensive than the equivalent benchmark investment over the last five years. The Fund believes that this is a consequence of the requirement it places on its investment managers to integrate Environmental, Social and Governance matters into their investment processes, together with the push to actively engage with the companies in which they invest.</p> <p>In its wider investment portfolio, the Pension Fund is an active investor in infrastructure assets, including substantial amounts of renewable power generation and the required supporting infrastructure alongside many social assets.</p> <p><u>In respect of procurement and supply chains</u></p> <p>The Council has for many years included environmental requirements in its specifications and, where appropriate, evaluation criteria.</p> <p>To inform its next steps, the council has commissioned the Carbon Trust to produce a carbon footprint. This will help to focus procurement activity on the most carbon-intensive sectors and contracts</p> <p>Supplementary question from Sarah Burston How does Norfolk County Council integrate sustainability and resilience into its transport and energy plans?</p> <p>Response from the Cabinet Member for Environment and Waste For some years, the road maintenance approach encapsulated within the Transport Asset Management Plan, has sought to address the likely impacts of climate change, so that the road network is suitably resilient. The Local Transport Plan seeks to adopt an approach that assists the transition to more sustainable modes of transport. Aligned to this is work in support of the County Electric Vehicle Strategy, which is working with partners to plug any gaps in infrastructure as we meet the government's target date for the banning of Internal Combustion Engine (ICE) vehicles. As far as the wider energy agenda is concerned, NCC is working with District colleagues and the New Anglia LEP through the Norfolk Climate Change Partnership to explore the opportunity to develop a Local Area Energy Plan (LAEP). This would provide a clear actionable pathway of what the transition to achieve net zero carbon emissions is likely to require in terms of infrastructure and investment in a particular locality over time. A successful LAEP facilitates a coordinated transition to the area becoming net zero, provides an evidence-based pathway, ensures stakeholders are working collectively to a common goal and incorporates energy and climate change mitigation measures.</p> <p>NCC is also a statutory consultee on Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects (NSIPs) where we support projects that make a significant contribution to renewable energy targets and objectives relating to clean growth. We also highlighted in our response to the Government's Planning for New Energy Infrastructure Draft National Policy Statements for energy infrastructure consultation the need for new infrastructure to demonstrate its long-term resilience and supported the proposed requirement for projects to be assessed on their ability to be "future proofed" both in terms of being able to provide for new technological advancements and resilience to climate change and environmental risks.</p>
6.3	<p>Question from Peter Offord Is Norfolk County Council treating the climate crisis as an emergency? Or is it prioritising its immediate business?</p>

	<p>Response from the Cabinet Member for Environment and Waste</p> <p>The County Council, as outlined in its 2019 updated Environmental Policy, has a commitment to reach net zero on our estates by 2030 as well as working with partners to achieve carbon neutrality more widely.. An update on progress towards these targets is in the Net Zero and Natural Norfolk Progress Update Paper presented at this Cabinet meeting. This highlights the practical steps that Norfolk County Council is making to reach net-zero emissions on our estates by 2030.</p>
6.4	<p>Question from Paula Evans</p> <p>How is Norfolk County Council influencing District Councils within Norfolk to ensure that all new housing development is zero carbon by 2025 at the very latest?</p> <p>Response from the Cabinet Member for Environment and Waste</p> <p>The County Council is a statutory planning consultee and works closely with district councils who determine new housing developments to ensure planned growth appropriately addresses its impacts. In terms of the infrastructure to support new housing developments, as the transport authority we are particularly keen to promote opportunities to support more active lifestyles, public transport enhancements, together with requirements to provide more charging infrastructure for Electric Vehicles (EVs). To aid this NCC is currently reviewing its guidance which will place a greater emphasis on these measures to help reduce the reliance of the private car in new developments. The County Council also responds to Local Plan consultations promoting policies that encourage sustainable development. NCC also supports the Norfolk Strategic Planning Framework (NSPF) providing guidance on housing, economic growth, infrastructure, and the environment. The NSPF sets out the collective agreements made by Norfolk Planning Authorities to ensure the most appropriate actions are being undertaken to support climate change initiatives and is exploring the production of a county-wide climate change best practice guide/design guide.</p> <p>Supplementary question from Paula Evans</p> <p>Does Norfolk County Council agree that all new housing must be built to extremely high energy efficiency standards, using the Passivhaus standard or similar?</p> <p>Response from the Cabinet Member for Environment and Waste</p> <p>The requirement for building standards is a district council function and while we do not have any powers to ensure that this standard is achieved, the County Council is fully supportive of measures to improve energy efficiency, which can also benefit in reducing household bills.</p> <p>The Future Homes Standard published in 2021 sets out the changes to building regulations to reduce Carbon emissions by 75-80%, by 2035 – accompanied by interim measures. This sets out a number of measures, many of which are already being seen across the County in a number of new developments.</p> <p>This strategy provides a measured pathway to providing more environmentally friendly homes, whilst also recognising wider issues around supply chain and the housing market.</p> <p>The report also notes the need to decarbonise the overwhelming majority of housing stock, much of which performs poorly (for example when measured on an EPC). New homes are one small element of addressing carbon emissions in housing stock in Norfolk.</p>

6.5	<p>Question from Elizabeth Traverse What measures are Norfolk County Council taking to ensure that health and social care systems, in particular mental health systems, will be resilient with the extra pressures they will come under due to climate change?</p> <p>Response from the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, Public Health and Prevention Thank you for your question. The Council undertakes a large range of support measures to ensure that the Social Care and Health systems in Norfolk are resilient to pressures and have an escalation route for when they arise. We do this through our Strategy, Promoting Independence – Living Well, Changing Lives, our Commissioning strategies, and Market Position Statements, and through monitoring financial and operational pressures in the Risk Registers.</p> <p>Supplementary question from Elizabeth Traverse How does Norfolk County Council identify those who are most at risk from the impacts of climate change and what is being done to assist the most vulnerable?</p> <p>Response from the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, Public Health and Prevention Thank you for your question. The Council uses its statutory powers within the Care Act to identify individuals at risk and respond to their social care needs, irrespective of the cause.</p>
6.6	<p>Question from Verna Salter In the context of climate action and biodiversity, how will Norfolk County Council involve citizens in the existing decision-making processes and ensure that the voices of all citizens and communities are represented and heard?</p> <p>Response from the Cabinet Member for Environment and Waste In the context of climate action and biodiversity, decision making processes will continue to be conducted through the appropriate Norfolk County Council Committees. Elected Members sitting on those committees are elected by, represent and speak on behalf of the citizens of Norfolk.</p>
6.7	<p>Question from Linda Tansley Taking into consideration Norfolk County Council's Environmental Strategy, what additional decision-making approaches for complex or contentious choices, such as representative citizen assemblies or citizens' juries, participatory mapping, and budgeting, etc, have been introduced?</p> <p>Response from the Cabinet Member for Environment and Waste Outside of Norfolk County Council's own committee meetings and decision making processes no additional decision-making approaches have been introduced. Beyond its own committee structure Norfolk County Council also works closely through a number of networks including the Norfolk Climate Change Partnership.</p> <p>Elected Members sitting on those committees are elected by, represent and speak on behalf of the citizens of Norfolk.</p>
6.8	<p>Question from Cliff Goodman Does Norfolk County Council understand its responsibility to urgently take climate</p>

	<p>action locally, as identified in the most recent international Panel on Climate Change report?</p> <p>Response from the Cabinet Member for Environment and Waste Norfolk County Council recognises its responsibilities and is working with urgency towards meeting its Environmental Policy commitments. This includes developing a Climate Action Plan for Norfolk and working with relevant partners to meet our commitments, including as a key member of the Norfolk Climate Change Partnership.</p>
6.9	<p>Question from Jenny Walker What measurable targets has Norfolk County Council set to rapidly grow the green economy and achieve climate and nature goals?</p> <p>Response from the Cabinet Member for Environment and Waste The Offshore Wind Operations & Maintenance Campus at Great Yarmouth is a flagship project to support renewable energy jobs in the county. This centre, which is set to finish construction this Spring, is set to provide 650 jobs and seeks to take advantage of the £59.4bn due to be invested in offshore energy and engineering by 2040.</p> <p>More broadly, we are developing a proposal for a Green Skills Market Analysis, to provide a strong evidence base and rationale for future interventions in the Green economy. The analysis should provide a clear roadmap for green jobs/skills, aligning with key associated plans and projects: Norfolk & Suffolk Economic Strategy and Decarbonisation Academy and the Government's Green Industrial Revolution 10 Point Plan, and Plan for Growth.</p> <p>Norfolk County Council is preparing to produce a Local Nature Recovery Strategy for Norfolk. This will set nature recovery targets measured against the current baseline identified in the Norfolk and Suffolk Natural Capital Evidence Compendium.</p>
6.10	<p>Question from Charles Martin How is Norfolk County Council supporting and working with all relevant private and civic actors in the area towards climate change mitigation and adaptation?</p> <p>Response from the Cabinet Member for Environment and Waste Norfolk County Council recognises that it has an influencing role to play, to support mitigation and adaption measures to the effects of climate change. Norfolk County Council works as part of the Norfolk Climate Change Partnership which addresses some the wider challenges facing the county. Within this partnership approach, we are exploring collaborative solutions to mitigate and adapt to the effects of climate change within the county.</p>
6.11	<p>Question from Patrick O'Brien How is Norfolk County Council planning to understand and act on the need to adapt existing properties and estates to address the impacts of climate change – and to plan for new housing stock which is resilient to these impacts?</p> <p>Response from the Cabinet Member for Environment and Waste Norfolk County Council is already working to adapt its existing properties and wider estate to meet the challenge of climate change. Norfolk County Council also works with other Local Authorities in Norfolk to ensure that, through the Planning System,</p>

	<p>new developments are resilient to the impacts of climate change. The Net Zero and Natural Norfolk Progress Update Paper at this Cabinet meeting outlines some of the work being done by the County Council to decarbonise existing building stock and retrofit if necessary to reduce carbon emissions.</p> <p>The requirement for building standards is a district council function and while we do not have any powers to ensure that this standard is achieved the County Council is fully supportive of measures to improve energy efficiency, which can also benefit in reducing household bills.</p> <p>The Future Homes Standard published in 2021 sets out the changes to building regulations to reduce Carbon emissions by 75-80%, by 2035 – accompanied by interim measures. This sets out a number of measures, many of which are already being seen across the County in a number of new developments.</p> <p>This strategy provides a measured pathway to providing more environmentally friendly homes, whilst also recognising wider issues around supply chain and the housing market.</p> <p>The report also notes the need to decarbonise the overwhelming majority of housing stock, much of which performs poorly (for example when measured on an EPC). New homes are one small element of addressing carbon emissions in housing stock in Norfolk.</p>
6.12	<p>Question from Emma Gooch Please could you let me know what customer service standards Councillors abide by, are they the same as NCC staff?</p> <p>Response from the Cabinet Member for Innovation, Transformation and Performance Officers and councillors strive to provide the standards set out in the council's customer service charter</p> <p>Supplementary question from Emma Gooch I contacted Mr John Ward and Mr John Fisher 14th June 2021, 6th December 2021, and 6th December 2021. I have still not a reply to the queries that I have raised. Is this normal practise not to reply to constituents, and what does a member of the public need to do in order to get a reply? Many thanks</p> <p>Response from the Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member Strategy and Governance Thank you for your question. It is highly unusual that either Cllr Fisher or Cllr Ward would not respond to a constituent so after checking with them they have confirmed that this matter has been responded to and actioned.</p>
6.13	<p>Question from James Harvey How does Norfolk County Council intend to raise funds, such as via Community Municipal Investments (CMI's), for low-carbon infrastructure and for measures that speed up carbon emissions reductions, such as energy efficiency and converting roads or car parks to public green space?</p> <p>Response from the Cabinet Member for Environment and Waste Norfolk County Council will proactively pursue all appropriate funding opportunities</p>

	available to help deliver its net zero and nature recovery agenda.
6.14	<p>Question from Willem Buttinger The Government in its report 'UK Climate Change Risk Assessment 2022' states "the evidence shows that we must be prepared for global warming of up to 4°C". It is predicted that sea levels will rise by up to 2 metres by 2100. What action is Norfolk County Council taking to prepare as advised by the Government?</p> <p>Response from the Cabinet Member for Environment and Waste Norfolk County Council continues to work closely and productively with Government and local stakeholders to play its part in helping to respond to the UK Climate Change Risk Assessment. We will demonstrate this through the development of our Climate Action Plan later on this agenda.</p>
6.15	<p>Question from Jason Greves In what ways does Norfolk County Council's leadership champion and direct action on climate change?</p> <p>Response from the Cabinet Member for Environment and Waste Norfolk County Council, outside of addressing its own climate change impacts, works as part of the Norfolk Climate Change Partnership which addresses some the wider challenges facing the county. Within this partnership approach we seek to lead and champion to leverage maximum impact. Norfolk County Council committee meetings, which include a Member Oversight Group, is a forum for cross party members to consider actions being taken on climate change and other related environmental issues. Much of this will be demonstrated in the production of our Climate Action Plan later on this agenda.</p>
6.16	<p>Question from Nicola Maunders What action is Norfolk County Council taking to promote climate education, diversifying the labour market to the green economy, and focusing on sectors that are sustainable?</p> <p>Response from the Cabinet Member for Environment and Waste Norfolk County Council recognises the need to develop long-term skills and employment opportunities which support green, clean growth – see the Green Skills Market Analysis mentioned under 6.9. The current focus is on engaging with employers and the education sector to identify ways to best support sustainable businesses, thereby providing new employment opportunities and career paths. Norfolk County Council have supported numerous green economy initiatives, for example through the EXPERIENCE project by focusing on sustainable, off-season tourism.</p>

Cabinet
4 April 2022
Local Member Questions

Agenda item 7	Local Member Issues/Questions
7.1	<p>Question from Cllr Steff Aquarone Can you tell us how much it has cost to maintain Holt Hall during the last year to include the costs of the security for the hall and how many incidents there have been of people breaching the security of the hall?</p> <p>Response from the Cabinet Member for Commercial Services and Asset Management Holt Hall is a listed building with extensive grounds – it is important to NCC to ensure that these were protected during the disposal process. A number of active and passive security measures are in place, alongside a maintenance regime to protect the building.</p> <p>Through Norse £3,980 has been spent on security with no reported incidents and a figure of £3,261 on maintenance. Additionally there are staff costs that total £47,267. This is for the regular maintenance, safety and security checks during the week and grounds maintenance.</p>
7.2	<p>Question from Cllr Brian Watkins How much of the council's allocation of the Government's Household support funding did it spend last year and what analysis was done to ensure that the funding was reaching the people who needed it the most?</p> <p>Response from the Cabinet Member for Finance Thank you for your question. We have received significant funding from central government in the last two years which has enabled us to support Norfolk residents and families through Covid and the immediate after effects. Most recently this comprised of a £6.697m Household Support Fund, which we have worked on proactively with partner organisations to make sure it was targeted at those who need it most. The scheme closes to applications at the end of March 2022, and a final report will be issued to the Department for Work and Pensions on 22 April 2022. At the recent Spring Statement it was confirmed that the Household Support Fund would be continued into 2022-23; details of this, including the individual local authority allocations, are awaited.</p> <p>As at the 22 March 2022, we have supported 52,385 households over a six month period (42,000 with children 10,385 without children). Our provision of Eden Red vouchers to children on Free School Meals (FSM) (£25 per week, with a bonus payment at Christmas) has helped 29,000 children outside of term time.</p> <p>Support was provided to families and individuals either directly through School Holiday Free School Meal support and through applications to the Norfolk Assistance Scheme as well as support through partner organisations including District Councils and a range of Voluntary Sector Organisations. Assessments were undertaken to ensure those in receipt of financial support were in financial need.</p>

7.3	<p>Question from Cllr Rob Colwell Can you provide an update on the situation with the Ukrainian refugees in Norfolk including what active role the Council will be taking?</p> <p>Response from the Leader and Cabinet Member for Governance and Strategy We are ready to welcome refugees in Norfolk. At the county council we have been working closely with our partners to get ready for our newest residents.</p> <p>We are expecting to welcome at least 450 people in Norfolk under the Homes for Ukraine scheme</p> <p>We are organising a number of welcome events in our libraries that will help new arrivals get access to the services and help they need. That might mean registering with a GP surgery, signing up to their local school, getting English language course from Adult Learning or helping them get access to benefits. In the longer term there will be a range of activities to support wellbeing and community integration.</p> <p>Where there are more vulnerable arrivals with additional needs such as care or disabilities, our people from abroad team will work closely with children's services and adult social care to provide specialist support.</p> <p>Children arriving in Norfolk will be taught in schools local to where they live. Headteachers, teachers and the school community will help them to settle in and support their learning, based on their individual needs.</p> <p>Norfolk's schools are experienced in supporting children from a range of different backgrounds and cultures and they will continue to do all they can to help refugees in the Norfolk.</p> <p>We have a dedicated page set up on our website for information on how residents can help support Ukrainian refugees arriving in Norfolk. I would encourage Members to direct people to this for guidance https://www.norfolk.gov.uk/safety/migrants-refugees-and-asylum-seekers/ukraine</p> <p>Second question from Cllr Rob Colwell Are Norfolk County Council concerned that their recommendations outlined in a letter dated 26 October 2021 to King's Lynn & West Norfolk Borough Council for £921,908 funding for 62 school places have been ignored in connection to a newly approved housing development application know as Parkway, Gaywood?</p> <p>Response from the Cabinet Member for Children's Services We have been working closely with our colleagues at KLWNBC regarding this planning application and understand there have been challenges to secure this scheme. It is the role of the relevant planning authority to secure commitments for the required public infrastructure. We had amended our request for secondary place funding only (£454k) as updated data revealed that primary children can be accommodated in existing schools. Unfortunately, KLWNBC has not secured this contribution as part of the process and this will result in further pressure on NCC resources.. We continue to work with local schools to secure sufficient school places.</p>
7.4	<p>Question from Cllr Lucy Shires Douglas is in his 70s, has a visual impairment and diabetes, where he is required to wear an insulin pump and blood sugar monitor. Until December, the council paid a contribution</p>

	<p>to his Internet provider to enable the medical professionals, that treat Douglas, access his blood sugar and insulin levels online. What has changed since to mean that somebody suffering from a chronic illness is no longer receiving support from the council, is this a response to budget cutting?</p> <p>Response from the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, Public Health and Prevention</p> <p>Thank you for your question.</p> <p>Nothing has changed. I can confirm that there have been no specific policy changes that would affect funding or individual support in this situation. We would of course be happy to pick up an individual enquiry through the proper channels where the specific facts of an individual's personal situation could be looked at.</p> <p>Supplementary question from Cllr Lucy Shires</p> <p>Roy is in his early 90s, he lives in the caravan without a working boiler which means he has no access to heating or hot water. Roy has been waiting months for a social care assessment in order for him to move into suitable accommodation with access to the support he needs. How much longer must Roy wait without access to basic things like heating and hot water before this council will support him?</p> <p>Response from the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, Public Health and Prevention</p> <p>Thank you for your question, I'm sorry to hear about Roy's situation. Housing and homelessness in your division is the responsibility of North Norfolk District Council so this question may be better made to their Cabinet Member with responsibility in this area, Cllr. Wendy Fredericks. Social Care will of course always respond in partnership with the relevant housing authority to ensure that care needs are met alongside housing needs.</p>
7.5	<p>Question from Cllr Mike Smith-Clare</p> <p>With the sale of Holt Hall to a private buyer, can the Cabinet Member for Children's Services explain how the profits raised will be used to provide essential extended outdoor learning opportunities to Norfolk's children and young people?</p> <p>Response from the Cabinet Member for Children's Services</p> <p>The sufficiency of good outdoor learning provision in Norfolk and our approach to move away from direct delivery was confirmed prior to the decision to sell Holt Hall. As per NCC policy any proceeds from sales are invested in our capital programme, which secures a wide range of public benefits including new SEND schools for Norfolk Children.</p>
7.6	<p>Question from Cllr Terry Jermy</p> <p>Can the Cabinet Member for Commercial Services and Asset Management confirm what restricted covenants have been placed on the Holt Hall site to stop future developments, or whether uplifts have been agreed so Norfolk County Council benefits financially in future if any of the land is redeveloped?</p> <p>Response from the Cabinet Member for Commercial Services and Asset Management</p> <p>The details of the sale are commercially confidential, until completion. It is therefore inappropriate for me to respond to this question in public – I am however happy to brief Cllr Jermy directly.</p> <p>We would however note that the site has been extensively and publicly marketed, with a substantial receipt for Norfolk Tax payers from a highly competitive bidding process</p>

	<p>In terms of future development we would note that there are several planning protections for Holt Hall, including that it is a rural location, it is not allocated, the listed nature of the building, and that much of the land is covered in mature woodland.</p>
7.7	<p>Question from Julie Brociek-Coulton Can the Cabinet Member for Children's Services confirm how many vouchers were issued to children in receipt of free school meals over the Christmas 2021 school holidays and how many places are available on the Big Norfolk Holiday Fun Scheme this Easter?</p> <p>Response from the Cabinet Member for Children's Services We are pleased to confirm that Norfolk issued 28969 vouchers to families with children eligible for free school meals during the Christmas break. These were issued via schools, colleges, early years providers, independent special schools and directly to eligible families educating their children at home. Norfolk has either used or exceeded its full allocation during the previous three school holidays. For Easter this year we are working with approximately 70 providers to provide just over 21,000 activity days for around 4000 children and young people.</p>
7.8	<p>Question from Cllr Brenda Jones At the Council meeting last week, we were told there is no need to have a Mental Health Member Champion as mental health is a "golden thread" running through everything. Can Cabinet Members give an example of how they have considered mental health as part of any of the decisions they have made in the last nine months?</p> <p>Response from the Cabinet Member for The Leader and Cabinet Member for Strategy and Governance Mental Health plays a vital role in all of Norfolk County Council's operations and is a high priority, reflected in the increasing of Member Champion roles to 12. All relevant portfolio holders are working closely with all Member Champions to drive this work forward. In November Cabinet endorsed the Norfolk Safeguarding Children Partnership Annual Report, which provided analysis and reflection on Safeguarding Practices, with both Adult and Children and Young Peoples mental health being a critical part. Additionally, in October, in order to build resilient, safe and supportive communities in Norfolk, the Safer Norfolk Plan 2021-24 was discussed by Cabinet, which fully appreciated that understanding childhood traumatic events are a crucial factor in order to build such communities. In September, when discussing Norfolk in an Integrated Care System (ICS) Cabinet understood that NCC adapt and embrace an ICS, there are significant benefits that could derive from it, that will ultimately contribute to delivering our strategic aims and improving our resident's lives; in particular those increasing mental health services in order to respond to mental health challenges of Children and Young People's mental health and emotional wellbeing.</p> <p>As mental health is the golden thread, we haven't just limited our consideration of it to just Adults and Children's Services. In September, when discussing the Local Transport Plan 4 Strategy 2021-2036, we understood that we need to plan on the basis that we will encourage people to stick with their new habits of walking and cycling, which bring benefits including better physical and mental health for people participating. Our ambitious climate plan and clean transport options delivered improves air quality and thus physical and mental health through active travel. Finally, by adopting policies to improve quality of place and conserving and enhancing our built and historic environments we recognise these enhanced positive physical and mental health outcomes.</p>

	<p>So, as you can see, we take the mental health extremely seriously throughout the wide range of our services in order to build a better future for Norfolk.</p>
7.9	<p>Question from Cllr Emma Corlett With a move to the gig economy and more people not having a fixed workplace, can either the Cabinet Member for Commercial Services and Asset Management or the Cabinet Member for Highways, Infrastructure and Transport confirm whether the Council will consider providing 24-hour toilet and shower facilities at our park and ride sites for workers and hauliers to access, so everyone can have dignity at work regardless of whether they have a workplace?</p> <p>Response from the Cabinet Member for Highways, Infrastructure and Transport Whilst we understand the issues, we have no intention of providing 24-hour toilet and shower facilities at our park and ride sites. The sites are closed overnight and this would incur additional costs in utilities, cleaning, maintenance and security that any potential income would be unlikely to cover. However, if there was a commercial interest in doing so from a third party then we would be happy to reconsider.</p>
7.10	<p>Question from Cllr Maxine Webb The SEND Review Green Paper identifies “a vicious cycle of late intervention, low confidence and inefficient resource challenges” as “the driver of challenges facing the SEND system”. The Minister has said that the system needs to be “less adversarial for families” built on “a spirit of co-production”. Does the Cabinet Member for Children’s Services agree with this summary and what new steps has the Council already taken to address these issues since the paper was published last week?</p> <p>Response from the Cabinet Member for Children’s Services The long awaited outcome of the national SEND review sets out a range of proposals and we will be providing a response in advance of the consultation deadline of 1st July. Our response will be informed by our close working across the SEND ‘system’ in Norfolk which, whilst led by the council through Children’s Services, will include our work with the Parent Carer Forum (Family Voice Norfolk) and other parent/carers groups along with colleagues in the CCG, Adult Social Services and professionals within our education and health providers.</p> <p>As is well known, we have been challenged by Ofsted/CQC to improve our communication and co-production with parents/carers following the area SEND inspection in 2020 and our subsequent response through the Written Statement of Action. We have made significant progress since then with, for example, the refreshed SEND Local Offer website, new SEND bulletin newsletter and a collective understanding of definitions of co-production, engagement and consultation. In addition, within our Area SEND Strategy, we have recently co-produced a SEND survey which will inform (on an annual basis) our SEND strategy refresh; we are pleased to confirm that we have had over 1200 responses to this survey and within these responses over 700 were from parents/carers.</p> <p>We are continuing to digest the detail of the national SEND review and we will certainly be working with all our partners, including parent/carers, during the coming weeks to ensure that we can seize the opportunities within it for Norfolk and to ensure that the implementation of the finalised national reform changes complement our ongoing SEND strategic improvement programme. The ambition of the national SEND review is summarised as Right Support, Right Place, Right Time, and this certainly matches</p>

	Norfolk's SEND improvements which has already been informed significantly by listening to children, young people and their families as evidenced with our £120 million capital investment and the new staff within ECHP teams.
7.11	<p>Question from Cllr Chrissie Rumsby</p> <p>In the past week we have learned no provision has been made for additional costs in the construction of, or against the bill for the failure of the NWL, millions of pounds have been spent without authority on schemes under Transport for Norwich and the Parking Partnership didn't have the power to increase parking charges.</p> <p>So far Cllr Wilby has shown no concerns at this cavalier disregard for good governance or the way public money is being raised, managed and spent.</p> <p>Will he reassure the public by asking the Council's external auditors to review the decisions taken without authority and the corporate risk register as a matter of urgency?</p> <p>Response from the Cabinet Member for Highways, Infrastructure and Transport</p> <p>The March 2022 NWL Cabinet report set out that work is ongoing in relation to the project budget and that this is planned to be reported to Cabinet in June 2022. This reporting forms part of the project governance and is part of the important decision making process as the project is delivered. The March Cabinet report also sets out the current expenditure to date on the project. The March NWL report, along with the Capital Programme and Risk Management reports (where they referred to the NWL), were the subject of Scrutiny Committee on 23 March and none of the reports were referred back to Cabinet. It was confirmed that at this stage the Council has the ability to deal with the implications of the project failing to be delivered. However, the position of the Council is also clear; that there is a strong case for the project and it is expected that the necessary funding and approvals will be forthcoming. It is not unusual for the Council to accept the risk of capital investment in such projects and it has held those risk for other major infrastructure that it has delivered, such as for the Broadland Northway and the Great Yarmouth Third River Crossing.</p> <p>I don't agree with the statement that millions of pounds have been spent without authority under Transport for Norwich. We have approved through Cabinet the spending and programme of projects that for part of the Transforming Cities Fund, and Cabinet also approves the Capital Programme (that includes Active Travel and a range of other projects). The Transport for Norwich Joint Committee was set up to provide enable wider input to the delivery of individual projects by elected representatives from Norwich City, South Norfolk and Broadland Council's. All reports, with the exception of the recent Ipswich Road project, have received either unanimous or majority support from the sitting joint committee members. The Ipswich Road report was the first that has seen a split decision and as the chair of the meeting, and as Cabinet Member, I used my casting vote. This was then submitted under the Council's delegated decisions reporting process, and has also since been considered by Scrutiny Committee on 23 March (and again was not referred back and the decision is now confirmed). The terms of reference of the Transport for Norwich Joint Committee were discussed when it met on 24 March and the details are being updated so that the remit of the Committee is clear.</p> <p>With regard to the Norfolk Parking Partnership Joint Committee decision, a report went to the Committee regarding numerous matters, and these were joined up as one report, however a separate decision notice was needed for the specific item regarding charges and this is currently being dealt with.</p> <p>I do not consider therefore that there is a need for any specific requests for external auditors to be appointed.</p>

7.12	<p>Question from Cllr Alexandra Kemp</p> <p>In order to show a good example of how local democracy is working in Norfolk, with the proper checks and balances, can County undertake a review about increasing and lengthening full Council Meetings, so opposition Motions are debated at the start of meetings again, and making the public feel more welcome attending debates at County Hall in support of important local issues?</p> <p>Response from the Leader and Cabinet Member for Governance and Strategy</p> <p>Thank you for your question. The Council Constitution provides guidance around the length of meetings, which allows for a three hour period before Members are requested to take a vote to extend. It is my opinion that this is correct and that Council meetings should focus on Council business and not be prolonged, which results in members needing to leave or becoming uncomfortable. This process is known by all Groups and should be considered when submitting large volumes of motions and what are considered priorities for them.</p> <p>We continuously review the constitution will monitor this but I feel that the current arrangements are fit for purpose</p>

**Written Supplementary Questions requiring written responses from the Cabinet Meeting held on
Monday 4 April 2022**

	<p>Agenda item 7 Local Member questions</p>
	<p>Supplementary question from Cllr Maxine Webb</p> <p>The paper also says “Sometimes those who know what is happening best are those who are most affected, such as children and young people, their families and professionals” To increase families’ confidence that opportunities offered by the Review are being seized, will you agree the formation of a new group, consisting of parent/carers and voices of children and young people, to join existing coproduction work and make public the minutes of all future coproduction meetings?</p> <p>Response from the Cabinet Member for Children’s Services</p> <p>We currently have a SEND partnership group, the Norfolk Area SEND Multi-Agency Steering Group (NASMA) which is longstanding and has recently been ‘joined’ by the development of the SEND Youth Forum and governance changes to ensure that it is a recognised sub-group of the Children & Young Peoples Strategic Alliance. NASMA has full representation of the SEND ‘system’ in Norfolk, including parent carer forum, and is co-chaired by Children’s Services, Clinical Commissioning Group and Family Voice Norfolk.</p> <p>NASMA is complemented by a large number of SEND strategic improvement project/strategy groups, all of which operate on the basis of co-production and have direct involvement of parent / carer groups to ensure that co-production is an ongoing ‘process’ and not an ‘event’. The outcome of all of our partnership working for SEND is summarised in the regular SEND Bulletin; again with this core communication being informed by parents/carers and professionals guiding us to ensure that we provide ‘bitesize’ and ‘plain english’ information rather than formal meeting minutes etc.</p>