

Cabinet

Date: **Monday 7 September 2020**
Time: **10am**
Venue: **Teams Meeting**

Pursuant to The Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority Police and Crime Panel Meetings) (England and Wales) Regulations 2020, the 7 September 2020 Cabinet meeting of Norfolk County Council will be held using Microsoft Teams.

[Please use this link to view the live meeting online.](#)

Members of the Committee and other attendees will be sent a separate link to join the meeting.

Membership:

Cllr Andrew Proctor	Chairman. Leader and Cabinet Member for Strategy & Governance.
Cllr Graham Plant	Vice-Chairman. Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Growing the Economy.
Cllr Bill Borrett	Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, Public Health & 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 & 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

A g e n d a

1 To receive any apologies.

2 Minutes

Page 5

To confirm the minutes from the Cabinet Meeting held on Monday 3 August 2020.

3 Members to Declare any Interests

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

5 To receive any items of business which the Chairman decides should be considered as a matter of urgency

6 Public Question Time

Fifteen minutes for questions from members of the public of which due notice has been given. Please note that all questions must be received by the Committee Team (committees@norfolk.gov.uk) by 5pm on Wednesday 2 September 2020. For guidance on submitting a public question, view the Constitution at <https://www.norfolk.gov.uk/what-we-do-and-how-we-work/councillors-meetings-decisions-and-elections/committees-agendas-and-recent-decisions/ask-a-question-to-a-committee>.

Any public questions received by the deadline and the responses will be published on the website at approximately 9.45am on the day of the meeting and can be viewed by [clicking on this link](#).

7 Local Member Issues/Questions

Fifteen minutes for local member to raise issues of concern of which due notice has been given. Please note that all questions must be received by the Committee Team (committees@norfolk.gov.uk) by **5pm on Wednesday 2 September 2020**.

- | | | |
|-----------|---|-----------------|
| 8 | Norfolk Fire & Rescue Service Training Facilities.
Report by the Executive Director of Community & Environmental Services. | Page 41 |
| 9 | Norfolk Fire and Rescue Service – HMICFRS Improvement Plan update.
Report by the Executive Director of Community & Environmental Services. | Page 51 |
| 10 | Finance Monitoring Report 2020-21 P4: July 2020.
Report by the Executive Director of Finance & Commercial Services | Page 80 |
| 11 | Strategic and Financial Planning 2021-22.
Report by the Executive Director of Finance & Commercial Services and the Executive Director of Strategy & Governance. | Page 120 |
| 12 | Wymondham Market Town Transport Network Improvement Strategy
Report by the Executive Director of Community & Environmental Services. | Page 146 |
| 13 | Devolution and Local Government Reform
Report by the Executive Director of Strategy & Governance. | Page 158 |
| 14 | County Council Highway Authority - Planning Consultation response to South Norfolk Planning Application 2018/2631
Report by the Executive Director of Community & Environmental Services. | Page 165 |
| 15 | Reports of the Cabinet Member Delegated Decisions made since the last Cabinet meeting:
To note the delegated decisions made since the last Cabinet meeting. | |

Decisions by the Cabinet Member for Highways, Infrastructure & Transport

- [Attleborough, Queens Square – Parking Amendments](#)
- [DfT Bid Submission – Emergency Active Travel Fund – Tranche 2](#)
- [Application to run e-scooter trials in Norfolk.](#)
- [Covid-19 Bus Services Support Grant.](#)

Tom McCabe
Head of Paid Service
Norfolk County Council
County Hall
Martineau Lane
Norwich
NR1 2DH

Date Agenda Published: 27 August 2020

Cabinet

Minutes of the Virtual Teams Meeting held on Monday 3 August 2020 at 10am

Present:

Cllr Andrew Proctor	Chairman. Leader & Cabinet Member for Strategy & Governance.
Cllr Bill Borrett	Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, Public Health & 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 & Waste.
Cllr Andrew Jamieson	Cabinet Member for Finance
Cllr Greg Peck	Cabinet Member for Commercial Services & Asset Management.
Cllr Graham Plant	Vice-Chairman and Cabinet Member for Growing the Economy.
Cllr Martin Wilby	Cabinet Member for Highways, Infrastructure & Transport.

Also Present:

Lorne Green	Police & Crime Commissioner for Norfolk (for item 8).
-------------	---

Executive Directors Present:

Craig Chalmers	Director of Community Social Work (for Executive Director of Adult Social Services)
Helen Edwards	Director of Governance and Monitoring Officer
Simon George	Executive Director of Finance & Commercial Services
Sarah Rhoden	Assistant Director, Performance and Governance (for Executive Director of Community & Environmental Services and Head of Paid Service).
Andrew Stewart	Director Insight & Analytics (for Executive Director of Strategy & Governance)
Sara Tough	Executive Director of Children's Services

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the Cabinet meeting and advised viewers that pursuant to The Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority Police and Crime Panel Meetings) (England and Wales) Regulations 2020, the meeting was being held under new Regulations which had been brought in to deal with the restrictions under Covid 19. Decisions made in the meeting would have the same standing and validity as if they had been made in a meeting in County Hall.

Cabinet Members and Executive Directors formally introduced themselves.

1 Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from James Bullion, Executive Director of Adult Social Care; Tom McCabe, Executive Director of Community & Environmental Services and Head of Paid Service; and Fiona McDiarmid, Executive Director of Strategy & Governance.

2 Minutes

The minutes from the Cabinet meeting held on Monday 6 July 2020 were agreed as an accurate record and would be signed by the Chairman as soon as possible.

3 Declaration of Interests

There were no Declarations of Interest made.

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

There were no matters referred to Cabinet.

5 Items of Urgent Business

There were no items of urgent business.

6 Public Question Time

6.1 The list of public questions and responses is attached to these minutes at Appendix A.

6.2 As a supplementary question, Dr Boswell asked if the Cabinet Member could explain how the evaluation of companies and their tender bids would ensure that the project requirement to create a biodiversity net gain was met.

The Cabinet Member for Highways, Infrastructure & Transport agreed to provide a written response to this question (Appendix C).

6.3 Lucy Shires referred to the response to her substantive question where it had been mentioned budget growth and capacity and evidence that the previous level of funding had meant there was insufficient capacity and funding to support children and families early enough and the Council was now able to evidence children and families were now being supported earlier. As a supplementary question, Ms Shires asked what the impact was of that under-investment on the safeguarding of young people and when would the public see the evidence to show that the outcomes were improving.

In response, the Cabinet Member for Children's Services stated that evidence was starting to show that early intervention was having much more effect and that more evidence would be seen in the future. He added he was confident the department was now on the right track.

7 Local Member Questions/Issues

- 7.1 The list of Local Member questions and the responses is attached at Appendix B.
- 7.2 As a written supplementary question, Cllr Mike-Smith Clare said that the response to his question stated ‘Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children was everyone’s responsibility and everyone who came into contact with children and their families had a role to play’ then failed to say what the cabinet member for Children’s Services was responsible for. Cllr Smith-Clare asked if the Cabinet Member would now spell it out please.

The Cabinet Member for Children’s Services would respond to this question in writing (Appendix C).

The meeting adjourned at 10.15am to resolve a streaming/technical problem. The meeting reconvened at 10.23am.

- 7.3 Cllr Kemp referred to new Surgeries in King’s Lynn and the new Public Sector Leaders’ Board and said that Cabinet would agree today to dispose of land in the South Wootton for a new doctors surgery. This could lead to three doctors surgeries in North Lynn, but only one in the south, where the growth area was. As a supplementary question, Cllr Kemp asked if the Leader would place on the agenda at the next Public Sector Leaders Board, the South Lynn Millennium Surgery, the new surgery for west Winch where there would be 4000 new homes and reopening the Clenchwarton Branch Surgery.

The Leader replied that the next meeting of the Public Sector Leaders Board was in September 2020 which would agree its Terms of Reference and its Forward Work Programme where the topics the Board would like to consider at future meetings would be discussed.

- 7.4 Cllr Roper, as a supplementary question, asked what guarantees the Cabinet Member could give, in the shadow of covid, that other excess deaths amongst Norfolk’s over-85 population would not be ignored in terms of looking at priorities and that the County Council and the health system would not take their eyes off the ball.

The Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, Public Health & Prevention responded that this was an area the Council continued to focus on and which had not suffered a drop in service delivery as a result of the pandemic. The Cabinet Member added that he was confident that the County Council would continue to be able to make the progress that had already been made with its Partners, Change, Grow, Live.

- 7.5 As a supplementary question, Cllr Tim Adams asked if the Cabinet Member for Growing the Economy supported all the Norfolk Conservative MP’s who, in Parliament, had recently voted against the guarantee of a minimum standard to protect British food.

The Cabinet Member for Growing the Economy said that he was unaware of that particular aspect, although he could state that the Council was supporting Norfolk and its food industry and farmers and would continue to do so. He added that he was quite happy that Norfolk’s agricultural and farming industries were being supported to ensure they were successful for the future.

- 7.6 As a supplementary question, Cllr Brian Watkins thanked the Cabinet Member for the comprehensive response to his substantive question and asked which outcomes people should be looking for as a result of the actions proposed and how should the public be able to measure the success of those actions.

The Cabinet Member for Growing the Economy replied that, as could be seen from the response to Cllr Watkins' substantive question, the public would be able to see the tourism projects for the city; the support for the Town Deal; the Transforming Cities Fund and the Government's Emergency Active Travel Fund; Community Infrastructure Levy and in east Norwich the Council was working with Partners, including Norwich City Council and Homes England which should see more houses built and the economy rise. He added that, if there wasn't a second outbreak of covid-19, Norfolk should have a successful recovery to the economy as all the measures and money put in place was specifically for that purpose.

- 7.7 Cllr Ed Maxfield, referred to the report at agenda item 14 (Norfolk Children's Services Local Government & Social Care Ombudsman Public Report) and said over the last couple of years parents had been asked to make quite a lot of allowances for the gains relating to the SEND transformation plan. As a supplementary question, Cllr Maxfield asked if the Cabinet Member for Children's Services could give those parents some assurance that the reporting promised from autumn 2020 to the People & Communities Select Committee would be accompanied by real and measurable targets in terms of performance and also include dates by which he would expect the targets to be met.

The Cabinet Member for Children's Services replied that, although he could not give specific dates at the present time, he could reassure Cllr Maxfield that the department was having regular conversations with parents and with groups representing SEND parents. He added that a result of the better communication was that both parties were starting to work together and gain more confidence to deal with any situation that may arise which should in turn alleviate the need for parents to report problems to the Ombudsman.

8 Norfolk Fire & Rescue Service – Annual Statement of Assurance 2019-20.

- 8.1 The Chairman welcomed Norfolk's Police & Crime Commissioner, Lorne Green, to the meeting.
- 8.2 Cabinet received the report by the Executive Director of Community & Environmental Services setting out the Statement of Assurance for the Norfolk Fire & Rescue Service 2019-20.
- 8.3 In introducing the report, the Assistant Director, Performance & Governance advised that the report looked back on the work of the previous year. She added that Cabinet would receive a report at its meeting on 7 September 2020 updating it on the progress with the NFRS Improvement Plan.
- 8.4 The Cabinet Member for Communities & Partnerships introduced the report and moved the recommendations, during which the following points were noted:
- All Fire & Rescue Authorities were required to provide an annual Statement of Assurance showing their performance over the previous 12 months.

- The Statement included information about finance, governance, operational matters and also gave some impressive statistics showing the achievements of the Service over the previous year.
- The report was for the period up to the end of the last financial year, therefore it did not include the impressive work undertaken by the NFRS during the peak of the covid-19 pandemic.

The Statement also mentioned the Service Delivery Plan, the key priorities of which were to:

- Reduce Fires
- Improve road and water safety
- Ensure operational readiness and fire fighter safety.
- Improve availability and response times.
- Develop a diverse and high performing workforce.

8.5 The Cabinet Member for Children's Services drew attention to the section of the report at Appendix A, which referred to the work carried out by NFRS in engaging with young people. Last year NFRS had worked with 130 young people in various engagement schemes. He added that a meeting was being arranged with the relevant officers to discuss how this work could continue and improve for the next year.

8.6 The Police & Crime Commissioner said that he noted the report and congratulated the NFRS on the comprehensive nature of the look back, adding that he looked forward to seeing the report on the improvement plan in September 2020.

8.7 Cabinet considered the report and **RESOLVED** to:

- **Approve** the Norfolk Fire and Rescue Service Statement of Assurance 2019-20 as set out in Appendix A of the report.

8.8 **Evidence and reasons for Decision**

It is a legal requirement to publish an annual Statement of Assurance. The format and content is for the Fire Authority to agree.

8.9 **Alternative Options**

It is a legal requirement to publish this document, therefore, there is no viable alternative.

9 **NCC Response to Covid-19 – initial lessons learned.**

9.1 Cabinet received the report by the Head of Paid Service setting out initial lessons learned from the County Council's response to Covid-19 which have been captured through an initial de-brief process with key officers involved in the Covid-19 response.

9.2 The Assistant Director, Performance & Governance (CES) highlighted that this was an initial learning report and that further learning activities would be carried out when appropriate.

9.3 The Chairman and Cabinet Member for Strategy & Governance introduced the report during which the following points were noted:

- The report gave an appraisal of the actions taken as well as an evaluation and identifying learning opportunities.
- Appendix B of the report contained 13 learning points, all of which had been allocated to the appropriate Lead Officer. The role of Cabinet Members would be to oversee the work.
- The Chairman asked Cabinet to agree to an additional recommendation to receive a report, in three months time, giving an update on the progress made.
- It needed to be accepted that covid-19 was likely to be around for some time and therefore this was the appropriate time to commence the evaluation and learning process.
- The Chairman highlighted the following from the report:
 - The vital role played by volunteers, which would increase as staff moved back to their normal roles.
 - The quality, consistency and ability to share data, led by the County Council's team working as Norfolk Office of Data and Analytics (NODA).
 - The business continuity plans which would provide a firm basis for planning and assumptions to be made. All plans had been developed and adjusted according to the current circumstances.
 - The ability to prioritise and deprioritise projects to allow staff to be available to assist other departments when appropriate to do so.
 - The support provided to vulnerable people which would continue for the future, as well as identifying who those vulnerable people were.
 - Staff were redeployed to other areas where possible, with key roles undertaken by comms and health and safety teams.
 - Future management of staff who were no longer working in an office environment and also how those staff could be supported and managed.
 - The Procurement of PPE, using the knowledge gained to carry out training for the future.
 - How well the County Council had worked with Partners which would further improve if all Partners had the same ICT arrangements, and also how Partners could support each other in the future.

9.4 The Cabinet Member for Growing the Economy supported the recommendation to receive an update report in three months' time. He then referred to the procurement of critical supplies, leading to Learning Point 11 (Develop a plan which ensures we have the health and safety capability as a central source and management capability), adding that when the pandemic had broken out and a lack of PPE for care homes and businesses had been identified, the County Council and the Local Enterprise Partnership had procured over £1m of PPE from China. The County Council's Economic Development Team had contacted Essex County Council, who had links with China, and within a short period of time sufficient PPE had been received to enable supplies to be purchased by any business having difficulty in procuring PPE. The County Council had been able to procure equipment by moving swiftly and the ten officers redeployed from CPE should receive praise for their work in ensuring people in care homes received the PPE to help keep the people of Norfolk and people within our care homes safe.

The Cabinet Member added that there was now over 900 sources of PPE available on the LEP website and any business would be able to link to that website to purchase PPE directly.

- 9.5 The Cabinet Member for Highways, Infrastructure & Transport said he wished to thank everyone, especially the volunteers across the county but he particularly wished to give a special mention to all the County Council staff in Highways that had worked together to make sure people were safe. He added that he would also like to thank the residents in his Division of East Depwade, which covered the town of Harleston and surrounding villages. Those volunteers had been picking up prescriptions, doing shopping, dog walking and keeping in touch with people who lived on their own, so he felt it was important that they were recognised for the work they had done and continued to do.

- 9.6 The Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, Public Health & Prevention welcomed the report, which was part of a suite of reports which had been considered by Scrutiny Committee and People & Communities Select Committee since the outbreak began.

The Cabinet Member agreed that that it was important that the Council's response to the pandemic was reviewed to ensure that, in the likely event there was a further spike, the Council was ready to meet any challenges as they developed.

The Cabinet Member continued that the report was helpful, and that he was very proud of what had been achieved as well as the response of the staff at the county council which had been magnificent. He added that there was no complacency and that it was right that the procedures were assessed and reviewed and that lessons continued to be learned for the future.

- 9.7 The Cabinet Member for Finance endorsed the additional recommendation for Cabinet to receive an update report in three months and highlighted the following points from the report:

- The ability to respond quickly and in a coordinated way, not only within the County Council but also with the Clinical Commissioning Group, the Local Enterprise Partnership which had made a huge impact on the ability to respond quickly and that those lessons should be carried forward for the future.
- The procurement of the PPE had been carried out effectively, with the team quickly liaising with Essex County Council and initiating a training programme which would also be relevant to the ability to deliver equipment through the Brexit programme.
- The importance of drilling down into individual departments to analyse how effective they had been in responding to the pandemic.

- 9.8 The Cabinet Member for Innovation, Transformation & Performance thanked all the volunteers for the multi-agency work in all divisions across Norfolk as they had carried out some fantastic work. The work with partners had gone well and the County Council was now ready to respond with partners quickly. He added that it was an important part of working together that work continued to ensure communications and sharing of information was improved and he looked forward to the follow-up report to see how that had developed.

- 9.9 The Cabinet Member for Commercial Services & Asset Management said that work in this area was likely to continue for some time, therefore it was important that lessons continued to be learned so improvements could be made where necessary. He added that all staff, agencies and the people of Norfolk deserved credit for the excellent response so far.

The Cabinet Member continued that he had recently read a report in the press that some opposition members were calling for a public inquiry and although he understood they may wish to outsource the job if they were not capable of carrying out the work themselves, he felt a public inquiry would cost a lot of money which could be better spent in responding to any future spikes in the pandemic.

The Cabinet Member agreed this was an excellent report and agreed that the topic should be re-examined in three months' time.

- 9.10 The Cabinet Member for Children's Services supported the suggestion of bringing a further report to Cabinet in three months as, although a lot of the work carried out had been done well and the Council had reacted quickly, analysis should be carried out to identify areas which could be improved.

The Cabinet Member reiterated the comments regarding volunteers and said he had been involved in his local volunteer group which he had found to be a very rewarding experience.

The Cabinet Member referred to section F of the report which referred to staff absence and attendance, stating that from a Children's Services viewpoint, he had been pleased that staff had continued to carry out their work, which had been partly due to the Executive Director of Children's Services sending a daily update to all staff to keep everyone involved and ensure everyone knew exactly what was happening. He felt this had helped staff perform better than expected which in turn had kept attendance levels up and he thanked and congratulated all the staff in Children's Services for their commitment.

- 9.11 The Chairman endorsed the thanks to everyone, all staff, partners and volunteers whose work had made the Norfolk response as good as it had been. He added that there was no complacency and it was now a question of moving forward and learning from events over the recent months.

- 9.12 Cabinet reviewed and considered the initial lessons learned from the County Council's response to Covid-19 and **RESOLVED** to:

- **Approve** the action plan at Appendix B of the report.
- **Agree** to receive a further report in 3 months' time on the progress of the lessons learned.

- 9.13 **Evidence and Reasons for Decision**

It is usual practice to capture learning at the end of an incident. Given the length of the Covid-19 emergency, it will likely be some time before the time is right for a formal de-brief process. Therefore, capturing initial learning points now is crucial to enable us to provide the best possible response to Norfolk communities.

9.14 **Alternative Options**

A full de-brief exercise is not possible at this stage, for the reasons set out in section 2, and therefore there are no alternative options.

10 **Section 75 Agreement for Adult Social Care and Community Health Services.**

10.1 Cabinet received the report by the Executive Director of Adult Social Care providing an overview of the current integrated arrangements for community health and adult social care, governed by a Section 75 Agreement and highlights key findings from a recent review of the service.

10.2 The Director of Community Social Work highlighted that from 2014, there had been an integrated management function in place with NHS Partners, Norfolk Community Health & Care, and the report outlined that the integrated management offer had been improved and that the success, while not in monetary terms, but in terms of integrated care for vulnerable Norfolk people, was valued. He added that some further work would be carried out to produce a metrics to gain further evidence to show how the integration work added real value.

10.3 The Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, Public Health & Prevention introduced the report and moved the recommendations, highlighting that this was an excellent example of integration work. He added that Norfolk Community Health & Care (NCHC) had been judged as a very high performing organisation and the six year contract with them had been very successful.

The Cabinet Member continued that the Section 75 Agreement was about sharing posts to provide additional integration with health partners as the pandemic had proved that health and social care could not work independently from each other

The Cabinet Member also highlighted that there was a cost pressure to the project as new posts were being added to support the joint arrangements. He asked Cabinet to support the recommendation as the expected outcomes and the focus of the County Council and Partners was moving towards working together to focus on the person using the service rather than the service and how it operated, and it would also send the right messages to Partner organisations.

10.4 The Chairman highlighted this was an example of Working Better Together, one of Norfolk County Council's priorities.

10.5 Cabinet **RESOLVED** to:

- **Agree** a renewal of the Section 75 Agreement between Norfolk County Council and Norfolk Community Health& Care for adult social care and community health services, for a five-year term with a break clause after three years.

10.6 **Evidence and Reasons for Decision**

An in-depth review of the current Section 75 arrangements concluded that it has enabled better support for patients and service users across Norfolk

11 Finance Monitoring Report 2020-21 P3: June 2020

- 11.1 Cabinet received the report by the Executive Director of Finance & Commercial Services which gave a summary of the forecast financial position for the 2020-21 Revenue and Capital Budgets, General Balances, and the Council's Reserves at 31 March 2021, together with related financial information.
- 11.2 The Cabinet Member for Finance introduced the report and moved the recommendations, during which the following points were noted:
- A significant reduction of just over £8m had been seen in the level of forecast overspend, now standing at £7.784m. This was principally due to Norfolk's share of the third round of covid-19 grant funding allocation of £6m.
 - A further £1m had been received from Defra to enable the County Council to help people struggling to meet food and other essential provision.
 - The total of government funding received so far was £50.691m.
 - Covid-related cost pressures currently stood at £62.288m.
 - A significant decrease of just over £2m had been seen in the anticipated overspend within adult social services, which was now forecast to be £7.934m, down from £9.983m last month.
 - Adult Social Care had received the majority of the Council's covid-19 grant funding and this would also be the case with the £6m additional funding.
 - Adult Social Services had been able to quantify some likely budget savings within transport and subsistence due to the adaptation of different ways of working throughout the pandemic. Principally savings were identified within the care and assessment teams of community social work and community health and social care.
 - A small reduction in the substantial overspend within the purchase of care budget was being forecast.
 - Children's Services was currently maintaining their forecast of a balanced budget and any overspend was expected to be offset by the already allocated covid-19 funding.
 - The results of the continuing discussions over the lost income support with the MHCLG was awaited and this would have a material effect on all departments, although mainly in Community & Environmental Services where income was a major factor in their overspend, along with the impact of a reduction in incineration tax announced early in 2020.
 - Net pressure specifically from the pandemic was now forecast at £11.597m and the difference between £7.784m and the £11.597m was due to non-covid related savings offsetting some of the covid shortfall.
 - The ability to achieve the planned net savings of over £40m agreed in the 2020-21 budget had been profoundly affected by the pandemic. Currently, savings were forecast of £22.46m, leaving a shortfall of £17.78m, nearly 44% of the total target. The implications of the non-achievement of savings would have a significant impact on the 2021-22 financial year.
 - General reserves remained stable and earmarked reserves were being monitored closely. Whilst the reserves were currently higher than anticipated when the budget was agreed in February 2020, this was mainly due to the receipt of covid-19 funding and the position was likely to reverse in the coming year.

- Capital spending had been affected by the pandemic which was particularly relevant to future savings where the SEND capital programme and completion of new schools may be delayed beyond the original target dates.
- Finance General was currently holding £6m tranche three funding which resulted in a net underspend at £3.972m. However this would be reversed out as funds were allocated to individual departments.

11.3 The Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, Public Health & Prevention thanked Cabinet for its support, as Adult Social Care had played a major part in the overspend to date, which was down to the issues with the pandemic and the importance the Council had placed on providing social care and the care market. He added that purchase of care was the biggest expense and the overspend was down to the efforts to ensure providers in the care market were paid to ensure their cash flow was protected and their increased costs were offset so they could continue to provide their high standards of care to protect the vulnerable people of Norfolk. The Cabinet Member apologised to Cabinet for creating the situation and highlighted that some funding from the government to offset the pressures had been received, although it was unknown how long the current situation would continue for. Therefore engagement was being maintained with the Minister for Social Care to explain the County Council's predicament, although whilst waiting for an outcome, the County Council was ensuring that the service within the localities was as good as it could be to protect Norfolk's vulnerable people.

11.4 The Cabinet Member for Children's Services brought to Cabinet's attention that the Transformation Programme in Children's Services was now back on track and that three SRB's would be opening in September 2020.

The Cabinet Member for Children's Services flagged up a warning which was currently being faced across the country, about concerns there could be an increase in referrals as children returned to school, which would need to be managed and that this could have a major impact on the budget.

11.5 The Chairman recognised the financial difficulties faced by Local Government as a whole and reiterated that pressure was being maintained on central government to ensure more money was received, not only for the money spent to date, but also to ensure the upcoming comprehensive spending review provided a good settlement for local government for the future. The Chairman also highlighted that the risk register provided a full description of corporate risks and that these would have a significant financial impact on the County Council if they were not properly managed.

11.6 Cabinet **RESOLVED** to:

1. **Note** the period 3 forecast general fund revenue overspend of **£7.784m** noting also that Executive Directors will take measures to reduce or eliminate potential over-spends;
2. **Note** the Covid-19 grant funding received of £50.691m, the proposed use of that funding and the related expenditure pressures.

3. **Note** the period 3 forecast shortfall in savings of **£17.789m**, noting also that Executive Directors will take measures to mitigate savings shortfalls through alternative savings or underspends;
4. **Note** the forecast General Balances at 31 March 2021 of £19.706m, before taking into account any over/under spends;
5. **Note** the expenditure and funding of the revised current and future 2020-23 capital programmes.

11.7 **Evidence and Reasons for Decision:**

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

Appendix 1 summarises the revenue outturn position, including:

- Forecast over and under spends
- Covid-19 pressures and associated grant income.
- Changes to the approved budget
- Reserves
- Savings
- Treasury management
- Payment performance and debt recovery

Appendix 2 summarises the capital outturn position, and includes:

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

11.8 **Alternative Options**

In order 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 grant or revenue funding has been identified to fund the expenditure.

12 **Disposal, Acquisition and Exploitation of Property.**

- 12.1 Cabinet received the report by the Executive Director of Finance & Commercial Services, including two exempt appendices, setting out proposals aimed at supporting Norfolk County Council priorities by exploiting properties surplus to operational requirements, proactively release property assets with latent value where the operational needs could be met from elsewhere and strategically acquiring property to drive economic growth and wellbeing in the County.
- 12.2 The Chairman referred to the exempt Appendices containing commercially sensitive information, which Cabinet Members had received a copy of and said that, as no one had indicated they wished to refer to them in the discussion, they would not be discussed during the meeting. He added that the information would become available through the Land Registry once the sales had been completed.

12.3 The Cabinet Member for Commercial Services and Asset Management introduced the report and moved the recommendations, during which the following points were noted:

- **Industrial Land at London Road, Attleborough.** This site was a former county farms field of 13 acres which had been deemed surplus to requirements. The site had originally been divided into three sub-plots and the sale of sites 2 and 3 had been agreed subject to the purchaser of site 1 delivering services to the whole site. This proposal had also included provision for Norfolk County Council to pay a proportion of the infrastructure costs. A viability assessment and a review of the options for the site had been carried out and it had been decided to withdraw from the previously agreed plot sales and sell the whole site to a single commercial organisation. A deal had now been negotiated with a potential purchaser to purchase the site as unserviced development land which would avoid the need for NCC to invest significant capital and also avoid any construction risks. The deal was favourable when compared to the independent valuation carried out and also avoided any capital investment or significant risk to NCC. The purchaser was understood to be planning to develop commercial and industrial accommodation at the site, which would support jobs and generate economic growth.
- **Beeston Park** was a proposed urban extension to the north of Norwich in the Broadland District Council area. Norfolk County Council was a member of a consortium of land owners with approximately 90 acres of county farms estate land included in the proposed development, the total of which was approximately 512 acres. Due to the phasing of the original development, it was expected to take approximately 20 years to complete and the Council Council would receive capital receipts over a lengthy time period. Outline Planning Permission had been granted by Broadland District Council on 17 February 2016 for 3520 dwellings; 16800 sq m of employment space; 2 primary schools; 8000 sq m of space for shops, services, cafes, restaurants and drinking establishments; 2000 sq m of community space including a health centre, library, community hall and an energy centre. Since the site was allocated, there had been no progress made, however, the promoter had now submitted a proposal which had been reviewed by the Council's agents NPS and which had been accepted by all the other lands owners. The proposal was a positive step and showed the strength and resilience of the Norfolk economy.
- **Fakenham Academy** had opened on 1 October 2013 and had operated on two sites – Wells Road and Field Lane. Both sites had been leased to Norfolk Academies. Norfolk Academies had released the Wells Road site back to the County Council on 1 March 2019 and, following a review by the Director of Property, in consultation with the Capital Priorities Group, it had been confirmed that the overall site was no longer required for Norfolk County Council use. Subsequently, part of the site had now been identified by Children's Services as suitable for a new SEND school. The Corporate Property Team had now commenced investigations as to how the remainder of the site could be utilised, exploited or disposed of which would include assessing community opportunities. Initial discussions had been held with the Town Council, the District Council and the Local Member to

ascertain which parts of the site were no longer required.

- The five other plots listed for disposal were a variety of former highways land and county farms land with no operational use.
- **Land at Hall Lane, South Wootton.** There had been some interest in this site for the provision of a doctors surgery and extra care housing and these options were currently being assessed. If these proposals were not realised, it was proposed to dispose of the site by open market sale through auction or tender, however the Property Team would do its best to realise the preferred option to provide extra care facilities at the site.

12.4 The Cabinet Member for Innovation, Transformation & Performance fully supported the proposals and referred to the old grammar school site at Fakenham saying that he commended the proposal for a SEND academy which would fill a much needed gap in provision in Fakenham and the surrounding area. He added that he had been involved in discussions around the disposal of the remainder of the site and commended the team on the work they had carried out with various local stakeholders which he hoped would lead to a good news announcement in the near future.

12.5 The Chairman referred to Beeston Park which was a key element of the Greater Norwich area growth plans for the future. He added that he hoped this new venture would progress the development.

12.6 Cabinet considered the report and **RESOLVED** to:

1. Delegate authority to the Director of Property in consultation with the Executive Director of Finance and Commercial Services and the Cabinet Member for Asset Management and Commercial Services to implement the sale of the land at London Road, Attleborough (3002/038) or any part on an un-serviced basis of it so long as the sale is at market rate and confirm that the existing approvals remain effective notwithstanding this additional proposed approval.
2. To authorise in respect of Beeston Park the implementation of the terms as set out in Exempt Appendix B.
3. Formally declare the land at Wells Road, Fakenham (1029/028A) (excluding the part retained for a new school) surplus to County Council requirements and instruct the Director of Property to dispose of the property. In the event of a disposal receipt(s) exceeding delegated limits the Director of Property in consultation with the Executive Director of Finance and Commercial Services and Cabinet Member for Commercial Services and Asset Management is authorised to accept the most advantageous offer(s).
4. Formally declare the Land at West Hall Farm, Gayton (2033/018) surplus to County Council requirements and instruct the Director of Property to dispose of the property. In the event of a disposal receipt exceeding delegated limits the Director of Property in consultation with the Executive Director of Finance and Commercial Services and Cabinet Member for

Commercial Services and Asset Management is authorised to accept the most advantageous offer.

5. Formally declare the Land adjacent to Lionwood Junior School, Norwich (4114/019B) surplus to County Council requirements and instruct the Director of Property to dispose of the property. In the event of a disposal receipt exceeding delegated limits the Director of Property in consultation with the Executive Director of Finance and Commercial Services and Cabinet Member for Commercial Services and Asset Management is authorised to accept the most advantageous offer.
6. Formally declare the Land at Hall Lane, South Wootton (2072/011) surplus to County Council requirements and:
 - (i) Instruct the Director of Property to dispose of the site to a doctor's surgery and/or extra care housing provider, or
 - (ii) In the event of no satisfactory agreement instruct the Director of Property to dispose of the property on the open market.

In the event of a disposal receipt exceeding delegated limits the Director of Property in consultation with the Executive Director of Finance and Commercial Services and Cabinet Member for Commercial Services and Asset Management is authorised to accept the most advantageous offer.

7. Formally declare the additional Land at Mill Road, Walpole Highway (2105/105A) surplus to County Council requirements and instruct the Director of Property to dispose of the property. In the event of a disposal receipt exceeding delegated limits the Director of Property in consultation with the Executive Director of Finance and Commercial Services and Cabinet Member for Commercial Services and Asset Management is authorised to accept the most advantageous offer.
8. Formally declare the Land adjacent to the Primary School, Watlington (2089/014) surplus to County Council requirements and instruct the Director of Property to dispose of the property. In the event of a disposal receipt exceeding delegated limits the Director of Property in consultation with the Executive Director of Finance and Commercial Services and Cabinet Member for Commercial Services and Asset Management is authorised to accept the most advantageous offer.

12.7 Evidence and Reasons for Decision

1. The disposal of the land at London Road, Attleborough releases land that is surplus to County Council use, in addition provides a significant capital receipts provides an opportunity for commercial development to support jobs.
2. In respect of Beeston Park, the county Council has received no income from the disposal of its assets but is incurring professional fees and is spending officer time. There is no definite date for when the development will commence, and it is clear the Promotor no longer wishes to carry the risk.

3. Declaring the land holdings at Wells Road, Fakenham; West Hall Farm, Gayton; Adjacent to Lionwood School, Norwich; Land at Hall Lane, South Wootton; Mill Road, Walpole Highway and land adjacent to Watlington Primary School surplus to County Council use means that the Corporate Property Team can consider options for the disposal and exploitation of these sites.

12.8 Alternative Options

1. For the disposal of the land at London Road, Attleborough the alternative would be to retain the site.
2. For Beeston Park, not to join the other land holders in disposing of the land will mean retaining the current situation of no development commencing, the ongoing delay of any income and accruing additional professional fees.
3. Declaring 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.

13 Schools Capital Programme

- 13.1 Cabinet received the report by the Executive Director of Children's Services providing a summary of schools' capital funding sources; a summary of the priorities which underpin the programme; proposals developed by Capital Priorities Group for the new programme; a financial summary of the proposed forward programme.
- 13.2 The Executive Director of Children's Services advised that this was an annual report to Cabinet, explaining how the County Council sought to fulfil its school place sufficiency duty.
- 13.3 The Cabinet Member for Children's Services introduced the report and moved the recommendations, during which the following points were noted:
 - The department was very aware of where new houses were being built and was making provision to meet demand on school places in those areas.
 - Since the report had been published, a number of enquiries had been received from Councillors concerned that their area was not included. He reassured Councillors that Children's Services were aware of the growth areas of Norwich North, near Rackheath and Salhouse; Attleborough; Wymondham; Bradwell; Ormiston Venture Academy; Long Stratton; Blofield; Poringland and Hellesdon and although these areas were not a priority at the current time, they remained on the radar for inclusion in future reports to the Capital Priorities Group before being presented to Cabinet.
 - The report identified an expansive programme which highlighted the investment being made in schools in Norfolk.
- 13.4 The Cabinet Member for Communities & Partnerships welcomed the inclusion of the proposed expansion of the Ormiston Victory Academy because, over the last few years, limited places had been available for children in her division moving up from the local primary schools into secondary school.
- 13.5 The Cabinet Member for Finance welcomed the fact that the department would be constantly monitoring house building as he felt further work would need to be

done on the location of schools around the Kings Lynn area due to the housing developments taking place in the area.

The Cabinet Member drew attention to the list of proposed schemes and highlighted that Norfolk County Council borrowing showed it was prepared to spend money to offer significantly better outcomes for children.

- 13.6 The Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, Public Health & Prevention welcomed the report and projects in over 40 of Norfolk's schools together with the capital expenditure with the majority of projects being delivered within the next 12 months. He added that this would have a significant impact in all the schools listed in the report and he heartily endorsed the recommendations.
- 13.7 The Cabinet Member for Growing the Economy commended the report and thanked the Cabinet Member for highlighting Bradwell in particular, where there was a large amount of housing development. He also highlighted that there was a SEMH school being built at a cost of £7m in Great Yarmouth, together with the John Grant complex and the Caister Infant and Junior schools so he felt Great Yarmouth was well served by the improvements in schools.
- 13.8 The Chairman highlighted that the report demonstrated the key role Norfolk County Council played in infrastructure and that schools were a key part of that infrastructure. He added that the report also demonstrated that the County Council was continuing with its normal business so these projects would be delivered in the timescales proposed.
- 13.9 Cabinet **RESOLVED** to:
- **Note** known grant settlements as summarised in section 2 of the report.
 - **Note** the principles on which the programme is based.
 - **Endorse** the basis of 2020-2023+ programme prioritisation for delivery.
- 13.10 **Evidence & Reasons for Decision.**
- A decision to support the proposed Schools' mainstream capital programme will ensure the Council can discharge its statutory responsibility to ensure sufficient school places in the area.
- 13.11 **Alternative Options**
- The schemes in this report are those set out in the Schools' Local Growth and Investment Plan and have formed the basis of the mainstream capital programme development discussion by Children's Services Capital Priorities Group and approval by the Executive Director of Children's Services. New schemes are subject to approval and at this stage do not need to be accepted into the programme.
- 14 Norfolk Children's Services Local Government & Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO) Public Report.**
- 14.1 Cabinet received the report by the Executive Director of Children's Services setting out the Local Government & Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO) public report regarding an investigation into a complaint about special educational

needs (SEND) assessment and alternative provision for the child and the impact this had on the child and family. The investigation had found that an injustice had been suffered as a result of fault.

14.2 The Executive Director of Children's Services reiterated the apology that had been made to the family referred to in the report. She asked Cabinet to note that key performance indicators would be reported to the People & Communities Select Committee on 18 September and a written statement of action in response to the Ofsted report would also be prepared which would be overseen by an Improvement Board which would commence in September 2020 once the plan had been agreed with the Department for Education and Ofsted. Cabinet would receive a report on the progress of the Plan in due course.

14.3 The Cabinet Member for Children's Services introduced the report and moved the recommendations. He reiterated the apology by the Executive Director of Children's Services to the family concerned adding that he had been in personal contact with the family. The Cabinet Member continued that action was being taken on the recommendations and as already mentioned, People & Communities Committee would review the key performance indicators, with the Improvement Board overseeing the progress, as per the recommendations from the LGSCO.

The Cabinet Member took the opportunity to reassure parents that Children's Services was now managing its services to ensure this situation did not occur again in the future and that discussions with parents and parent groups as a result of the recent Ofsted report were taking place which would hopefully improve communications with all parties, as well as improving SEND performance.

14.4 Cabinet considered the LGSCO Public Report and **RESOLVED** to:

- **Agree** the actions we are proposing to take;
- **Respond** to the LGSCO within three months of publication to endorse the action that Norfolk Children's Services has taken to comply with the LGSCO recommendations and remedy the fault.

14.5 **Evidence & Reasons for Decision.**

It is a statutory duty to comply with the recommendations of the Local Government & Social Care Ombudsman.

14.6 **Alternative Options**

None identified.

15 **Reports of the Cabinet Member and Officer Delegated Decisions already made:**

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

Decisions by the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, Public Health & Prevention:

- [Use of the Infection Control Fund.](#)

Decision by the Cabinet Member for Finance

- [Future Provision of PPE in relation to Covid-19.](#)

Decision by the Cabinet Member for Highways, Infrastructure & Transport

- [Hethersett, Canns Lane, TRO](#)

Decision by the Cabinet Member for Children's Services

- [Covid-19 – Nelsons Journey Financial Support](#)

The meeting ended at 11.40am.

Chairman



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

Cabinet
3 August 2020
Public & Local Member Questions

Agenda Public Question Time**item 6**

6.1

Question from Gary Blundell

Why does Costessey seem to get the short end of the stick from Norfolk County Council on highways work? Examples of this are the danger to pedestrians crossing between Next and Sainsburys on William Frost Way and the 10 years of waiting for plans for a second exit from Queens Hills.

Money can always be found for improvements to places like Thickthorn yet improvements which have been at least 13 years in the making are yet to materialise for the Longwater roundabouts even with commuted sums of money from developers.

Response:

The County Council has completed work on a Longwater Strategy. This included an analysis of the issues and identification of various measures that could be taken forward to overcome these issues. A number of these measures have already been delivered including a free-flow slip road from William Frost Way to Dereham Road and extensive widening of Dereham Road to two-lanes in either direction. These measures have substantially improved traffic flows. There are elements of the strategy that have yet to be delivered and we will continue to look for suitable funding opportunities to bring these forward. We have already successfully secured commitment to further improvements that will be delivered by the developers of the new housing at Easton. This includes cycle / footway links across the A47 and a crossing on William Frost Way.

Thickthorn Junction is part of the trunk road network maintained and managed by Highways England who are directly funded by government. The proposed improvements at Thickthorn will therefore be delivered by Highways England, not Norfolk County Council. We welcome these improvements and will work closely with Highways England on their continued development.

We have also made arrangements to undertake a pedestrian crossing assessment during the autumn and a following feasibility study into a pedestrian crossing on William Frost Way.

6.2

Question from Mr Richard Carter:

Cabinet is respectfully asked to suspend their approval of a school site in Holt which would breach NCC policy guidelines

The consequences of Cabinet Approval would:

- increase the Council's debt burden by £6m as S106 funds are insufficient
- create 130 surplus school places leading to closure of Pilgrim Foundation Schools or support a Developer in his Appeal against a Local Planning Authority
- contribute to financial and infrastructure "damage" to NNDC whilst financially enriching a Developer
- support a Developer in his Appeal against a Local Planning Authority
- deny public access to Officer evidence underlying the above assumptions

Response:

Cabinet is asked to approve a capital programme based on the agreed Schools Local Growth and Investment Plan. There is agreement regarding the need for places and approval is based on site availability, which is a matter for the local planning process. In line with our policy we have been working over the last five years to identify suitable sites to relocate and expand Holt Primary School.

- increase the Council's debt burden by £6m as S106 funds are insufficient

As a Local Authority NCC has a duty to provide sufficient places. If school places are needed, they have to be funded regardless of the availability of funding sources such as government grants or S106 developer contributions.

- create 130 surplus school places leading to closure of Pilgrim Foundation Schools or support a Developer in his Appeal against a Local Planning Authority

There is no plan to close Pilgrim Foundation Schools and no evidence that we would be creating surplus places. We are pleased with the success of the Pilgrim Federation and its four good schools, which are serving local villages. We aim to provide places close to where children live to enable walking and cycling to school. We will be providing more places in Holt for children who live in Holt and who will live in the new developments. We will be building a 21st Century school to benefit the children who live in Holt.

- contribute to financial and infrastructure "damage" to NNDC whilst financially enriching a Developer.

This is for NNDC to comment.

- support a Developer in his Appeal against a Local Planning Authority.

We are not supporting a developer, the Local Planning Authority originally supported this development and in line with planning processes, NCC is seeking to fulfil its duty to provide sufficient places and to address condition issues of an old Victorian school.

- deny public access to Officer evidence underlying the above assumptions

Queries relating to the proposal for a new school building for Holt are currently being dealt with a Freedom of Information request as appropriate.

6.3 **Supplementary Question from Mr Richard Carter**

Will Cabinet suspend this recommendation and reassess the evidence ?

- NCC assessed its Education Contribution as £334,000
- The Developer assessed the benefit to NCC as £743,000, and charged this against District Council Planning Obligations.
- The £409,000 difference significantly increased Open Market Housing to the benefit of the Developer whilst reducing the Affordable Housing entitlement of the District

Response:

I cannot comment on the above. These are questions for NNDC as they relate to

the local planning process.

6.4 **Question from Sue Catchpole**

As Norfolk has the highest percentage of Primary School age pupils with social, emotional and mental health needs in the East of England and indeed a higher percentage than England, what is the strategy that this council has implemented to ensure that these Norfolk children have received the support they have needed during the pandemic and for these children to adjust to the 'new normal' in September?

Response:

We have previously recognised our challenges to address a range of SEND in Norfolk and our SEND Strategy together with the SEND and AP Transformation Programme has been widely communicated. During the COVID-19 crisis we have been working with schools and providers to provide support for all children, including those with social, emotional and mental health needs. This included both bespoke support for individuals (details outlined below) and extensive transition support co-created with professionals.

The Transition Toolkit Recovery and Learning contains a wide range of resources including support for mental health (Aspect 7 of the toolkit). Schools and providers are pro-active in planning both their curriculum and support for children and young people when they return in September. We also work closely with our colleagues in the health sector, who have launched high quality resources such as 'JustOneNorfolk' (www.justonenorfolk.nhs.uk) and Kooth an app for young people to support mental well-being.

We will be working with schools as they take advantage of the National Tutoring programme and other measures to support learning and increase resilience.

Support during the pandemic

- Bespoke support, guidance and advice has been provided for many pupils, for pupils on school rolls and for pupils who the Local Authority has a direct responsibility for, to enable pupils to attend settings where deemed appropriate
- Additional support and capacity has been bolstered into teams providing this support including from specialist teams facilitated by a central triage system within Children's Services Learning and Inclusion 'Inclusion Team'
- Points of contacts for schools have been streamlined through one specialist team but additional methods of contacting the team have been developed so that advice and support can be accessed more quickly and easily. Children's Services teams across multiple departments have signposted to these to ensure professionals and schools know how to access support within NCC.
- The Norfolk STEPs team has been refocused to provide practical support and advice for families who are supporting pupils at home who have social, emotional and mental health needs. This has included providing practical parenting support to help prevent behaviours escalating to help create calmer, safer and more consistent family responses to children and young people. This support has been accessed by schools, settings, and professionals across Children's Services including High Needs SEND teams, social workers and Early Help practitioners - around 100 requests for support

- have been received and responded to and this is continuing over the summer break
- Some of the most vulnerable pupils with social, emotional and mental health needs have been prioritised for the most intensive support, including attendance at commissioned alternative provision settings

Transition Support

- Specific transition support, guidance and advice has been provided, based upon advice from the DfE, PHE and NCC H&S team, to support the return of pupils in September. This has been produced by a multi-disciplinary team across Children's Services.
- Existing commissioned emotional support is being focussed on supporting children and families who may find the return to school difficult where children may be experiencing attachment difficulties
- The inclusion and outreach services which support schools, settings and colleges are ready for a possible surge in requests for support in September: this includes ensuring points of contact continue and that the breadth of specialist services which have supported schools and settings will continue to be available to provide bespoke support, guidance and advice through the transition period back to school.

6.5 **Question from Dr Andrew Boswell**

The Council has stated that it seeks to improve the environment with the Norwich Western Link, but codes concerning environmental issues are lacking in the tender notice. In particular, codes 71313000-5 (Environmental engineering consultancy services) and 71313400-9 (Environmental impact assessment for construction). Does this mean that there will be other tenders for the environmental impact assessment and environmental engineering related to the scheme?

Response:

CPV codes are a system of classification for public procurement which uses standardised vocabulary to help procurement personnel classify their contract notices consistently and to make it easier for suppliers and contracting authorities to find notices.

The main CPV code used in the OJEU Contract Notice was 45000000 Construction Work, because this is the core requirement for this procurement. Only a Contractor capable of constructing the Norwich Western Link will be able to bid. If they do not have the specialist skills (e.g. environmental engineering consultancy services) to meet the requirements in the contract documentation, they will be able to sub-contract to a company with those skills. The contract documentation clearly lays out the requirements for the environmental aspects the contractor will be required to deliver.

The additional CPV codes used include 71000000 (Architectural, construction, engineering and inspection services), which is the top level of the hierarchy and therefore includes 71313000-5 and 71313400-9

6.6 **Question 1 from Bryan Robinson**

I am concerned at the limited number of CPV Codes in the Tender Contract Notice emphasising specialist works only. Is this likely to lead to a legal challenge as many elements of work particularly Code 45233000 (Construction, foundation and surface works for highways roads) are excluded?

Response:

The reasons for this are set out in the response to Dr Boswell's question at 6.5 above.

The main CPV code 45000000 and the additional CPV code 452000000 (Works for complete or part construction and civil engineering work) include CPV code 45233000 in their hierarchy. It is not necessary to list every single CPV code which may apply.

6.7 Question 2 from Bryan Robinson

The list also excludes any reference to relating to the landscaping for roads and motorways under Code 4511273000 which is a key environment issue. How is the Council going to ensure that the shortlisted contractors have this expertise and undertake the 3 year maintenance and replacement policy? I trust the omission does not indicate an intention to contract this work separately as the NDR with its failed performance issues.

Response:

Please see answer to 6.5 above.

The main CPV code 45000000 includes CPV code 451127300 in its hierarchy.

The contract for the Norwich Western Link consists of three stages, with the third stage being 3 years of landscape maintenance. This stage 3 of the contract has been included as it better allocates the risk of any planting attrition to the contractor.

6.8 Question from Lucy Shires

As the Council who spends the second lowest amount in the East of England and significantly less than the average National spend on Safeguarding children and young people's services, when will we see the impact report to fully understand the effect of this council's underinvestment in the safeguarding of our young people?

Response:

The 2019/20 Budget for Safeguarding Children and Young People's services as per the Section 251 published figures was £19.942m compared to £16.413m in 2018/19. An uplift of £3.529m, an increase of 21.5% Year on Year. The published figures are not yet available for 2020/21 however there has once again been significant additional growth and capacity in the service with new support services and a new social care operating model. The increased investment has improved performance in key areas, including evidence we are supporting children and families earlier.

**Agenda Local Member Issues/Questions
item 7****7.1 Question 1 from Cllr Steve Morpew.**

It is extremely important that Council contractors WSP do not trap bats when they are heavily pregnant or have young dependent pups, because of the potential harm this would do to the pups of this protected species. Why has the council proceeded with trapping barbastelle bats at a site to the south of the proposed Western Link Road?

Response:

It is important that we are able to gather data about this protected species in order to inform measures to protect and support bats as part of the Norwich Western Link project.

The County Council sought approval from Natural England, the Government's advisory body for the natural environment, through their licencing process. We will of course always follow the advice of key bodies like Natural England and throughout all stages we have arranged and carried out activities in accordance with the licence and conditions they have issued to us. We would not progress any surveys without their prior approval.

In this case, Natural England issued us with a licence to carry out these surveys. Natural England reportedly subsequently received evidence that the bats in this area of Norfolk have different mating habits than other populations nationally and issued an amended licence. We stopped the surveys originally planned and have made new arrangements that meet the requirements of the revised licence.

It is for Natural England to determine whether and when it is appropriate for surveys to be carried out.

7.2 Question 2 from Cllr Steve Morpew

How many pregnant or lactating barbastelle bats is it acceptable to the Council to trap during this process and how many have been trapped so far?

Response:

No pregnant or lactating bats have been trapped.

Surveyors working on our behalf had planned to start carrying out radiotracking surveys on private land on the evening of Friday 24 July, in accordance with the licence issued by Natural England. The selected location for the trapping was in a woodland on private land where we have the permission of the land owner.

However, at around 9.15pm, whilst setting up the nets, the surveyors were interrupted by a group of objectors who had trespassed onto the private land in order to confront our surveyors. The police and the landowner were called and eventually the group appeared to leave the immediate area, however the surveyors had ongoing concerns that the objectors had remained nearby. Shortly afterwards the survey was aborted as our surveyors felt bat and staff welfare could be compromised by continuing to work in these conditions.

It is unfortunate that our surveyors found themselves in this situation and that some campaigners felt it necessary to behave in this way. Staff were on site to carry out

legitimate and lawful surveys that have been licensed by Natural England. A condition in the Natural England licence for this work states:

'Trapping must be suspended if heavily pregnant or suspected early lactating bats of any species are being caught in high single figures on any given survey night.'

7.3 Question from Cllr Emma Corlett

The ability for children to safely play outdoors is more important than ever, yet of the 77 councils who support Play Streets, Norfolk is the only council who charges for road closures. Any charge is prohibitive to the most disadvantaged communities, including Town Close. Will the cabinet member therefore commit that there will be no charge to communities who wish to close their road for Car Free Day in September?

Response:

We have agreed to not only support Car Free Day in Norwich, but to roll it out across the county and encourage residents in all local communities to apply to close their road should they wish. There will obviously be certain restrictions on the types of roads that can be closed but you will be pleased to hear that we have agreed to waive fees on this day. We hope that this will help to make the initiative as accessible as possible and support our wider long term aims to build strong communities and reduce pollution across the county. Further details on this initiative will shortly be published

7.4 Supplementary Question from Cllr Emma Corlett

Will he further commit to explore permanently scrapping all charges for street play road closures?

Response:

We are looking at Car Free Day as the starting point but will be looking closely at what more we can do in terms of promoting street play road closures moving forward. So yes, I will certainly commit to exploring it.

7.5 Question from Cllr Jess Barnard

Following the comments made at People and Communities Select Committee by Conservative councillors regarding young people, will the cabinet member for children's services condemn the unfounded and sweeping accusations made against the young people of Norfolk, and thank our young people who throughout this pandemic have volunteered in covid response teams, raised money for local services, been essential workers, young carers and overwhelmingly taking precautions against covid to protect their communities?

Response:

Young people have had to cope with enormous changes to their lives during Covid. Such changes and sacrifices have impacted on their wellbeing, their relationships, their learning, activities and routines. Young people in Norfolk have undoubtedly made significant and invaluable contribution during this time. They have supported not only one another and their families, but also their communities. They have also helped NCC and our partners to plan and evaluate how we deliver our services

through the pandemic. During lockdown, young people have shaped our media campaigns around safeguarding, support for young carers, online safety, returning to school, young people's mental health and how we develop and reshape services and support for young people going forward.

While any community will have pockets of individuals, young and old who choose to ignore guidance, the vast majority of young people have joined with the collective effort to keep Norfolk safe and they should be recognised and thanked for that effort.

7.6 Question from Cllr Colleen Walker

What steps is the council taking to add to the numbers of laptops available to young learners from disadvantaged backgrounds in addition to the 1800 already distributed?

Response:

Through our work to distribute laptops to children with a social worker we have learned that about 60-65% of identified children required a device. A very small proportion of parents even returned their device. We already had a very successful scheme to provide devices for looked after children. For other disadvantaged children, schools are provided with Pupil Premium Funding and can consider how they utilise this, particularly as recent government guidance contains an expectation that schools deliver online and remote learning in the event of further localised lockdowns. Some schools are already using Pupil Premium funding to provide devices. In line with our role, we will support and challenge schools to have robust systems for online and remote learning for all children. Our Online Learning Toolkit was produced together with colleagues from schools and academies and includes a discussion of technology use.

7.7 Supplementary Question from Cllr Colleen Walker

What will the cabinet member do to ensure young people without access to technology do not fall behind with remote learning during possible future Covid spikes?

Response:

This response is answered within the main question.

7.8 Question from Cllr Mike Smith-Clare

Last month the children's cabinet member replied to a question 'It is not the place of schools, or Children's Services to feed all children, nor to monitor whether children arrive at school hungry, and therefore unable to learn effectively.' Whose responsibility is it to monitor whether children arrive at school hungry and therefore unable to learn effectively?

Response:

We recognise that whilst it is of course a parental responsibility to ensure that children have a nutritious breakfast and don't go hungry, some families may need support in the current crisis. Many schools do excellent work to support children and families by utilising the community offer available. We have provided a partner

resource pack (<https://www.schools.norfolk.gov.uk/coronavirus/partner-support-pack>) to all schools, which details not only food related support, but also a much wider range of community and third sector offers to support families and children.

Where children arrive hungry and unable to learn, this can be part of a safeguarding concern. Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is everyone's responsibility and everyone who comes into contact with children and their families has a role to play. Schools and colleges and their staff are an important part of the wider safeguarding system for children as they are in a position to identify concerns early, provide help for children, and prevent concerns from escalating. Statutory guidance 'Keeping Children Safe in Education', clearly outlines the safeguarding responsibilities of all schools and colleges. School have safeguarding policies that outline this process.

7.9 Question from Cllr Terry Jermy

Further to the answer provided in May 2020, could the Cabinet Member for Assets provide an update in relation to the former Cosy Carpets building in Thetford and the legal case with Mr Nolan Guthrie referred to in response to my written question at the time, and confirm whether or not the case has now been resolved.

Response:

"All parties are working together to resolve the case in advance of reaching Land Tribunal. It is therefore inappropriate to discuss at this point"

Cllr Jermy has been previously briefed on this issue by officers and they are happy (subject to commercial confidentiality) to provide further updates, including once the case has been concluded.

7.10 Question from Cllr Danny Douglas

Can the County Council leader please re-examine the possibility of using a TRO to divert buses away from Magdalen Street leaving the street for more walking and cycling? The existing pavement space is not sufficient to allow social distancing at present.

Response:

To assist with social distancing, a one-way system has been set up as well as two metre markers put on the pavements on Magdalen Street.

Magdalen Street forms the main route in and out of the city centre from the north of the city for buses and Anglia Square is a busy bus interchange serving local shops and services. We are aware from feedback from businesses along Magdalen Street that access by public transport is very important to them.

There are currently no plans to remove bus services from Magdalen Street but will of course keep the existing arrangements under review. In the meantime, we continue to progress opportunities across the county to encourage and support cycling and walking, including through the significant Transforming Cities programme in Norwich.

7.11 Supplementary Question from Cllr Danny Douglas

Will the County Council leader join me in a request to Simon Bailey Chief Constable of the Norfolk Constabulary in requesting additional police resources to ensure the county councils scheme to promote licensed outdoor chairs and tables on St Benedict's and Exchange Street is a success without effecting the 10,000 residents of the city centre through anti-social behaviour?

Response:

The recently implemented emergency highway works on St Benedict's Street and Exchange Street were designed to allow more space for people to socially distance. Businesses who are interested in outdoor tables and chairs licenses are liaising with the City Council; it is unclear at this stage how many licenses will be requested and provided. At this stage, it is therefore not possible to ascertain what issue(s) may arise that require police intervention.

The question of how much police resource is required in these areas is something that Norfolk Constabulary are best placed to consider. I am sure that all public authorities across Norfolk will continue to work together to support communities across Norfolk to keep safe and well during Covid-19 recovery.

7.12 **Question from Cllr Chrissie Rumsby**

Last week the government made an announcement about tackling obesity. Given the motion brought to this council by the Labour group was to address food poverty and poor nutrition will the cabinet think again and review the way they perceive food poverty and take a more holistic approach to public health? Poverty and poor nutrition has a consequence and that often is obesity as cheapest food often has the worst nutritional value.

Response:

As you will already be aware the new approach to healthy living (or lifestyle behaviours) – which includes consumption of a poor diet as one of the key risk behaviours – was approved by Cabinet in October 2019. This approach, which was referred to as the Systems Approach, will aim to look wider than just commissioning services. It will include significant workforce development to upskill key workforces around behaviour change so that they can support people to address barriers to change. In addition, efforts to promote 'positive' health behaviours will be supported by communities. Looking at these issues more widely will start to address wider determinants such as food poverty and health literacy in ways that we have not been able to previously.

7.13 **Question from Cllr Mike Sands**

Holt Hall and Whitlingham Adventure Centre have supported children and young people though access to additional learning activities. Beneficiaries have included SEND learners. If these centres are closed what provision will fill the gap and what risks have been identified in not providing extended learning opportunities?

Response:

Our outdoor learning centres at Holt Hall and Whitlingham Adventure have been closed since March, in line with government guidance. Our review into the future of outdoor learning was also paused at that time, whilst we dealt with the ongoing emergency.

We have adapted the review, and this restarted on 17th July. We are asking schools, as the main users of these services, for their views on the future of outdoor learning in Norfolk. This engagement will enable us to consider any implications to Norfolk schools and Learners.

Press statement:

Holt Hall and Whitlingham Adventure have been closed since March, when the country went into lockdown. At that time, we had been reviewing our outdoor learning service because both centres were running at a loss and the buildings required significant maintenance. The financial situation is now even more challenging because Covid-19 has created a bigger funding gap for the council and the centres have been unable to operate or make any money.

Our review had been paused while we dealt with the emergency but will now continue. We are therefore asking schools for their views on how outdoor learning should look in the future. It might be that we provide more school-based support for outdoor learning, as schools make the most of their outdoor spaces, in light of the pandemic. No decisions have been made on the future of Holt Hall and Whitlingham Adventure and we are looking at a range of options, which include the possible closure of Holt Hall and the transfer of Whitlingham to a new provider.

7.14 Question and supplementary question from Cllr David Collis

What is happening to Norfolk's Music Service?

Response:

We are pleased to note that some of the provision offered by the Music Service will resume in September, as requested by schools. However, there will still be a need to consider how we can offer a cost-effective service, which can also be targeted to reach groups, including more disadvantaged children, who may not be able to afford individual instrumental tuition. As with many of our traded services we are considering the impact of the COVID-19 crisis and the opportunities available in the future.

I was particularly pleased to witness an online concert organised by our Music Service during the recent lockdown.

Supplementary Question from Cllr David Collis:

Are cuts still being proposed?

Response:

This response is answered within the main question.

7.15 Question from Cllr Alexandra Kemp:

This May, Cabinet set up a Public Sector Leaders' Board, of local government, health, police and Local Enterprise Partnership, to drive the local strategic agenda for Norfolk's recovery.

As the Local Member for Clenchwarton and King's Lynn South, I note the plethora of poor centrally-made strategic decisions (and omissions) affecting West Norfolk,

including -: unwanted incinerator contract; harmful traffic order to cannibalize the £5.3 million bus-and-cycle-only lane; economically damaging plan for an A10 roundabout before West Winch Bypass; and neglect of local health with the non-delivery of both the South Lynn Millennium Surgery and local hospital rebuild. What strategic decisions has the Board made to benefit West Norfolk?

Response:

The Norfolk Public Sector Leader Board is not due to meet for the first time until September 2020, therefore this Board has not made any decisions to date. A forward work plan for the Public Sector Leader's Board has been proposed at the Norfolk Leader's Group meeting on 31 July 2020 and that will be considered at the September meeting referred to.

7.16

Question from Cllr Tim Adams

How important are the agriculture and farming sectors to reviving Norfolk's economy following Covid and the challenges of Brexit?

Response:

Agriculture is a significant sector across Norfolk and is recognised as such, not least as one of the three key sectors outlined by the Local Industrial Strategy, alongside Clean Energy and Digital, as well as well as our Norfolk and Suffolk Economic Strategy.

Supporting and lobbying for Norfolk farming is a key pillar of our Norfolk Rural Strategy and pivotal in time of change. As such, in the last week, we have responded to the DEFRA's consultation on a new Environmental Land Management (ELM) scheme, to ensure the programme attains the greatest possible participation by Norfolk farmers and land managers, with prompt and accessible payments for participants.

In the long term, water security will be vital for the continued strength of agriculture in Norfolk. We are board members of Water Resources East, together with a wide range of organisations with and interest in water resources and are building a strategy to achieve this. A current bid has been received into the Norfolk Strategic Fund to accelerate this development.

As well as supporting existing agriculture for the future, we are working hard to drive the industry up the value chain and see more of our produce prepared for market in the county; our Food Enterprise Park is part of one the first Food Enterprise Zones in the country and provides commercial space to encourage food production and processing.

The LEADER programme, administered by Norfolk County Council, with decisions made by community-based Local Action Groups, has demonstrated a high level of impact in rural areas – directing vital funds to support agri-tech projects and diversification. The programme has committed nearly £8.5m of grants for projects that include:

- increasing farm productivity
- supporting micro and small businesses and farm diversification
- boosting rural tourism

- increasing forestry productivity

7.17 Question from Cllr Steffan Aquarone

What is the moral justification for trapping lactating barbastelle bats in the name of surveying in the proposed area of the Norwich Western Link, and why were contractors not wearing appropriate PPE?

Response:

These are legitimate and lawful surveys that have been licensed by Natural England for the purpose of gathering data about a protected species, in order to inform measures to protect and support bats as part of the Norwich Western Link project.

On Friday evening, the surveys were aborted while our surveyors were setting up their equipment after objectors had trespassed onto private land to confront our surveyors. They were aborted due to concerns that bat and staff welfare could be compromised by continuing work with trespassers present. Full PPE was present on site and would have been used for any bat handling activities as per guidelines for protecting bats, but was not being worn as the surveys had not started

7.18 Supplementary Question from Cllr Steffan Aquarone

This is now the second time the council has made a mistake in trying to survey this land. Will he stake his cabinet position on there being no more?

Response:

I'm not clear what is being referred to here when Cllr Aquarone says 'This is now the second time the council has made a mistake in trying to survey this land'. The County Council sought approval from Natural England, the Government's advisory body for the natural environment, through their licencing process. We will of course always follow the advice of key bodies like Natural England and throughout all stages we have arranged and carried out activities in accordance with the licence and conditions they have issued to us.

I would like to categorically state that staff working on the project and our consultant and sub-contractor have conducted themselves professionally and with integrity at all times, in some very challenging circumstances. The actions taken by the group who confronted our surveyors on the evening of Friday 24 July are completely unacceptable.

7.19 Question from Cllr Dan Roper

Statistically Norfolk sees higher than national average excess winter deaths in our over 85s population (50.5% in 17/18 compared to 41.1% nationally), so what new approaches will the council take to reduce the levels of excess death amongst the 85s this winter?

Response:

Norfolk has a particular demographic profile with more retirees than other counties. As you would expect the County Council is already working closely with the Norfolk and Waveney Clinical Commissioning Group and other Health and Care system

partners. We are all planning for winter 2020/21 and drawing on the national report "Preparing for a challenging winter 2020/21" from the National Academy of Sciences, and taking into count the context of the Covid-19 pandemic. As well as reviewing the delivery of existing schemes to support winter planning, a number of new or enhanced initiatives are being developed. This includes strengthened work on flu vaccinations (including in care settings), step-down bed facilities to support people safely out of hospital, and a review of how we can ensure sufficient capacity in the community that keeps people safe and well. We will also continue to reinforce the important actions everyone can take to stay safe during the pandemic, including handwashing, social distancing, and self-isolating.

7.20 Question from Cllr Tim East

Will you give a guarantee that the council will not use the financial impact of Covid as a reason to reduce the future care packages for disabled people?

Response:

Norfolk County Council will not use the Covid-19 Pandemic to reduce any disabled persons package, this has been said before. Ensuring care packages are reviewed and 'right sized' is an ongoing part of the Care Act which is the legislative framework for the work of Adult Social Services. We continue to do this in line with our Promoting Independence strategy which seeks to reduce demand, re-able and build greater resilience in communities and families. Throughout the Pandemic the Council has done everything it can to protect those who rely on its services.

7.21 Question from Cllr David Harrison

During the pandemic and beyond, as a council with a greatly lower percentage of successful completions of drug treatments in non-opiate users than the rest of the region and indeed nationally; How have you taken the knowledge and instances of best practice from the other Councils in the East of England to improve the recovery rates for those people using the Council's services?

Response:

Although Norfolk has a lower percentage completion rate for non-opiate users than some other areas in the East of England, it is an improving picture. Throughout the pandemic, the County Councils drug behaviour change service provider, Change Grow Live (CGL), has remained open. They have continued to support all clients, positively contacting over 1800 clients per week through various digital platforms and via telephone. All CGL bases have remained open for people to access harm minimisation advice and equipment. New referrals have been managed based on support needs and those with high risk factors, including poor physical and mental health have been seen face to face by clinicians. Since April, CGL made the decision, supported by commissioners, not to discharge clients during lockdown, preferring to provide ongoing emotional wellbeing support and interventions during this very stressful time. However, as lockdown relaxes, clients who are ready are now being prepared for discharge with ongoing recovery support being in place.

We work very closely with colleagues in the East of England region and we have continued to meet as a region regularly over the last four months to share good practice. During the pandemic each local authority area has experienced similar practice, with services remaining open but moving to an online offer and clients not

being discharged.

7.22 Question from Cllr Brian Watkins

According to a recent survey from the Centre for Cities, Norwich has been identified as one of the slowest cities to recover from the coronavirus lockdown. What are the key actions the Council is taking in partnership with other councils and stakeholders, to try and address this worrying situation?

Response:

The Centre for Cities study measures footfall, not spending and confidence. As is well known, many of the City's businesses are in the financial and digital creative sectors, which have been able to operate effectively with home working (eg Aviva), while still contributing to the economy of Norwich. The safety measures we have had in place have meant that Norfolk and Norwich have had some of the lowest incidences of the virus in the country

It is also far too soon to talk about the recovery of any city from the pandemic at this early stage, in terms of footfall. In line with government guidance, non-essential shops have only recently re-opened, the leisure and cultural offer (eg libraries) that many people venture into the City for is only now opening up again, and not all of the City's car parks have yet re-opened. However, anecdotal evidence suggests the City is busy at weekends, since the re-opening of non-essential shops - last weekend St Andrew's car park was full, for the first time since lockdown.

The city of Norwich is central to the County Council's recovery plans, with a range of business and infrastructure-related interventions in place, to speed up the recovery:

- A £500k tourism project to support the City, as part of package of £2.225m of measures to get the Norfolk tourism sector back on its feet. The funding will support the improvement of the presentation, cleanliness and hygiene of key areas, communication of safety messages with visitors and visitor assistance. A small grants programme is also being developed for businesses to support the costs of making the changes needed to extend the season.
- Support for the city's Town Deal for c.£25m of funding from Government to improve the city centre for businesses and the local community.
- Securing over £30m of Transforming Cities funding, focussed on measures to help people's connectivity, allowing them to get to job opportunities, leisure, retail, etc.
- Securing £300k from Phase 1 of the Government's Emergency Active Travel Fund, covering Covid signage, physical-distancing measures and closures to traffic on Exchange Street and St Benedict's, to help traders recover. A Phase 2 bid will be submitted by 7 August, looking at further recovery measures.
- Greater Norwich's pooled Community Infrastructure Levy (the Infrastructure Investment Fund) has opened a call for new infrastructure projects, with priority being given to those that support the economic recovery of Covid-19.
- In East Norwich, the Council is working with partners including Norwich City Council, Homes England and developers and landowners to produce a masterplan for the area, with the Council provide funding towards the plan.

We have also secured circa £50k for study into the buildability of links (road, public transport and walking and cycling) to open up the various sites

7.23 Question from Cllr Ed Maxfield

The Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman recently instructed the Council to provide more regular updates to its committee members on the number of children out of education in the county - and those at risk of having their education break down. Can the Cabinet Member for Children's Services tell us what plans he has for providing this information and what steps he will take to review Council practices where it risks failing to meet its statutory obligations to provide education for children?

Response:

We will be reporting routinely to People and Communities Select Committee starting from the meeting on 18 September 2020 for two academic years. We have extensive plans in place to as part of our SEND and AP Transformation Programme to address these issues. This includes, but is not limited to securing sufficient places for children with a range of needs. To date we have:

- Worked across multi-agency teams to enable full support around each child register under CME (Children Missing Education)
- Conducted regular welfare calls to the families these are continuing during the summer holiday
- Established a tuition framework, which is being added to on a regular basis
- Held multi-agency triage meetings to ensure the most appropriate support provided from the start
- Rapidly developed working practices to adapt to new ways of working – e.g. laptops provided to all who required devices through distributing refurbished LA laptops
- Ensured tracking of engagements through an attendance register
- Forged transition plans for all year 6 and 7 pupils
- Updated the CME register regularly
- Provided Free School Meals for all those eligible (vouchers)
- Secured tuition for all students, which is reviewed every six weeks and some continues throughout the summer

The LGSCO said:

The Council should provide its People and Communities Select Committee with regular updates on its performance for two full financial years in terms of the following:

- number of children out of education;
- average time for arranging alternative education provision for children who have been out of education;
- average time taken to produce final EHC plans and EHC plan reviews compared with statutory timescales; and
- number of upheld complaints about EHC plans and education provision from both the Council's own complaints process and us.
- These updates should be provided each time the Committee meets during the above period

Appendix C

Questions requiring written responses from the Cabinet Meeting held on Monday 3 August 2020

	Question and response:
<p>Agenda item 6 Public Question Time</p> <p>Supplementary Question from Dr Andrew Boswell</p>	<p>As a supplementary question Dr Boswell asked if the Cabinet Member could please explain how your evaluation of companies, and their tender bids, will ensure that the project requirement to create a biodiversity net gain is met? "</p> <p>Response from the Cabinet Member for Highways, Infrastructure & Transport:</p> <p>The February 2020 Cabinet report set out that 'Aspects of the scheme that deliver biodiversity net gain will be included in the specification or will be added later through change control where they cannot be specified precisely prior to detailed design – for example, because of the need for landowner negotiations to obtain land where planting can be undertaken'. This process is still active and being developed and led by the project team. All proposals will be developed and included as part of the planning and other related statutory approval processes.</p> <p>The main contractor will be responsible for delivering all requirements within the site extent boundary, that will be defined within the planning process, including measures which have been included for biodiversity net gain reasons. A significant number of ecological and environmental surveys have already been carried out and surveys are continuing to ensure we are establishing a thorough understanding of habitats and wildlife in the area around the route, and to provide up-to-date information ahead of the planning application being submitted next year. So work is ongoing to help inform what measures are needed, however bidders will need to demonstrate that they have accounted for our biodiversity net gain goals in their design, landscaping and mitigation proposals.</p> <p>Ultimately the main contractor will be responsible for delivering the project as agreed following the approvals processes. This will include the specified biodiversity net gain. Under the contract they will also be responsible for maintaining planted areas for 3 years after completion of the construction phase. All of the planted areas will be monitored to ensure they are maintained during that period.</p>
<p>Agenda item 7 Local Member written Supplementary Question from Cllr Mike Smith-Clare</p>	<p>As a written supplementary question, Cllr Mike-Smith Clare said that the response to his question stated 'Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children was everyone's responsibility and everyone who came into contact with children and their families had a role to play' then failed to say what the cabinet member for Children's Services was responsible for. Cllr Smith-Clare asked if the Cabinet Member would now spell it out please</p> <p>Response from the Cabinet Member for Children's Services: Due to a streaming issue, the Cabinet Member for Children's Services agreed to provide a written response.</p> <p>The Cabinet Member replied, as he had said previously, that he would like to be able to feed all Norfolk's Children, although it was the responsibility of families to do so.</p> <p>As the Cabinet Member, Cllr Fisher said he was responsible for ensuring the needs of all children and young people, including the most disadvantaged and vulnerable and their families and carers were met. In doing so, he would work closely with other local partners to improve the outcomes and wellbeing of children and young people. He added that it was not his role to get drawn into the day to day operational management of education and children's services, although it was his role to provide strong, strategic leadership and support and challenge to the Executive Director of Children's Services and relevant members of the Senior Management Team as appropriate.</p>

Cabinet

Item No: 8

Decision making report title:	Norfolk Fire and Rescue Service Training Facilities
Date of meeting:	7 September 2020
Responsible Cabinet Member:	Cllr Greg Peck (Cabinet Member for Commercial Services and Asset Management) Cllr Margaret Dewsbury (Cabinet Member for Communities and Partnerships)
Responsible Director:	Tom McCabe (Executive Director and Community and Environmental Services)
Is this a key decision?	No
If this is a key decision, date added to the Forward Plan of Key Decisions.	N/A
<p>Introduction from Cabinet Member</p> <p>We all understand and recognise the crucial role our emergency services play in keeping Norfolk communities safe. Equally, we recognise our role in helping to ensure that we keep our staff safe and well prepared to respond to those in need.</p> <p>We have an exciting opportunity to develop our approach and modernise facilities for training and developing our staff both now and in the future. Developing 21st century learning solutions for the development of 21st century people.</p> <p>This approach builds on our highly successful collaboration work with Norfolk Constabulary which has already delivered a number of significant benefits. It continues to support emergency services working together to ensure efficient, effective and joined up services. Something that Norfolk communities want and expect and expect from us.</p> <p>Creating space to think, learn, train and practice together places our services in the best possible position to meet current and future needs.</p> <p>Equally exciting are some of the associated benefits that this approach could deliver, including opening up space for community use, supporting the local economy and generating additional income.</p>	

Executive Summary

As reported to Cabinet in March as part of the update on Fire and Police collaboration activities, officers have been working with Norfolk Constabulary to explore the opportunity to develop the concept of an emergency services training academy for joint learning and development.

This report sets out our intent to develop a joint emergency services training academy with Norfolk Constabulary. This academy would use a number of training venues, each being best suited to meet the needs of learning outcomes and 21st century people. This paper focuses on an early opportunity to develop the academy approach by collaborating with Norfolk Constabulary to develop the former Hethersett Old Hall School site (owned by Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner).

Recommendations

- 1. To agree to work with Norfolk Constabulary to develop the emergency services training academy concept**
- 2. Collaborate with Norfolk Constabulary to develop the former Hethersett Old Hall site, as set out in this report**
- 3. Task officers to carry out a detailed feasibility study of other necessary improvements to the wider training infrastructure and, if viable, to develop a detailed business case for Members to consider.**

1. Background and Purpose

- 1.1. Training facilities for operational Fire and Rescue staff are currently based in two locations; Scottow Enterprise Park (SEP) and a training centre based in Bowthorpe, Norwich. The facility at SEP came into operation in 2015 and therefore is relatively modern. The training centre at Bowthorpe is over 30 years old and the building has become quite tired. The site does not currently benefit from the latest technology and the layout of the site, particularly in terms of office space, does not meet the latest NCC standards for modern working arrangements and therefore will require some modernisation.
- 1.2. As reported to Cabinet in March as part of the update on Fire and Police collaboration activities, officers have been working with Norfolk Constabulary to explore the opportunity to develop the concept of an emergency services training academy for joint learning and development. Emergency services have common workforce and development needs, some bespoke to the blue light sector, which could be best delivered through an academy approach.
- 1.3. Since that time, Norfolk Constabulary (through the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner) has purchased the former Hethersett Old Hall School Site and is in the process of developing the site as their primary base for the training of staff. To enable the concept of a joint academy we have worked with Norfolk

Constabulary to explore opportunities for a joint facility at this location, including by participating in a joint Project Board to oversee site development.

- 1.4. The vision to be delivered by a joint academy, “21st century learning solutions for the development of 21st century people”, is presented at Appendix A. The benefits of joint location are central to this and a joint facility at the Hethersett Old Hall School Site would enable this. However, “Live Fire” and other elements of infrastructure required for the delivery of a range of safety critical training are unlikely to be supported at this venue, so further options need to be considered

2. Proposals

- 2.1. NFRS works with Norfolk Constabulary to develop the emergency services training academy concept to deliver our vision of “21st century learning solutions for the development of 21st century people.

2.2 Former Hethersett Old Hall School site (HOHS), Hethersett

This site, owned by the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner, will be a shared centre for emergency services ‘clean’ training

Entering a collaborative approach to training and development at the HOHS will enable NFRS to significantly improve it’s training offer to it’s employees.

Development of the HOHS will deliver modern, efficient facilities to provide theoretical based training utilising excellent IT infrastructure, hardware and connectivity supporting both physically and remotely connected classrooms.

The HOHS will enable greater collaboration in training delivery, opportunities are already being explored around driver training, first aid and managerial / leadership skills. This opportunity will bring staff from the emergency services closer together and will enable even greater opportunities to plan, train and deliver against community risk reduction activities building on our commitment to making Norfolk Safer.

A joint approach to learning with other emergency services would also enable a joint approach under prevention, response, and post incident investigation and joint learning, unique within the emergency service sector.

Work to develop the site is already underway and facilities for new Police recruits are due to be operational in the early Autumn.

We would continue to work with Norfolk Constabulary to develop early opportunities at the site. Initial opportunities (over the next 3-6 months) are likely to be collaboration on a blue light driver training facility, creation of a physical training hub (the current Fire and Rescue physical training team does

not have a dedicated base to work from) and shared use of modern classroom facilities.

2.3 Further Infrastructure to support NFRS and Interagency Training

There is a growing need for the development of fire service staff in terms of current practical training, future technologies and integration with other emergency responders.

The joint academy concept embeds a recognition that current and future training outcomes will be agile to meet shared and independent development needs of partners in the emergency response sector. To enable this a range of facilities will need to be maintained. NFRS will need to consider a range of options to ensure we benefit from joint location for those outcomes specified in 2.2 and secure other facilities for those areas not immediately available at Bowthorpe and unlikely to be delivered at HOHS.

Current facilities based at the Bowthorpe site were built 30 years ago and consist of a brick construction building and metal training tower all of which do not reflect the domestic, commercial and industrial buildings in which we attend fires and other emergencies on a regular basis. Reducing the risk to our emergency services and to the public is best done through realistic scenarios-based training on structures and simulated environments closely matching those which will be experienced in the real world.

The proposal to move to a joint facility at HOHS provides many opportunities and improvements, but it is unlikely to meet the spatial and infrastructure training requirements of a modern fire service and those of the multi-agency emergency response and security environment. An environment recognised by central government's current Integrated Review of Security, Defence, Development and Foreign Policy; this review is placing an expectation on the importance of integrated civil capabilities, to secure community wellbeing, emergency response and security at the centre of its thinking.

3. Impact of the Proposal

- 3.1. The development of these proposals would enable Norfolk to be among the first joint emergency services approach to training and development of this type in the country. It will also ensure access to modern training facilities for emergency service staff that are able to meet existing and future needs, enhance training capacity and capability and support work to keep Norfolk communities safe.

4. Evidence and Reasons for Decision

- 4.1. There are a number of potential benefits in progressing the joint training academy approach as set out in this report. These include: -

- Bringing local buildings back into productive use, to support the local economy
- Providing certainty in terms of future use of sites, enabling work to start and avoiding the sites falling into further disrepair
- Providing modern, progressive facilities reflecting the changing needs of emergency service staff to deliver the changing needs of Norfolk.
- Supports an efficient approach to use of resources by placing emergency services in the best possible position to enable shared and common approaches
- Whilst the development will focus on emergency service needs, and facilities could be made available for other NCC and public service authorities to access, building the shared training academy approach even further
- Ensuring Norfolk and its partners through the Civil Contingencies Act (2004) are well placed to respond to emergency response and emerging central government policy in relation to securing community wellbeing, emergency response and security.

5. Alternative Options

- 5.1. The existing site at Bowthorpe, which is owned by the County Council, could be developed further. Retaining Fire and Rescue training at Bowthorpe in the medium/long term would require some investment in the building to enable modern facilities. There is not space on site to create the range of facilities required for our fire service and support an integrated approach to multi-agency emergency response training.
- 5.2. We could explore utilising the former Hethersett Old Hall School site as a single joint training academy location. There is not space on site to create the additional capability likely to be needed (e.g. a scenario room approach) and therefore it would not be possible to create this new capability. In addition, it may not be possible to locate all relevant training onto this site either as a result of potential planning issues or because it does not fit with the vision for the site.

6. Financial Implications

- 6.1. The intention is for the proposals to be delivered on a mutually beneficial basis, but organisation's maintaining ownership and control of their property assets. The use of all sites by both organisations would be through fair use of the facilities on a quid pro quo basis, these details will require further consideration.

Costs for the wider infrastructure review to be developed as part of the business case

7. Resource Implications

- 7.1. **Staff:** In developing our service, we need to ensure our learning environments are relevant to the needs of our people and our sector, capable in providing physical, environmental and technological solutions, and being agile enough to encompass emergent learning needs and service outcomes. Investment in the emergency services academy concept will mean that emergency service staff in Norfolk will be able to access the most comprehensive operational training capability in the region. Supporting our staff to keep both themselves and Norfolk communities safe.

The concept has the opportunity to be the best of its type in the country, placing Norfolk emergency services as a national leader in in-house training capability. This will help attract and retain the best possible staff for Norfolk's services. It also ensures that training facilities can reflect the changing and diversifying workforce and enable all our people to maximise their potential.

There will be opportunities to develop shared staffing models to manage and operate the sites, and this may result in proposals to change posts and/or organisational support structures. Staff will be fully consulted on any staffing proposals developed.

- 7.2. **Property:** The development of facilities at Hethersett and the consideration of improved training infrastructure may mean that Fire and Rescue training may no longer be carried out at the Bowthorpe facility. Opportunities to deliver the requirements of the proposal in 2.3 will be explored, this may result in Bowthorpe no longer being the centre of training for NFRS. There may be an opportunity for the site to be made available for other NCC services to access or disposed of, provided it is not required for a future fire station location. It sits within an industrial park on the edge of Norwich and may be attractive for business use.

-
- 7.3. **IT:** These issues will need to be explored as part of detailed development work. Technological solutions will form a key element of thinking, including on site technology to support webinars and other virtual training activities which could be carried out to avoid staff having to travel to a training facility where these could be delivered remotely. This is particularly important for our on-call firefighters where attendance at training courses can be more challenging to arrange.

8. Other Implications

- 8.1. **Legal Implications:** The Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004 enables fire and rescue authorities to establish and maintain one or more training facilities for providing education and training.

The Health and Safety at Work Act 2015 places a requirement in employers to have a duty to provide training for their employees to ensure, so far as it reasonably practicable, their health and safety at work.

Joint Emergency Service Interoperability Programme (JESIP) models and principles are the standard for emergency service interoperability in the UK. The JESIP Joint Doctrine: the interoperability framework, sets out a standard approach to multi-agency working. These proposals develop shared training facilities and will support the effective delivery of the framework in an emergency.

8.2. **Human Rights implications:** None.

8.3. **Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA):** An equality impact assessment will be completed as part of the detailed development work.

8.4. **Health and Safety implications:** The proposal is to invest in modern emergency services training facilities, with additional capability, to support keeping our staff and Norfolk communities safe.

8.5. **Sustainability implications:** These will be considered in detail as part of the detailed development. Relevant planning approvals would need to be obtained.

8.6. **Any other implications**

Integrated Review of Security, Defence, Development and Foreign Policy (2020) (see para 2.3 above).

9. **Risk Implications/Assessment**

9.1. There are a number of potential benefits and opportunities arising from the joint training academy model, and these are set out in more detail in this report and the appendix.

9.2. Appropriate planning approvals would need to be sought and there is no guarantee that approvals would be granted for the outcomes as presented

10. **Select Committee comments**

10.1. N/A

11. **Recommendations**

- 11.1.
 1. **To agree to work with Norfolk Constabulary to develop the emergency services training academy concept**
 2. **Collaborate with Norfolk Constabulary to develop the former Hethersett Old Hall site, as set out in this report**

3. Task officers to carry out a detailed feasibility study of other necessary improvements to the wider training infrastructure and, if viable, to develop a detailed business case for Members to consider.

12. Background Papers

- 12.1. [Report to Cabinet titled 'Emergency Services Collaboration – update' dated 2 March 2020](#)

[Report to Cabinet titled 'Hethel Innovation Ltd and Scottow Enterprise Park' dated 2 March 2020](#)

[Report to Cabinet titled 'Norfolk Fire and Rescue Service – HMICFRS Improvement Plan' update dated 8 June 2020](#)

Officer Contact

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

Officer name: Stuart Ruff – Chief Fire Officer **Tel No.:** 0300 123 1383

Email address: stuart.ruff@fire.norfolk.gov.uk

Officer name: Sarah Rhoden – Assistant Director, CES **Tel No.:** 0344 800 8020

Email address: sarah.rhoden@norfolk.gov.uk

Officer name: Tim Edwards – Assistant Chief Fire Officer **Tel No.:** 0344 800 8020

Email address: tim.edwards@fire.norfolk.gov.uk



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

Emergency Services Joint Training Academy

Vision

“21st century learning solutions for the development of 21st century people”

Summary

Norfolk Fire and Rescue Service and Norfolk Constabulary have common workforce development needs, some bespoke to our sectors which would be best delivered from an integrated training facility; a shared location would enable best value and the maximising of resources; in 2019 the County Council and the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner signed a Memorandum of Understanding committing to improve community safety by enhancing collaboration; partnered use of Hethersett Old Hall School (HOHS) would enable these three outcomes by providing 21st century learning solutions for the development of 21st century people, including first responders and leaders.

NFRS vision for HOHS

Our Joint Training Academy will enable NFRS and NC to be at the heart of community safety for the communities of Norfolk. It will provide a purposed space to think, learn, experience and practice together; this will better enable us to deliver the current and future needs of our ever changing and diverse communities.

- Our Joint Training Academy will promote a 21st century workforce by enabling the ambition, potential and excellence of our staff to thrive through 21st century training solutions for 21st century people; delivered in physical environments which sponsor a feeling of wellbeing, are ergonomic and flexible, to enable members of the "Blue Light" community to be challenged, developed and assessed to meet the needs of our changing communities.

Enable NFRS to be Relevant, Capable and Agile

In the IRMP 2020/23, NFRS stated its vision to be at the heart of community safety by ensuring that it is Relevant, Capable and Agile; relevant to the needs of our communities, capable in the delivery of services and agile in response to shifting environments.

In developing our service, we need to ensure our learning environments are relevant to the needs of our people and our sector; capable in providing physical, environmental and technological solutions, being agile enough to encompass emergent individual learning needs and service development outcomes.

Our people at the centre of our thinking

Our staffs need to understand, design and deliver outcomes to meet the needs of our evolving communities, through the delivery of our statutory duties. Any solutions we use to meet our statutory duty to develop and prepare our staffs need to recognise and promote the diversity of our people and their thinking, skills, needs and ambitions. 21st century learning environments need to reflect our changing and diversifying workforce to enable all of our people to maximise their potential by enabling a feeling of wellbeing, meeting different needs for different people and providing facilities which maximise technological solutions, being flexible to meet our sector specific training needs.

Cabinet

Item 9

Decision making report title:	Norfolk Fire and Rescue Service – HMICFRS Improvement Plan update
Date of meeting:	Sep 2020
Responsible Cabinet Member:	Cllr Margaret Dewsbury (Cabinet Member for Communities and Partnerships)
Responsible Director:	Tom McCabe (Executive Director, Community and Environmental Services)
Is this a key decision?	No

Introduction from Cabinet Member

Like the rest of the County, the focus of the Service over the last few months has been on normalising activities in the Covid-19 environment. Staff continue to provide services we can be proud of. Prevention activities have been restricted, in line with Government guidance, but continue for those at the highest risk. The full range of emergency response services to Norfolk communities has continued throughout this period.

Whilst some Covid-19 response activities, such as ambulance driving and logistics support have stopped, the Service is well-prepared to reinstate these activities should the need arise.

In the meantime, progress continues to be made to deliver the Fire and Rescue Improvement Plan. Particular points of progress since Cabinet last reviewed the Plan are:-

- Completion of the Community Risk Profile
- Start of the Concept of Operations Review
- Delivery of Tactical Response Vehicles
- Establishment of the Community Fire Safety posts
- Publication of the People Strategic Framework
- Completion of the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Plan

The Service also continues to work with Norfolk Constabulary to develop a combined Community Safety Team and to identify opportunities to develop new and improved training facilities.

The timetable for the next round of Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) inspection is currently unclear. However, we have been informed that HMICFRS will conduct a review, before the end of the calendar year, to assess how the Service has responded to Covid-19. Furthermore, we anticipate that the second round of HMICFRS inspections will commence early in 2021. I look forward to showing the Inspectors the progress and improvements that we have made.

Executive Summary

This report sets out the progress made to deliver the activities set out in the Improvement Plan since it was last reviewed by Cabinet June, and the plans for further improvement activities.

Recommendations

- To review and consider the progress made in delivering the Improvement Plan as set out in the report and at Appendix A.
- To agree to receive a further update on progress at the Cabinet meeting in December 2020.

1. Background and Purpose

- 1.1. Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) undertook a week long inspection of Norfolk Fire and Rescue Service (NFRS) in February 2019. This was the first time that HMICFRS inspected all 45 fire and rescue services across England. In carrying out the inspections, HMICFRS look to answer three main questions:
 1. How **effective** is the fire and rescue service at keeping people safe and secure from fire and other risks?
 2. How **efficient** is the fire and rescue service at keeping people safe and secure from fire and other risks?
 3. How well does the fire and rescue service look after its **people**?
- 1.2. The HMICFRS has published a report setting out their inspection findings. After taking all the evidence into account, a graded judgment is applied for each of the three questions. The four categories of graded judgment are: outstanding; good; requires improvement; and inadequate.
- 1.3. Norfolk Fire and Rescue Service was assessed with overall graded judgement of requires improvement. Other findings from the inspection were that the service is:
 - good in the way it responds to fires and other emergencies, with improvements required in how the service understands the risk from fire and other emergencies, how it prevents these risks from occurring and how it protects the public through fire safety regulation
 - good in the way it responds to national risks such as terrorism
 - good at making the service affordable now and in the future, with improvement needed in how it makes the best use of the resources available to it
 - good at getting the right people with the right skills, with improvement needed in how the service promotes its values and culture, ensures

fairness and equality, and how it manages performance and develops its leaders

- 1.4. An Improvement Plan has been developed and agreed to address the findings of the Inspection. Cabinet reviewed progress against this plan in June, and this report updates on the progress made since then

2. Update on delivery of the Improvement Plan

- 2.1. A detailed update on the progress being made to deliver the Improvement Plan is set out in Appendix A. Further information about some key areas of focus are set out below. Whilst progress continues to be made, some activities have been paused or rescheduled to enable the service to focus resources on responding to Covid-19.

2.2. Culture

- 2.2.1. The HMICFRS inspection in Norfolk identified ensuring values and behaviours are understood and demonstrated at all levels of the organisation as an area for improvement. The report also stated that “There was evidence of isolated examples of staff not acting in accordance with accepted behaviours, which was perceived to be bullying”. Culture was one of the key themes the HMICFRS has identified from across the 45 inspections carried out.

- 2.2.2. The new People Strategic Framework, which clearly identifies people as the Service’s most important asset and details an intent to attract, develop and retain a diverse and talented workforce, which sits at the heart of a relevant, capable and agile Service that protects the communities of Norfolk by working ‘Together, for Norfolk’, has been published. The document has been very well received by NFRS staffs. Furthermore, the recently published Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan clearly articulates the activities that will be delivered this year to increase awareness and promote the EDI agenda.

- 2.2.3. The Chief Fire Officer continues to be very clear that any form of bullying and harassment is not acceptable and the new NFRS cultural framework, which is expected to be formally launched in October, will reinforce this message. The Cultural Framework will be underpinned by the revised formal grievance process and a network of independent EDI advisors who will provide expert advice on cultural and EDI issues and assist with the informal resolution of issues.

- 2.2.4. The new senior management team is committed to demonstrating and championing the cultural framework.

2.3. Efficient use of available resources

- 2.3.1. The inspection noted that we should ensure that we are making the best use of our available resources, including from elsewhere within Norfolk County Council, to increase resilience and capacity.

2.3.2. The Service has worked collaboratively with members of the NCC analytics teams to enhance the Community Risk Profile and identify the areas of the County most vulnerable to Fire and other emergencies. Whilst the focus of this work was on Fire initially, the Service is now working with Norfolk Constabulary on the development of a combined Community Safety Risk Profile. Furthermore, the methodology adopted by the team could prove hugely beneficial across other County Council departments.

2.3.3. The Collaborative work with partners, agencies and other blue light services delivered during the response to Covid-19 has provided an insight into how the Service may be able to work more collaboratively to help keep Norfolk communities safe. The lessons learned about the efficient use of resources will be fed into the Concept of Operations Review which will commence in October.

2.4. **Service development and investment**

2.4.1. The Service has used the additional £877k revenue funding, that Members approved earlier this year, to:

- Recruit new wholetime Firefighters. 11 new recruits completed training in June. They are now delivering operational capability at various locations around the County. Another wholetime Firefighter recruitment campaign was launched in July. The campaign was designed to increase the diversity of our workforce and has attracted over 876 applications.
- Restructure the Community Fire Protection Team. The restructuring proposal is currently subject to the consultation process. It is anticipated that we will recruit into the 4 newly established posts by 31 Dec 20.
- Increase Fire Prevention services for vulnerable people. Whilst Covid-19 has restricted delivery in this area, the Service has published the new Community Risk Profile, which identifies the areas of the County most vulnerable to Fire and other emergencies and future Prevention activities will be targeted at these communities.
- Provide specialist water rescue services for the County and in support of National emergencies.

2.4.2. The Service has also committed the £2.897m of capital investment that was approved by Members earlier this year. This investment has enabled the Service to:

- Invest in new ICT equipment and software. The Service has started transferring users across to NCC ICT systems and the transfer process is expected to be complete by the end of 2020. Once all users have transferred, an ICT hardware replacement/upgrade programme will commence early in 2021. Furthermore, the Service has started to roll-out the Mobile Data Terminal upgrades which will provide operational crews with the latest technology supporting both the provision of

operational information to incident commanders and provide control with dynamic vehicle location and status information.

- Purchase new vehicles. We have purchased 5 new Tactical Response Vehicles. The Service already has 3 of these vehicles in operational use and the other 2 vehicles are expected to be operational by the end of September. Furthermore, the specification for the new Type B Fire Appliances will be approved this month. The Service will then be able to go out to tender in October, thereby enabling an anticipated delivery date of March 2022.
- Set out project plans to delivery improvements and upgrades to fire stations across the county.
- Improve provision of critical equipment. New PPE was purchased and distributed to all operational staff in August.

3. The next HMICFRS inspection in Norfolk

- 3.1. The timetable for the next round of HMICFRS inspection is currently unclear. However, we have been informed that HMICFRS will conduct a review, before the end of the calendar year, to assess how the Service has responded to Covid-19. Furthermore, we anticipate that the second round of HMICFRS inspections will commence early in 2021.

4. Evidence and Reasons for Decision

- 4.1. The Improvement Plan aims to address the areas for improvement identified by the HMICFRS, and are focussed on improving the efficiency and effectiveness of the service, and how we look after our people. The Improvement Plan sets out the activities the Chief Fire Officer has identified as necessary in order to demonstrate paying due regard to the findings of the HMICRS inspection, but also to improve the service for Norfolk communities.
- 4.2. The new Strategic Development Oversight Group will ensure that those groups representing Fire and Rescue staff are able to be involved in the future development of the service.

5. Alternative Options

- 5.1. Cabinet may wish to amend or make additions to the Improvement Plan.

6. Financial Implications

- 6.1. The additional resource required to support the delivery of the improvement plan is included in the medium-term financial plan. This includes the relevant revenue and capital funding.

7. Resource Implications

- 7.1. **Staff:** There will be a need to secure additional resources to deliver some activities, and the funding to enable this was agreed by Members as part of the budget setting process. A new programme of wholtime firefighters has been

completed and the new recruits that have been trained are now on operational duty.

7.2. **Property:** There are no property implications from this report.

7.3. **IT:** An ICT and technology transformation programme has been developed. Members recently agreed additional capital funding to enable the programme to be delivered.

8. Other Implications

8.1. **Legal Implications:** Fire and rescue authorities must give due regard to reports and recommendations made by HMICFRS (section 7.5 of the Fire and Rescue National Framework for England 2018).

8.2. **Human Rights implications:** N/A

8.3. **Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA):** The full equality impact assessment carried out as part of the development of the new IRMP identified that the service should impact positively on people with protected characteristics. This is because there are some enhancements to service standards and delivery which would see Norfolk communities receive additional resource and support to help keep them safe. It is also because the core aim of the IRMP is to identify who is most at risk from dying or being injured in a fire or emergency, to ensure that resources are targeted effectively to mitigate this. Delivery of the Improvement Plan will support this.

8.4. **Health and Safety implications:** Putting in place a new operational learning process as part of the Improvement Plan enables the service to identify ways to improve operational activity to help keep staff and Norfolk communities safe.

8.5. **Sustainability implications:** N/A

9. Risk Implications/Assessment

9.1. The HMICFRS inspection programme was carried out for the first time in 2019. Because this is a new inspection regime for fire and rescue services, it is difficult at this stage to determine whether the improvements set out in the Improvement Plan will be considered sufficient to address the concerns raised in the inspection, and also whether sufficient progress is being made to deliver these improvements.

9.2. In terms of oversight, the Cabinet Member for Communities and Partnerships meets monthly with the Chief Fire Officer to review progress against the Plan. The HMICFRS undertake regular engagement sessions with fire and rescue services through their Service Liaison Leads (SLL), and the Chief Fire Officer meets periodically with the Norfolk SLL to talk through progress. Members of the senior management team also regularly attend national sessions, including with the National Fire Chiefs Council, to help identify and understand national best practice.

10. Select Committee comments

- 10.1. The Infrastructure and Development Select Committee reviewed the Improvement Plan in July 2019. The Select Committee provided challenge and input around whether the Improvement Plan was robust in addressing the improvement areas identified, and realistic in terms of delivery, prior to it being finalised and approved by the Cabinet Member for Communities and Partnerships.

11. Recommendations

- 11.1. 1. To review and consider the progress made in delivering the Improvement Plan as set out in the report and at Appendix A.
2. To agree to receive a further update on progress at the Cabinet meeting in December 2020.

12. Background Papers

- 12.1. [Norfolk Fire and Rescue Integrated Risk Management Plan 2020-23](#)
- [Report to 17 July 2019 Infrastructure and Development Select Committee titled 'Norfolk Fire and Rescue Service – HMICFRS inspection outcomes'](#)
- [Report to 2 March 2020 Cabinet Meeting titled Norfolk Fire and Rescue Service – HMICFRS Improvement Plan update](#)
- A full copy of the HMICFRS Inspection report, and further information about the inspection process, can be found on their website at <https://www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmicfrs/>
- HMICFRS State of Fire and Rescue: The Annual Assessment of Fire and Rescue Services in England 2019
<https://www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmicfrs/publications/state-of-fire-and-rescue-annual-assessment-2019/>

Officer Contact

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

Officer name: Stuart Ruff – Chief Fire Officer **Tel No.:** 0300 123 1383

Email address: stuart.ruff@fire.norfolk.gov.uk

Officer name: Tim Edwards – Assistant Chief Fire Officer **Tel No.:** 0300 123 1383

Email address: tim.edwards@fire.norfolk.gov.uk



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

Norfolk Fire & Rescue Service

Improvement Plan

Progress update as at
7th August 2020



Effectiveness

1. How effective is the fire and rescue service at keeping people safe and secure from fire and other risks.



Requires improvement

Understanding the risk of fire and other emergencies



Requires improvement

Areas for improvement identified by HMICFRS	Key areas of progress	Further progress	Notes
The service should improve how it uses information from its engagement with the local community to build up a comprehensive profile of risk in the service area.	We have published an engagement and communication strategic framework ensuring that we “use all relevant opportunities to engage with our stakeholders.”	As our ability to engage face-to-face is likely to continue to be restricted by Covid-19, we intend to use the information provided in our new Community Risk Profile and some of the technological services that we have adopted during Covid-19 to engage with our communities through other means, including social media, webinars and other online meetings. We intend to conduct two strategic community engagement events by 31 Mar 21.	

Areas for improvement identified by HMICFRS	Key areas of progress	Further progress	Notes
<p>The service should ensure that its integrated risk management plan is informed by a comprehensive understanding of current and future risk. A wide range of data should be used to build the risk profile and operational data should be used to test that it is up-to-date.</p>	<p>Our Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP) has been agreed by Members and plans are being developed to deliver against the five proposals.</p> <p>We have engaged with other Fire and Rescue Services to understand best practice for community risk profiling and have explored options for a dynamic software solution.</p> <p>A new Community Risk Profile (CRP) has been produced in collaboration with NCC analytics teams. The CRP maps risks on a geographical basis and it will be used to inform how we target prevention and protection activity during 2020/21.</p>	<p>Whilst the new CRP provides a comprehensive risk map for Norfolk, we have already identified other information sources that would further enrich the risk picture. We plan to add this additional data to the CRP during future stages of development. We have also identified Risk Modelling software tools that will greatly assist with the development of future iterations of the CRP. A Business Case for the procurement of this software is currently being prepared and will be presented for approval in Sep 20.</p> <p>The CRP will also underpin our Concept of Operations review which we plan to commence in Oct 20.</p>	

Preventing fires and other risks

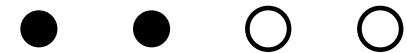


Requires improvement

Areas for improvement identified by HMICFRS	Key areas of progress	Further progress	Notes
The service should ensure it targets its prevention work at people most at risk. This should include proportionate and timely activity to reduce risk.	<p>We have cleared our home fire risk check (HFRC) backlog and are responding to new requests.</p> <p>A new risk based customer service standard to ensure our HFRC visits are delivered within a defined and reasonable period of time to those most vulnerable from fire has been drafted and is due to be published in Aug 20</p> <p>A new Community Risk Profile (CRP) has been produced in collaboration with NCC analytics teams. The CRP maps risks on a geographical basis and it will be used to inform how we target prevention and protection activity during 2020/21.</p>	<p>We are continuing to develop opportunities to collaborate with the Norfolk Constabulary to delivery community safety activities and reducing risk across Norfolk.</p> <p>A Meeting was held with Norfolk Constabulary in Jul 20 to share our CRP and its development methodology and to explore the potential for adding Police information to future iterations of the CRP. Adding such information would further enrich the risk picture and thereby enhance our future collaborative community safety work. This opportunity will be explored further as we develop future iterations of the CRP.</p>	

<p>The service should ensure that staff have a good understanding of how to identify vulnerability and safeguard vulnerable people.</p>	<p>We have refreshed our safeguarding policies and processes and a programme of refresher training for our entire 800+ workforce is complete.</p> <p>The service has appointed a safeguarding lead. Duty Group Managers are in place to support staff to deal with any concerns or issues identified and Control are supporting the reporting process.</p>	<p>We are continuing to review our effectiveness at identifying and reporting safeguarding issues to the relevant authorities.</p>	
<p>The service should evaluate its prevention work, so it understands the benefits better.</p>	<p>Our new operational learning process is enabling us to evaluate the effectiveness of our prevention and protection activities.</p> <p>Assurance Board meetings are held monthly and our Operational Learning/Training Group meetings are held every 2-weeks to review incidents and to examine what prevention interventions were in place prior to the incidents and to identify what could be done to make future interventions more effective.</p>	<p>A Performance and Risk Board will be introduced to assess our effectiveness against the strategic frameworks and key performance indicators and to ensure that learning drives future organisational improvements.</p> <p>TORs for an Operational Learning Change Group have been drafted and are due to be submitted for approval in Aug 20.</p> <p>Processes for Performance Reporting and for feeding Operational Learning back into the Service are being developed.</p>	

Protecting the public through fire regulation



Requires improvement

Areas for improvement identified by HMICFRS	Key areas of progress	Further progress	Notes
The service should ensure it allocates enough resources to a prioritised and risk-based inspection programme. This should include its arrangements for providing specialist protection advice out of hours.	<p>An assessment has been carried out to identify how to deliver additional out of hours support in an efficient and effective way, and Members recently agreed additional funding that will enable this.</p> <p>Members have also agreed additional investment in the service to enable additional prevention and protection resource.</p> <p>A working group has been established to determine the most effective use of the additional investment.</p>	4 new Community Fire Protection posts (2 Grey Book and 2 Green Book) are being worked through the formal consultation process by our Strat HRBP. We hope to have recruited into these new established posts by Dec 20.	
The service should ensure that staff work with local businesses and large organisations to share information and expectations on compliance with fire safety regulations.	Following a successful pilot, the service is now offering training sessions across Norfolk to residential social landlords to educate staff around fire and community safety.	The Communications and Engagement strategic framework outlines our engagement activities which will be expanded upon through identified action plans.	
The service should ensure it addresses effectively the burden of false alarms.	A policy is already in place to support staff to identify false alarms and avoid	We are continuing to review ways in which we can further reduce false alarms.	

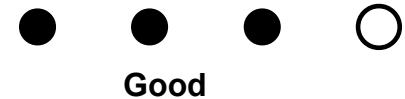
	<p>unnecessarily responding.</p> <p>The number of false alarm calls we receive in our emergency control room is reducing.</p>		
--	---	--	--

Responding to fires and other emergencies



Areas for improvement identified by HMICFRS	Key areas of progress	Further progress	Notes
The service should ensure it has an effective system for staff to use learning and debriefs to improve operational response and incident command.	<p>The new operational learning group is continuing to embed new process and evaluate the effectiveness of it.</p> <p>We are also working closer with our regional fire and rescue service and National Fire Chiefs Council to ensure learning opportunities identified with Norfolk are shared with the region and nationally and vice-versa.</p> <p>The new innovations group has been supporting new ways of working under the pandemic situation proving the effectiveness and agility of the group.</p>	<p>Work is continuing to develop an improved approach to assessing prevention and protection activities by making better use of digital technology and processes.</p> <p>A National Operating Guidance (NOG) implementation plan has been drafted and will be submitted for approval in Aug 20.</p>	

Responding to national risks



Areas for improvement identified by HMICFRS	Key areas of progress	Further progress	Notes
The service should ensure its firefighters have good access to relevant and up-to-date risk information. This should include cross-border risk information.	We have undertaken refresher training with all our operational staff to ensure they know how to access information on appliance computers.	We are making progress in delivering a new software package (known as PORIS) to replace existing risk information available on on-board computers and will deliver improved risk information to our crews to support the effective resolution of emergency incidents. A delivery roadmap has been agreed. Project documents have been refreshed and key deliverables identified with time markers. The project status has now moved from Red to Amber.	
The service should arrange a programme of over-the-border exercises, sharing the learning from these exercises.	Operational crews are continuing to undertake over-the-border district exercises as outlined in our district/station plans to ensure we work effectively with our colleagues in Suffolk, Cambridgeshire and Lincolnshire. We assess these exercises using our new operational learning process.	The new software systems for risk information will enable us to provide more detailed information to crews about cross-border risks to support operational planning.	

<p>The service should ensure it is well-prepared to form part of a multi-agency response to a terrorist-related incident and that its procedures for responding are understood by all staff and are well tested.</p>	<p>Our joint police and fire control room is benefiting from the advantages of working closer together. The co-location of our control rooms will enable greater effectiveness in and enhanced communication during a major incident or terrorist related event.</p>	<p>We have delivered on-going training for staff on how we will respond and deal with terrorist related incidents.</p>	
--	--	--	--

Efficiency

2. How efficient is the fire and rescue service at keeping people safe and secure from fire and other risks.



Requires improvement

Making best use of resources



Requires improvement

Areas for improvement identified by HMICFRS	Key areas of progress	Further progress	Notes
The service should ensure that resources are appropriately allocated to support the activity set out in its integrated risk management plan.	<p>The new 2020-23 IRMP – which focuses on how we allocate resource to mitigate community risk - has been agreed been published.</p> <p>A new Community Risk Profile (CRP) has been produced in collaboration with NCC analytics teams. The CRP maps risks on a geographical basis and it will be used to inform how we target prevention and protection activity during 2020/21.</p> <p>Our People Strategic Framework has successfully passed through the Rep Body consultation process. The document will be formally published by 31 Jul 20.</p>	Our other Strategic Frameworks (Response, Prevent & Protect, Logistics and Planning), have been delayed due to Covid-19 but they are in development and will be published by 30 Sep 20.	
The service should ensure that it makes best use of the resources available to it,	The dedicated Fire and Rescue ICT team has transferred to the wider NCC	The organisational review will continue to take a detailed look at the service and identify	

including from elsewhere within Norfolk county council, to increase resilience and capacity.	<p>team and an ICT transformation programme and managerial oversight board.</p> <p>Support from key roles within NCC has been secured. Additionally, two senior managers from outside NFRS are now part of the Senior Management Team. One person is now responsible for undertaking an holistic organisational review and the other for developing and improving the planning and assurance function.</p>	<p>where we can improve ways of working, invest in technological improvements and resourcing models to drive efficiency and effectiveness.</p> <p>The ICT transformation programme will continue to improve the effectiveness of IT hardware and systems across the service.</p>	
--	--	--	--

Making the fire and rescue service affordable now and in the future



Areas for improvement identified by HMICFRS	Key areas of progress	Further progress	Notes
The service should ensure it makes the best use of available technology to improve operational effectiveness and efficiency.	<p>The dedicated Fire and Rescue ICT team has transferred to the wider NCC team and a ICT transformation programme has been developed as a result.</p> <p>NFRS is working with other services regionally to share systems wherever possible. Our emergency response is now delivered using new software called Vision 4. This has been developed as part of a consortium with three other Fire and Rescue services. The new software is one of the most advanced available in the country.</p>	<p>The mobile data terminals (MDT) upgrade on all our fire engines commenced in August, delays caused by Covid-19.</p> <p>Over the next twelve months we will see a refresh of our ICT hardware which will also provide additional flexibility of options available and improve effective ways of working particularly enabling remote working.</p> <p>We have begun upgrading our software solutions to improve ways of working is in place.</p>	

People

3. How well does the fire and rescue service look after its people.



Requires improvement

Promoting the right values and culture



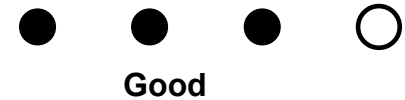
Requires improvement

Areas for improvement identified by HMICFRS	Key areas of progress	Further progress	Notes
The service should ensure its values and behaviours are understood and demonstrated at all levels of the organisation.	<p>We have developed a new NFRS Cultural Framework and this is ready to launch. We facilitated workshops with all our staff to develop a new set of agreed values and behaviours for the framework.</p> <p>The National Fire Chiefs Council's leadership framework has been incorporated into our appointments and promotions process.</p>	<p>Work is ongoing to identify, train and implement a network of advisors (independent of the Line Management chain) who will support managers and staffs with addressing issues and concerns relating to the new organisational values and behaviours identified in the NFRS Cultural Framework.</p> <p>The Cultural Framework Working Group is also working to ensure that all the necessary foundations (processes and procedures) are in place to support the roll-out of the Cultural Framework and to ensure that the values and behaviours are embedded in our organisation.</p> <p>We will have a route to</p>	

		training identified for the members of the advisor network and have all the other necessary foundations in place to be able to formally launch the Cultural Framework by Oct 20.	
--	--	--	--

Areas for improvement identified by HMICFRS	Key areas of progress	Further progress	Notes
<p>The service should assure itself that staff understand and have confidence in the purpose and integrity of health, safety and wellbeing policies.</p>	<p>We are continuing to deliver a wellbeing programme. This roadshow is being delivered across the service and all teams and are getting/have been involved. Action plans have been developed in a number of teams.</p> <p>We have access to the Norfolk Support Line which provides support, guidance and signposting to those who feel that may need help. We monitor the usage and effectiveness of this service.</p>	<p>We will continue to assess wellbeing performance, including by assessing the results of the latest survey</p> <p>The staff survey is currently live and we will review the results to ensure our wellbeing performance is being improved.</p>	

Getting the right people with the right skills



Areas for improvement identified by HMICFRS	Key areas of progress	Further progress	Notes
The service should ensure its workforce plan takes full account of the necessary skills and capabilities to carry out the integrated risk management plan.	<p>Now that a new IRMP for the service has been published, work on a new Workforce Plan will progress to support managing resources effectively to ensure we are capable and agile to deliver the 2020/23 IRMP.</p> <p>We have set up a Resources Board which reviews all staffing/vacancy changes to ensure they are fit for purpose and support delivery of the IRMP.</p>	Following publication of the People Strategic Framework, our Capability Lead Officer will be tasked with establishing the Working Groups that will enable the strategy, which includes the Work Force Planning Working Group. This Working Group will be responsible for creating and implementing a Workforce Plan that meets the requirements of our IRMP. We hope to have a Workforce Plan fully implemented by Jan 21.	

Ensuring fairness and promoting diversity



Requires improvement

Areas for improvement identified by HMICFRS	Key areas of progress	Further progress	Notes
The service should assure itself that it has effective grievance procedures.	We continue to manage and review all grievances received within the service.		
The service should assure itself that staff are confident using its feedback mechanisms.	<p>The Service leadership team are undertaking regular face to face team meetings across the service.</p> <p>We have embedded a processes of team meetings and one to ones to ensure that we have mechanisms in place to ensure our staff are well informed and their voices heard.</p> <p>A staff group has been established and is reviewing internal communications processes to help ensure they are fit for purpose.</p>	<p>We are reviewing the effectiveness of our communications and feedback mechanisms, including through the staff survey.</p> <p>We will conduct a staff survey during Sep/Oct 20 to test the general atmosphere amongst our staffs and to capture their thoughts and opinions about how we have responded to the Covid-19 pandemic.</p>	

Areas for improvement identified by HMICFRS	Key areas of progress	Further progress	Notes
<p>To identify and tackle barriers to equality of opportunity, and make its workforce more representative, the service should ensure diversity and inclusion are well-understood and become important values of the service.</p>	<p>A full Equality Impact Assessment was carried out as part of the IRMP development process. This has identified a number of areas of data and performance which we can monitor to assess our performance, and to help drive our plans e.g. around community engagement.</p> <p>Our recruitment process and opportunities for improving diversity will continue to be reviewed.</p> <p>NFRS have recently assumed the lead for the Regional FRS Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Group. The Regional EDI Group has been cited as best practice by Asian Fire Service Association.</p>	<p>Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) are key tenets of the new NFRS Cultural Framework.</p> <p>Work is ongoing to identify, train and implement a network of EDI advisors (independent of the Line Management chain) who will support managers and staffs with addressing EDI issues and other concerns relating to the new organisational values and behaviours identified in the NFRS Cultural Framework.</p> <p>An EDI Action Plan has been drafted in consultation with our NCC CES EDI lead. The plan is due to be submitted for approval in Aug 20 and then implemented this financial year.</p>	

Managing performance developing leaders



Requires improvement

Areas for improvement identified by HMICFRS	Key areas of progress	Further progress	Notes
The service should ensure its selection, development and promotion of staff is open, transparent and fair.	<p>We have amended our promotions interview selection process. 1-2-1 style interviews have been replaced with a promotion pathways and panel interview processes which ensures transparency and fairness.</p> <p>We have completed 97.5% of our Personnel Development Plans (PDPs) this year. The PDPs are one of the tools that are used to identify the aspirations and development requirements of all our people.</p>	Once the People Strategic Framework has been published (by 31 Jul 20), our Capability Lead Officer will be tasked with establishing a Workforce Planning Group and a Training and Development Working Group. These Working Groups will be responsible for creating and implementing Action Plans that ensure that the selection, development and promotion of staffs continues to be open, transparent and fair. We hope to have these Working Groups established and Action Plans developed by Jan 21.	

<p>The service should put in place an open and fair process to identify, develop and support high-potential staff and aspiring leaders.</p>	<p>The pilot supervisory manager development programme was a success, so we have now adopted this delivery model for our potential middle manager cadre.</p>	<p>Work is ongoing to further develop and embed the manager development programmes and promotion pathways across the rank structure. We hope to have the supervisory and middle manager processes fully embedded in the organisation by Jun 21.</p> <p>Once the People Strategic Framework has been published (by 31 Jul 20), our Capability Lead Officer will be tasked with establishing a Workforce Planning Group. The Group will be responsible for creating and implementing a formal Talent Management plan which meets the strategic intention of the People Strategic Framework. We hope to have the Working Group established and the Talent Management Plan developed by Mar 21.</p>	
---	--	---	--

Report to Cabinet

Item No. 10

Report title	Finance Monitoring Report 2020-21 P4: July 2020
Date of meeting	7 September 2020
Responsible Cabinet Member	Cllr Andrew Jamieson (Cabinet Member for Finance)
Responsible Director	Simon George (Executive Director of Finance and Commercial Services)
Is this a key decision?	No

Introduction from Cabinet Member

This report gives a summary of the forecast financial position for the 2020-21 Revenue and Capital Budgets, General Balances, and the Council's Reserves at 31 March 2021, together with related financial information.

Executive Summary

Subject to mitigating actions, the forecast revenue outturn for 2020-21 at the end of period 4 (July) was an overspend of **£7.901m** on a net budget of £430.421m. General Balances are £19.7m and service reserves and provisions are forecast to total **£74.7m**.

Covid-19 financial pressures are taken into account in the forecasts in this report. Details of these pressures and progress on achieving saving are addressed in detail in this report.

Recommendations

1. To approve expenditure of £8.5m for LED upgrades to 15,000 main road streetlights across Norfolk as set out in paragraph 4.1 of Capital Appendix 1, to be funded from additional prudential borrowing.
2. To approve the drawdown of £2.7m, from the existing Accommodation Rationalisation capital budget, to fund Accessibility and Inclusivity improvements to County Hall as set out in paragraph 4.2 of Capital Appendix 1.
3. Note the period 4 forecast general fund revenue overspend of **£7.901m** noting also that Executive Directors will take measures to reduce or eliminate potential overspends;
4. Note the COVID-19 grant funding received of **£63.824m**, the proposed use of that funding, and the related expenditure pressures.
5. Note the period 4 forecast shortfall in savings of **£17.780m**, noting also that Executive Directors will take measures to mitigate savings shortfalls through alternative savings or underspends;

6. Note the forecast General Balances at 31 March 2021 of £19.706m, before taking into account any over/under spends;
7. Note the expenditure and funding of the revised current and future 2020-23 capital programmes.

1. Background and Purpose

- 1.1. This report and associated annexes summarise the forecast financial outturn position for 2020-21, to assist members to maintain an overview of the overall financial position of the Council including the financial implications of the Covid-19 pandemic.

2. Proposals

- 2.1. Having set revenue and capital budgets at the start of the financial year, the Council needs to ensure service delivery within allocated and available resources, which in turn underpins the financial stability of the Council. Consequently, progress is regularly monitored and corrective action taken when required.

3. Impact of the Proposal

- 3.1. The impact of this report is primarily to demonstrate where the Council is anticipating financial pressures not forecast at the time of budget setting, primarily relating to the implications of the Covid-19 pandemic, together with a number of other key financial measures.
- 3.2. The capital expenditure proposals will ensure sufficient capital funding is available for these newly identified purposes, without affecting the remainder of the capital programme or the current year's revenue budget.

4. Evidence and Reasons for Decision

- 4.1. Two appendices are attached to this report giving details of the forecast revenue and capital financial outturn positions:

Appendix 1 summarises the revenue outturn position, including:

- Forecast over and under spends
- Covid-19 pressures and associated grant income
- Changes to the approved budget
- Reserves
- Savings
- Treasury management
- Payment performance and debt recovery

Appendix 2 summarises the capital outturn position, and includes:

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

5. Alternative Options

- 5.1. In order 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 grant or revenue funding has been identified to fund the expenditure.

6. Financial Implications

- 6.1. As stated above, the forecast revenue outturn for 2020-21 at the end of P4 was an overspend of **£7.901m** linked to a forecast shortfall in savings of **£17.780m**. Forecast service reserves and provisions are forecast to total **£74.7m**, and general balances of **£19.7m**. Grant funding of **£63.824m** has been received to off-set additional expenditure occurred as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Within the forecast overspend are significant financial pressures identified in Adult Social Services, Community and Environmental Services, and Finance, mainly relating to Covid-19 related pressures, the majority of which have been offset by additional grant funding received.

Within Adult Social Services, the areas of highest pressures, the main area of forecast overspend is on Older People and Learning Disabilities services within the Purchase of Care budget. A full narrative is given in Appendix 1.

The Council's capital programme is based on schemes approved by County Council on 17 February 2020, as well as previously approved schemes brought forward plus schemes subsequently approved.

7. Resource Implications

- 7.1. None, apart from financial information set out in these papers.

8. Other Implications

8.1. Legal Implications:

In order to fulfil obligations placed on chief finance officers by section 114 of the Local Government Finance Act 1988, the Executive Director of Finance and Commercial Services continually monitors financial forecasts and outcomes to ensure resources (including sums borrowed) are available to meet annual expenditure.

Although the Council is forecasting an overspend for the current financial year, decisions taken by Cabinet as well as actions taken by Chief Officers to mitigate the position over the course of the year will have a significant impact on that position, as will any additional government funding. As context, at 31 March 2020 the Council's general fund was over £19.7m with earmarked reserves (excluding provisions and LMS balances) over £77m.

8.2. Human Rights implications

None identified.

8.3. Equality Impact Assessment

In setting the 2020-21 budget, the Council consulted widely. Impact assessments are carried out in advance of setting the budget, the latest being published on page 450 of the 13 January 2020 Cabinet agenda as "Budget proposals 2019-2020 Overall Summary: [Equality & rural impact assessment report](#)".

The Council is maintaining a dynamic [COVID-19 equality impact assessment](#) to inform decision making during the pandemic.

The Council's net revenue budget is unchanged at this point in the financial year and there are no additional equality and diversity implications arising out of this report.

9. Risk Implications/Assessment

- 9.1. The Council's Corporate Risk Register provides a full description of corporate risks, including corporate level financial risks, mitigating actions and the progress made in managing the level of risk. A majority of risks, if not managed, could have significant financial consequences such as failing to generate income or to realise savings.

Unlike many other parts of the public sector such as the NHS, local authorities are required by law to set a balanced budget. As part of their duties, the Executive Director of Finance and Commercial Services has a responsibility to report to members if it appears to him that the authority will not have sufficient resources to finance its expenditure for the financial year. While not underestimating the severity of the current crisis and its impact on the Council's finances, the Executive Director of Finance and Commercial Services believes the current year's forecast gap can be closed through mitigating actions and the possibility of additional central government support for the sector. However, there will be a continuing impact on the medium-term financial strategy and updates are being reported to Cabinet.

10. Select Committee comments

- 10.1. None

11. Recommendation

- 11.1. Recommendations are set out in the executive summary to this report.

12. Background Papers

- 12.1. [Equality & rural impact assessment report](#) (page 450)
[COVID-19 equality impact assessment](#)
[Covid-19 financial implications for Norfolk County Council report](#) (page 152)

Officer Contact

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

Officer name: Harvey Bullen

Tel No. : 01603 223330

Email address: harvey.bullen@norfolk.gov.uk



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

Appendix 1: 2020-21 Revenue Finance Monitoring Report Month 4

Report by the Executive Director of Finance and Commercial Services

1 Introduction

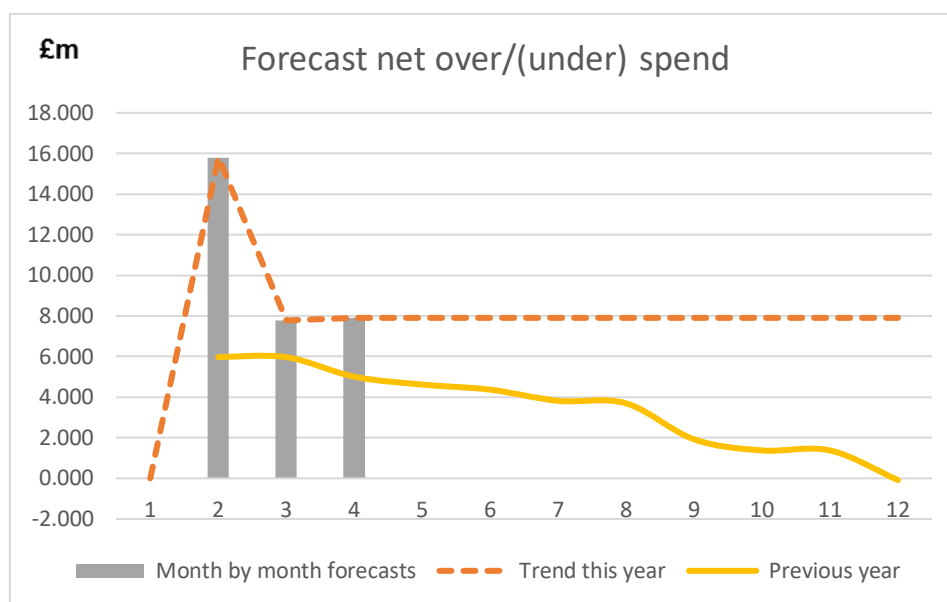
1.1 This report gives details of:

- the P4 monitoring position for the 2020-21 Revenue Budget
- additional financial information relating to the Covid-19 pandemic
- forecast General Balances and Reserves at 31 March 2021 and
- other key information relating to the overall financial position of the Council.

2 Revenue outturn – over/underspends

2.1 **At the end of July 2020 an overspend of £7.901m is forecast on a net budget of £430.421m**

Chart 1: forecast /actual revenue outturn 2020-21, month by month trend:



2.2 Chief Officers have responsibility for managing their budgets within the amounts approved by County Council. They have been charged with reviewing all their cost centres to ensure that, where an overspend is identified, action is taken to ensure that a balanced budget will be achieved over the course of the year.

- 2.3 Details of all under and over spends for each service are shown in detail in Revenue Annex 1 to this report, and are summarised in the following table:

Table 1: 2020-21 forecast (under)/over spends by service

Service	Revised Budget	Net (under)/over spend	%	RAG
	£m	£m		
Adult Social Services	255.740	8.176	3.2%	R
Children's Services	196.311	-	0.0%	G
Community and Environmental Services	161.799	2.738	1.7%	A
Strategy and Governance	9.365	0.401	4.3%	A
Finance and Commercial Services	32.668	0.738	2.3%	A
Finance General	-225.462	-4.152	1.8%	G
Totals	430.421	7.901	1.8%	R

Notes:

- 1) the RAG ratings are subjective and take into account risk and both the relative (%) and absolute (£m) impact of overspends.

- 2.4 **Children's Services:** The forecast outturn as at Period 4 (end of July 2020) remains at a break-even position, considering the immediate impact of Covid-19, the allocated Covid-19 grants and the re-started transformation programme. Since the previous forecast, the Council has been awarded a further Covid-related in-year grant to cover the additional anticipated costs of home to school and college transport for the first half of the Autumn term. At this stage, the department is anticipating that it will spend all of these additional funds and, therefore, the forecast Covid-19 pressures now amount to £5.459m in the areas of Learning & Inclusion (primarily lost trading income and home to school / college transport), and Social Care (primarily delays in savings delivery and support for the market) have been off-set by government grants allocated to the service.
- 2.5 Any surge or second peak could lead to unpredictable demand for social care support and placements, and could disrupt current, stable placements. The department has undertaken modelling of the potential surge that may be seen when schools return in September, considering various patterns of demand and impact upon services. This risk continues to be kept under close review.
- 2.6 It should be noted that there is a significant degree of uncertainty in relation to expenditure and income for Children's Services as a result of Covid-19. At this stage, up to 6 months delay in lost transformation savings has been projected for those projects directly affected by the Covid-19 response. Given the current national context, there continue to be significant influences beyond the Council's control that will make delivery of savings difficult in light of the ongoing recovery work, ongoing Covid-related restrictions, potential surge in demand and further waves. Again, this risk will continue to be kept under close review.
- 2.7 **Dedicated Schools Grant:** The updated outturn forecast is a £9.7m overspend on the High Needs Block. This is an increase of £1.2m compared to the initial forecast previously reported. At this stage, it is assumed that all other blocks will break-even.
- 2.8 This remains a high-level forecast undertaken prior to the start of the new academic year when many changes to placements can take place and is based upon the best information available at this point in time. Given the uncertainty surrounding

expectations upon schools and education providers as a result of Covid-19, it will be subject to review as the situation progresses.

- 2.9 The increase in the forecast is primarily due to the inclusion of additional posts to either directly work in mainstream schools to support inclusion for children and young people with high-level special educational needs, including social, emotional and mental health needs, to support transition to new specialist resource base placements, and to strengthen arrangements for provision for children & young people of compulsory school age who, due to illness, exclusion or otherwise, would not otherwise receive suitable education.
- 2.10 In comparison to this forecast, 2019-20 saw an overspend of £10.307m within the High Needs Block (HNB) and this forecast represents an increase in expenditure year-on-year compared to 2019-20 of approximately £6m, primarily due to demographic growth and the full-year effects of last year's pressures, partially offset by in-year savings delivered due to the SEND & AP Transformation Programme. This in-year overspend will be combined with the cumulative overspend of £19.703m brought forward from prior years. This forecast considers:
- known placements projected forward;
 - demographic growth based upon modelling;
 - the significant pressure seen in 2019-20 for Section 19 related support and post-16 support;
 - ongoing pressure for special school places (2019-20 included a significant increase (approx. £2-2.5m) in independent school expenditure in the last third of the year);
 - presumed continued reduction in expenditure for Alternative Provision following significant work to reduce exclusions alongside schools;
 - savings based upon the special school and SRB places opening during the financial year reducing the demand upon independent provision;
 - specific school-based posts to support inclusion within mainstream schools and to reduce demand for specialist placements.
- 2.11 Whilst there was a HNB increase year-on-year of funding allocation of £11.3m, approximately £5.4m was assumed prior to the Autumn government announcements regarding 2020-21 HNB funding (both 1% growth assumption previously seen in funding allocations alongside ongoing transfer from the Schools Block in line with the 2019-20 that would have required approval from the Secretary of State). Given the government funding announcements in the Autumn, the funding increase above our planning expectations was just under £5.9m.
- 2.12 The government has just announced additional, DSG funding for 2021-22 onwards. Work is underway to understand the implications for both Norfolk schools and for the High Needs Block.
- 2.13 Significant work is being undertaken through the Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) and Alternative Provision (AP) part of the Transformation programme both to ensure that the right specialist provision is in the right place to meet needs, whilst also progressing work to transform how the whole system supports additional needs within mainstream provision.
- 2.14 During the Covid-19 response, Learning and Inclusion colleagues have been focussed upon supporting the schools of Norfolk (mainstream and specialist) to remain open as appropriate in line with government expectations. This continues to support schools to prepare for the start of the Autumn term. Significant focus is still

required from these staff to continue to support schools as the education landscape changes in response to the latest government announcements. However, focus is now also shifting back to re-starting the transformation programme.

- 2.15 In addition, construction work was also paused due to Covid-19, affecting builds in relation to expanding Specialist Resource Base provision and additional special school places. This work has restarted, and the forecast is based upon the current anticipation that the additional places will be open in line with pre-Covid-19 expectations.
- 2.16 The Government has made clear its expectations that all children and young people will return to school for the start of the new school year in September, including special schools. There remains considerable uncertainty as to how school budgets have been affected by Covid-19, and there remains a risk that if schools have seen a significant impact this could cause further pressure in terms of schools being unable to meet the needs of children. This could result in increases in exclusion, higher referral rates for Education, Health and Care Plans, higher requests for HNB support into mainstream or special schools.
- 2.17 The Council submitted its DSG recovery plan to the Department for Education at the end of June 2019. A meeting was due to take place in March, but this was postponed due to the SEND Area OFSTED inspection. It has then been postponed again due to Covid-19. Work is underway to revise the DSG recovery plan to take into account the outturn position for 2019-20 and updated plans. This will be brought back to a future meeting.
- 2.18 **Adult Social Services:** The forecast outturn as at Period 4 (end of July 2020) was a net overspend of £8.176m after utilising £26.052m of Council Covid-19 grant funding and £12.386m of infection control funding.
- 2.19 The forecast has increased by £0.242m since our Period 3 position.
- 2.20 The impact of the pandemic on the adult social care budget is becoming clearer. The service started the year having achieved good progress in 2019-20 towards demand management through the promoting independence strategy. However, the outlook for 2020-21 was challenging with a £23m savings target – mostly related to demand management – and therefore strong delivery of the savings programme, in this financial year, was critical for the service. Covid-19 has therefore created a double pressure due to higher costs and loss of savings. At Period 4 our volume of usual service users (i.e. excluding additional hospital discharge) is below the position at the end of last financial year, however they are not below the budgeted volumes due to unavoidable delay in delivery of many of the savings needed to meet the target.
- 2.21 The forecast at Period 3 predominately reflected the impact of savings, loss of income, additional packages of care due to the pandemic, financial support for the market and the resultant shortfall between these pressures and available NCC Covid grant. The additional volumes that the service has experienced are from hospital discharge and are currently fully funded from NHSEI. These have been assumed to continue for the remainder of the financial year. At Period 4, and as the next phase of the pandemic emerges, there are further challenges and areas of uncertainty for the service and Council. These include:
- The council is currently awaiting guidance from the government regarding the new hospital discharge service requirements. The expectation from a letter received by health organisations is that the current arrangements will

be amended from 1st September with discharge support for up to six weeks for discharge or admission avoidance from that date. From 1st September care placements made through this pathway since 19th March will need assessing and normal funding responsibility re-established whether health, social care or private funding of care. Although transitions arrangements are envisaged, without these it could increase costs to the council of £5.5m in this financial year due to the increase in volume of packages of care and the higher costs of care experienced during the first four months of the year. This area remains a potential pressure for 2021-22 should additional funding not be available.

- Day services and related transport are reopening, however it is now clear that capacity at any point in time will need to be significantly reduced to manage social distancing rules. Providers are working with commissioners to put in place safe new models of care, but this could lead to increased unit costs, additional services – such as transport journeys and the need for alternative provision for people who are not able to access their usual services. Further work with providers and individuals to assess the models of care and demand, but it is expected that cost pressures will increase during the remainder of the year.
- The forecast at Period 4 assumes that the level of home support provided compared to contracted levels will remain at the levels seen normally. If people choose to have less services than normal for the remainder of this financial year then this would reduce the forecast. A 5% variation compared to our assumptions equates to £1.5m.
- Provider support payments. The forecast includes total spending of £16m to support the market. Decisions regarding support mechanisms from September onwards will need to take into account wider market price increases, local factors affecting specific providers; any continued government support; and increased pressures within the day service market.

- 2.22 Previous work with CES to enable a £1m reduction in the customer transport costs for 2020/21 is expected to be negated due to increased transport journeys and this has been adjusted within the forecast.
- 2.23 Covid-19 has meant that our staff have had to work differently in continuing to meet our duties. Financially this has meant that embracing a socially distanced approach to social care has meant that recruitment and staff travel have naturally slowed leading to a reduction in the associated expenditure in this area. Across our 3 core front line areas of the department we have seen the identification of vacancies, combined with a reduction in expenditure for travel and subsistence, for Care & Assessment teams within Community Social Work (£0.360m) and Community Health and Social Care (£0.150m), as well as within Early Help & Prevention (£0.333m).
- 2.24 The department recognises the financial pressure the above overspend, and in particular, the under-delivery of 2020/21 savings is having on the Council. As part of its newly formed Covid-19 recovery governance, a specific financial recovery workstream has been created. This is predominately looking at the transition arrangements for the hospital discharge service requirements, to mitigate financial risks and to look at the price of care in the market and opportunities to manage this. The service is working to reinstate approaches that will enable some savings programme work to recommence.

- 2.25 With the Purchase of Care (POC) budget making up 77% of our ASC budget, and being heavily dependent on the individual needs of the 14,000+ people at any one time being supported by this budget, it is perhaps not surprising that this is the area feeling the financial pressure. The department is looking to achieve savings of £23m in this financial year, and as described in the budget savings section of this paper, it has been extremely difficult in the current climate to deliver against this challenge
- 2.26 The largest area of forecast overspend is with Purchase of Care for Older People. Whilst it is still too soon to truly understand any revised trend for care services in the medium to longer term, we do know in the short term we continue to have volumes of care higher than we have budgeted for. Our Living Well ethos requires a different climate to be wholly effective in preventing, reducing and delaying need for formal services. In the first four months of the year many of our care providers were paid fixed (minimum amounts whereby additional services provided are paid for in addition) payment amounts to enable them to have secure cash flow during Covid-19. Whilst this is a vital investment in sustaining a crucial market, it has meant that the spend per month is fixed at a level above which we had initially budgeted. We have been able to utilise some of the Council's Covid-19 grant to offset a proportion of this cost, in particular in our enhanced support, but that has not been sufficient to wholly cover. The transition from payment based on averages to actuals is being actioned during August and September.
- 2.27 During the pandemic we have seen a combination of additional packages put in place to meet differing or escalating care needs and with our NHS partners have also had to manage a different hospital discharge arrangement, that has also temporarily altered our financial assessment procedures. Whilst we have been recovering the Covid-19 related costs incurred on behalf of the NHS, it has clearly meant a different approach that has required the focus of the service.
- 2.28 Whilst our income related to the NHS will increase due to the Covid-19 reclaims, our general customer contribution levels will decrease. For those that are part of the NHS discharge arrangement, we will not lose out financially in the short term. However, where services are not being fully supplied to the customer, but still being paid for by NCC, such as Day Care, we will not be recovering any financially assessed customer contributions. In addition, we have reviewed our planned phase 2 charging policy around the Minimum Income Guarantee which will reduce our income against the associated saving target.
- 2.29 Outside of purchase of care, our budgets for NorseCare and Independence Matters within Commissioning are both forecast to overspend, due to the expected non-delivery of savings.
- 2.30 **CES:** Historically CES budgets have been fairly stable throughout the year and certainly the early part of the financial year, however we are reviewing the financial impacts of Covid-19 and the forecast overspend of £2.738m, after taking into account Covid-19 grant income of £6.112m.
- 2.31 The most significant pressure for CES is the ability to achieve planned income which accounts for the majority of the current forecast pressures within Community Information and learning and Culture and Heritage. Pressures on Income also account for part of the services pressure within Highways and Waste.
- 2.32 There is a significant uncertainty in relation to the impacts on income and we will therefore be reviewing and revising these forecasts as the year progresses

- 2.33 The forecast pressures within Highways and Waste also relates to waste volumes and Impacts of Dutch Incineration tax on the cost of Waste disposal. Although there is limited data at this early stage of the year we are currently seeing additional waste volumes through kerbside collection and therefore we are currently seeing additional costs of waste disposal and recycling credits. The impacts of the Dutch tax are largely offset by the planned used of reserves.
- 2.34 The service has also incurred additional costs in relation to the re-opening of Household Waste Recycling Centres for traffic management and site security.
- 2.35 The Department is also reviewing any potential areas for savings that will help off-set this pressure which will include reduced spend on travel, printing and other administration areas. There are also likely to be a number of posts that are currently vacant and therefore we have not been able to recruit to, which will deliver a one-off saving
- 2.36 **Corporate services:** Both the Strategy and Governance and Finance and Commercial Services directorates are forecasting overspends at this stage of the year, primarily relating to central Covid-19 related costs.
- 2.37 **Finance General:** The forecast underspend in Finance General is £4.152m, with an underlying overspend made up of unbudgeted Covid-19 related costs, partly off-set by forecast underspends on the costs of borrowing and additional government Emergency Assistance Grant funding for Food and Essential Supplies. The forecast net underspend this month is mainly due to MHCLG tranche 3 funding, which will be allocated to services following proposals which will be brought to a future Cabinet, and interest payable costs being lower than budget. Further details are given in Revenue Annex 1.

3 Agreed budget, changes and variations

- 3.1 The 2020-21 budget was agreed by Council on 17 February 2020 and is summarised by service in the Council's Budget Book 2020-21 (page 19) as follows:

Table 2: 2020-21 original and revised net budget by service

Service	Approved net base budget	Revised budget P3	Revised budget P4
	£m	£m	£m
Adult Social Services	255.740	255.740	255.740
Children's Services	196.211	196.211	196.311
Community and Environmental Services	163.471	161.799	161.799
Strategy and Governance	9.365	9.365	9.365
Finance and Commercial Services	30.811	32.668	32.668
Finance General	-225.177	-225.362	-225.462
Total	430.421	430.421	430.421

Note: this table may contain rounding differences.

- 3.2 During period 4, there was one minor budget adjustment between services to reflect revised operational arrangements relating to Care Leavers Council Tax exemption grants. The Council's net budget for 2020-21 has remained unchanged.

4 General balances and reserves

General balances

- 4.1 On 17 February 2020 Council agreed the recommendation from the Executive Director of Finance and Commercial Services for a minimum level of General Balances of £19.623m through 2020-21. The balance at 1 April 2020 was £19.706m. The forecast for 31 March 2021 is unchanged, before any over or underspends.

Reserves and provisions 2020-21

- 4.2 The use of reserves anticipated at the time of budget setting was based on reserves balances anticipated in January 2020. Actual balances at the end of March 2020 were higher than planned, mainly as a result of grants being carried forward, including Covid-19 support grants, and reserves use being deferred.
- 4.3 The 2020-21 budget was approved on the basis of a forecast reduction in earmarked revenue reserves and provisions (including schools reserves but excluding LMS and DSG reserves) from £73m to £65m, a net use of £8m.

Table 3: Reserves budgets and forecast reserves and provisions (excluding LMS/DSG)

Reserves and provisions by service	Budget book forecast balances 1 April 2020	Actual balances 1 April 2020	Increase in opening balances after budget setting	2020-21 Budget book forecast March 2021	Latest forecast balances 31 March 2021
	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m
Adult Social Services	16.896	20.291	3.395	10.371	12.459
Children's Services (inc schools, excl LMS/DSG)	1.961	6.200	4.239	3.321	3.033
Community and Environmental Services	35.847	40.934	5.087	32.612	40.588
Strategy and Governance	3.042	2.916	-0.126	3.265	2.972
Finance & Commercial Services	2.469	4.301	1.832	2.472	2.792
Finance General	12.915	49.428	36.513	12.915	12.878
Reserves and provisions excluding LMS and DSG balances (see below)	73.130	124.070	50.940	64.956	74.722
Schools LMS balances	12.001	12.361	0.360	4.212	9.836
DSG Reserve (negative)	-18.387	-19.704	-1.317	-18.830	-29.403
Total	66.744	116.727	49.983	50.338	56.355

- 4.4 Actual overall provisions and reserves (subject to external audit and excluding capital, DSG and LMS reserves) at 31 March 2020 were approximately £50m in excess of 2020-21 budget book assumptions. This is due primarily to £26.8m Covid-19 government grants received in late March, which will be fully used in 2020-21, plus general increases in reserves, including unspent grants and contributions, brought forward after budget setting. The current forecast net total for reserves and provisions at 31 March 2021 (excluding schools LMS and DSG reserves) is approximately £10m higher than was assumed at the time of budget setting due to the increase in grants brought forward.

4.5 Provisions included in the table above

The table above includes provisions of £27.4m comprising £9.9m insurance provision, £12.6m landfill provision (this provision is not cash backed), £4.7m provisions for bad debts, and a small number of payroll related provisions.

5 Covid-19 financial implications

- 5.1 Details of central government funding announcements, and forecast Covid-19 pressures are set out below. Details were set out in a detailed report to the [6 July 2020 meeting of this Committee](#).
- 5.2 Covid-19 funding secured to date is as follows:

Table 4a: Covid-19 funding

Funding	Actual/forecast 2020-21 £m
MHCLG tranche 1 (received March 2020)	26.932
MHCLG tranche 2	16.742
MHCLG tranche 3	6.001
Emergency Assistance Grant for Food and Essential Supplies	1.016
Previously included P3	50.691
Infection Control Fund	12.386
Home to School and College Transport Funding	0.747
Total to date P4	63.824

- 5.3 The MHCLG funding listed above has been unringfenced, but is expected to address additional expenditure, lost income and delayed or irrecoverable savings while assisting those who are in most need of additional support and social care, and those at higher risk of severe illness. The Emergency Assistance Grant is to help those who are struggling to afford food and other essentials due to Covid-19.
- 5.4 The latest MHCLG support package to help local authorities was announced by the Local Government Secretary on 2 July 2020, including the tranche 3 allocation shown in the table above. In addition, a scheme has been announced to cover 75% of lost income where losses exceed 5% of a council's planned income from sales, fees and charges. At the time of writing an overview of the allocation and calculation methods has been received, and the details are being worked through. Once known, the impact of this on service budgets will be reported along with proposals for the allocation of tranche 3 funding.
- 5.5 In May, the government announced a £600 million Infection Control Fund in April to tackle the spread of coronavirus (COVID-19) in care homes. As noted at 6 July 2020 Cabinet the Norfolk allocation is £12.386m, received in May and July, to be spent by September.
- 5.6 The grant has been given "to ensure care homes can cover the costs of implementing measures to reduce transmission" with 75% of the initial funding received to be passed straight to care homes in Norfolk, including to care homes with whom the local authority does not have existing contract). To be eligible for support from the grant, providers who do not already must complete the daily care home Capacity Tracker. The remaining 25% must also be used for infection control measures, however local authorities are able to allocate based on need, for example support for domiciliary care and wider workforce measures.
- 5.7 The allocation of the 75% for residential care homes reached providers at the beginning of June. Following receipt of the second grant payment in July, the payment of the second instalment has been made to all providers that have completed the capacity tracker and submitted plans for the use of the funding for infection control measures as per the grant agreement. Not all providers wished to

receive the money and unused funding from this allocation will be added to the remaining 25%.

- 5.8 The allocation of the remaining funds was assessed based on risk and relevance to the specific measures outlined in the infection control grant conditions. A risk profile was completed for each area of the care market against the primary role of infection control. The highest risks were considered to be in provision where there are shared living areas and therefore the priority focus is supported living, supported accommodation and housing with care. Although less of the infection control measures are relevant for home care providers there are identified needs for these providers and the payment reflects this. In addition, the second instalment has enabled some further support for care homes and support for day services as part of their reopening, direct payment holders and services provided by the voluntary sector.
- 5.9 The allocation of funding is available to providers regardless of whether they contract with Norfolk County Council.
- 5.10 On 8 August 2020 the Education Secretary announced £40m Additional Dedicated Home to School and College Transport Funding, for transport authorities to help provide alternatives to public transport and ensure children and young people can return to full time education through the autumn term. Norfolk's allocation has been confirmed as £0.747m and will be applied within Children's Services.
- 5.11 In addition to the additional funding described above, the government will allow Council's to spread their tax deficits over 3 years rather than the usual one year.
- 5.12 A summary of the forecast Covid-19 related cost pressures are as follows:

Table 4b: Covid-19 cost pressures

	Adult Social Services	Children's Services	Community and Environmental Services	Strategy and Governance Department	Finance and Commercial Services and Finance General	Total
	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m
Previously reported	36.212	7.030	9.635	0.560	8.851	62.288
Changes this month	12.386	0.747	-	-		13.133
Total cost pressures	48.598	7.777	9.635	0.56	8.851	75.421
Government support						-63.824
Net Covid-19 pressure						11.597

- 5.13 Details of cost pressures by services are set out in Revenue Annex 2.
- 5.14 There continues to be a high degree of uncertainty about the cost pressure forecasts, and these will continue to be refined as the local and national response becomes clearer. The Council continues to emphasise financial pressures and implications for services in regular returns to MHCLG.
- 5.15 A particular risk relates to Business Rates and Council Tax income. No pressures have been included for 2020-21 with any impact not expected to have an impact on

the general fund until 2021-22 and this will be taken into account during 2021-22 budget setting.

- 5.16 The costs and income pressure relating to Covid-19 vary from the overall Council forecast net overspend shown in this report. This is due to non-Covid-19 related under and over-spends, and actions already put in place by Chief Officers to mitigate the financial impacts of the pandemic.
- 5.17 An additional element of cost mitigation included in forecast over and underspends is the Government's Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme. While the scheme has not been used to duplicate other sources of public funding, such as the Covid-19 support grants, the government has recognised that there are exceptional cases where, for example, Local Authorities have needed to close venues such as museums and registry offices. As a result, the Council has made claims totalling £0.681m to the end of July 2020, including £0.156m in respect of schools-based staff.
- 5.18 On 12 August 2020 the Secretary of State for Education announced additional non-ring-fenced funding for local authorities to support pupils' and students' wellbeing and psychosocial recovery as they return to full-time education in autumn 2020. The amount of Wellbeing for Education Return Grant allocated to Norfolk is £0.146m. This will be received by the Council in September 2020 and incorporated into future finance monitoring reports.

6 Budget savings 2020-21 summary

- 6.1 In setting its 2020-21 Budget, the County Council agreed net savings of £40.244m. Details of all budgeted savings can be found in the 2020-21 Budget Book. A summary of the total savings forecast to be delivered is provided in this section.
- 6.2 The latest monitoring reflects total forecast savings delivery of £22.464m and a total shortfall of £17.780m (44%) forecast at year end.
- 6.3 The forecast savings delivery is anticipated as shown in the table below:

Table 5: Analysis of 2020-21 savings forecast

	Adult Social Services	Children's Services	Community and Environmental Services	Strategy and Governance Department	Finance and Commercial Services	Finance General	Total
	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m
Budget savings	22.897	9.250	5.013	-0.613	1.389	2.308	40.244
Period 4 forecast savings	9.173	6.849	3.898	-0.691	0.927	2.308	22.464
Savings shortfall	13.724	2.401	1.115	0.078	0.462	0.000	17.780

Commentary on shortfall savings

- 6.4 The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic is having a profound effect on the Council's ability to achieve planned budget savings. Further details on the emerging financial implications of COVID-19 including the impact of non-delivery of savings are reflected elsewhere in this report.
- 6.5 Thirty-five savings are forecasting a shortfall, representing a budgeted total savings value of £30.149m and a forecast savings shortfall of £18.220m. This total is before adjustment for forecast savings over-delivery of £0.440m detailed in paragraph 6.6. Commentary on each saving is provided in Revenue Annex 3.

Commentary on overdelivering savings

- 6.6 One saving is currently forecast to over-deliver in 2020-21.

Adult Social Services:

ASC035 Investment and development of Assistive Technology approaches, budget £0.500m, over delivery £0.437m: Current projections, tested by the ASTEC Board, suggest we will over-deliver.

In addition, there is a favourable variance of £0.003m on ASC052 relating to the reversal of one-off use of repairs and renewal reserve.

2021-22 to 2023-24 savings

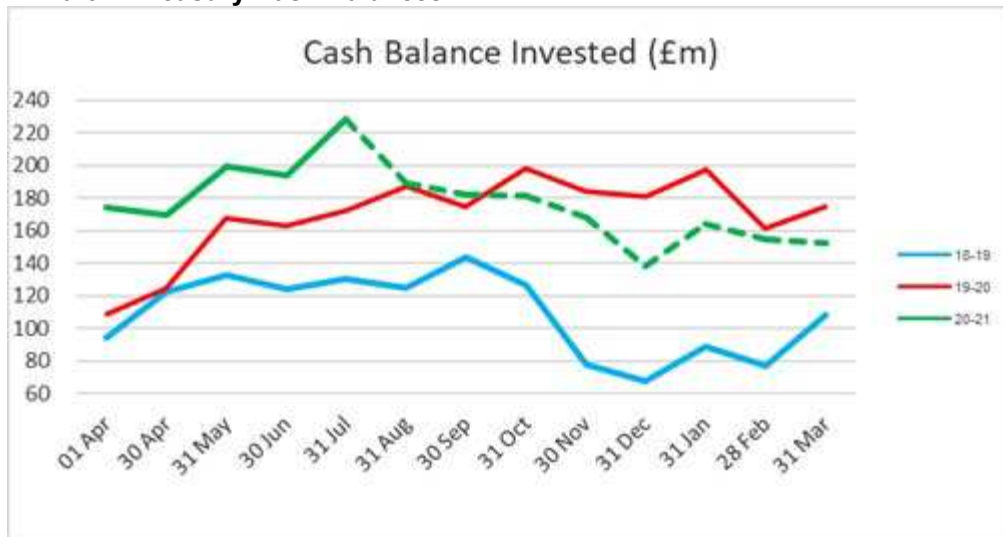
- 6.7 Budget setting in 2020-21 saw the approval of £20.747m savings for 2021-22, £2.383m for 2022-23 and £0.412m savings for 2023-24. Any impact on the

deliverability of these savings, and any 2020-21 savings that are permanently undeliverable, are being considered as part of the 2021-22 budget setting process.

7 Treasury management summary

- 7.1 The corporate treasury management function ensures the efficient management of all the authority's cash balances. The graph below shows the level of cash balances over the last two financial years to March 2020, and projections to March 2021.

Chart 2: Treasury Cash Balances

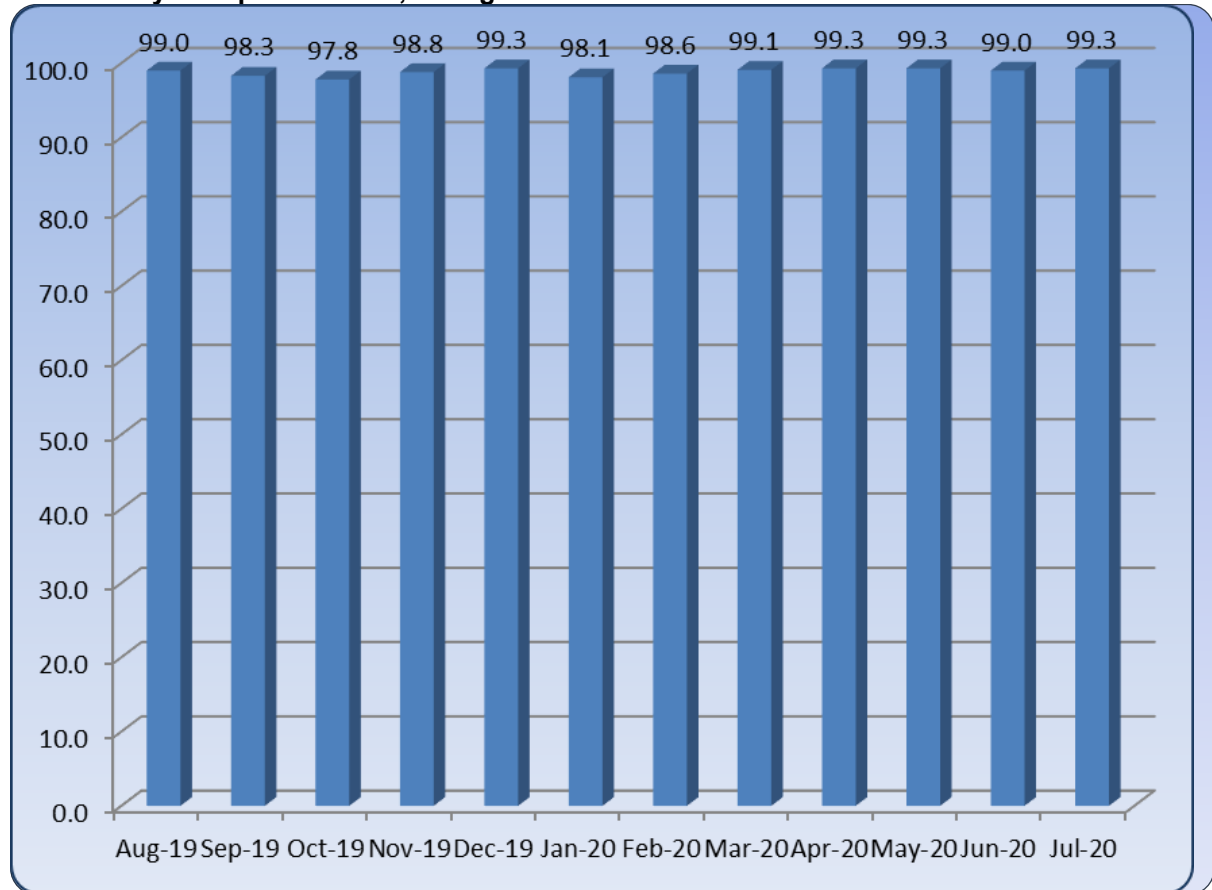


- 7.2 The forecast closing balance is approximately £152m, above average for recent years but a little lower than the balance at 31 March 2020. Balances in the graph above assume £80m will be borrowed to fund capital expenditure in the current financial year, in line with the Council's Treasury Strategy.
- 7.3 PWLB and commercial borrowing for capital purposes was £705.0m at the end of July 2020. Associated annual interest payable on existing borrowing is £29.3m.

8 Payment performance

- 8.1 This chart shows the percentage of invoices that were paid by the authority within 30 days of such invoices being received. Some 470,000 invoices are paid annually. 99.3% were paid on time in July against a target of 98%. The percentage has not dropped below 97% in the last 12 months.

Chart 3: Payment performance, rolling 12 months



*Note: The figures include an allowance for disputes/exclusions.

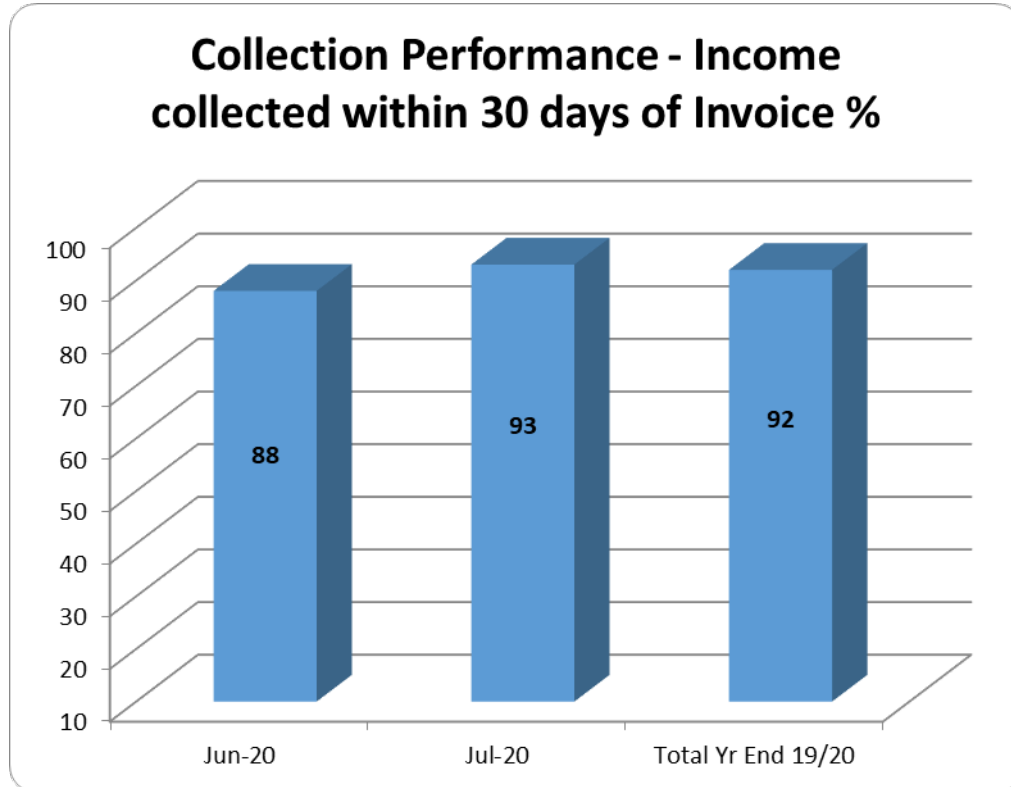
9 Debt recovery

- 9.1 **Introduction:** In 2019-20 the County Council raised over 160,000 invoices for statutory and non-statutory services totalling over £1.4bn. Through 2019-20 92% of all invoiced income was collected within 30 days of issuing an invoice, and 98% was collected within 180 days.

Debt collection performance measures

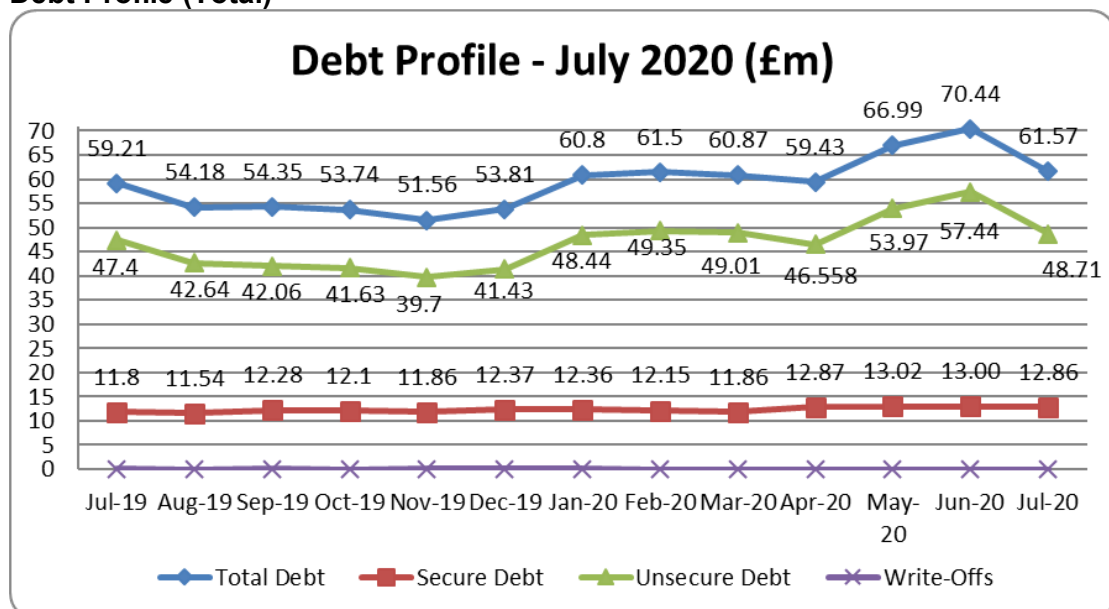
- 9.2 The proportion of invoiced income collected within 30 days for invoices raised in the previous month – measured by value – was 93% in July 2020. Overall debts reduced by £9m in July (see debt profile graph below).

Latest Collection Performance



- 9.3 The value of outstanding debt is continuously monitored, and recovery procedures are in place to ensure that action is taken to recover all money due to Norfolk County Council. The level of debt is shown in the following graph:

Debt Profile (Total)



- 9.4 Of the £48.7m unsecure debt at the end of July, £11.2m is under 30 days. The largest area of unsecure debt relates to charges for social care, £37.8m (previous month £41.6m), of which £17.7m (down from £20.1m) is debt with the CCG's for shared care, Better Care Pooled Fund, continuing care and free nursing care.
- 9.5 Secured debts amount to £12.9m (June 2020: £13.0m). Within this total £4.8m relates to estate finalisation where the client has died, and the estate is in the hands of the executors.
- 9.6 **Debt write-offs:** In accordance with Financial Regulations and Financial Procedures, Cabinet is required to approve the write-off of debts over £10,000. The Executive Director of Finance and Commercial Services approves the write-off of all debts up to £10,000.
- 9.7 Service departments are responsible for funding their debt write-offs. Before writing off any debt all appropriate credit control procedures are followed.
- 9.8 For the period 1 April 2020 to the end of July 2020, 64 debts less than £10,000 were approved to be written off following approval from the Executive Director of Finance and Commercial Services. These debts totalled £4,361.44.
- 9.9 No debts over £10,000 have been approved for write-off since 1 April 2020.

Forecast revenue outturn

Revenue outturn by service

Table A1a: revenue over and (under) spends by service

Service	Revised Budget	Net total over / (under) spend	Over / (under) spend as %	Forecast net spend
	£m	£m		£m
Adult Social Services	255.740	8.176	3.2%	263.916
Children's Services	196.311		0.0%	196.311
Community and Environmental Services	161.799	2.738	1.7%	164.537
Strategy and Governance	9.365	0.401	4.3%	9.766
Finance and Commercial Services	32.668	0.738	2.3%	33.406
Finance General	-225.462	-4.152	1.8%	-229.614
Forecast outturn this period	430.421	7.901	1.8%	438.322
Prior period forecast	430.421	7.784	1.8%	438.205

Reconciliation between current and previously reported underspend

Table A1b: monthly reconciliation of over / (under) spends

	£m
Forecast overspend brought forward	7.784
Movements July 2020	
Adult Social Services	0.242
Children's Services	
Community and Environmental Services	
Strategy and Governance	
Finance and Commercial Services	0.056
Finance General	-0.181
Outturn over/(under) spend	7.901

Covid-19 grant allocation by service

Table A1c: Covid-19 grant received and service allocations to mitigate overspends

	£m
Adult Social Services	38.438
Children's Services	5.459
Community and Environmental Services	6.112
Strategy and Governance	0.332
Finance and Commercial Services	1.360
Finance General	6.120
Rounding	0.002
Covid-19 grant allocated	57.823
Government Covid-19 funding third tranche to be allocated	6.001
Covid-19 grant	63.824

Revenue Annex 1 continued

The net underspend is a result of a range of underlying forecast over and underspends which are listed below.

Revenue budget outturn by service – detail

Adult Social Services	Over spend	Under spend	Changes
	£m	£m	£m
Purchase of Care	33.054		1.291
Commissioned Services	1.843		-0.269
Community Social Work		-0.36	-0.142
Business Development	0.013		0.104
Early Help & Prevention		-0.333	-0.245
Community Health & Social Care		-0.15	-0.253
Management, Finance & HR	0.161		-0.244
Use of Infection control grant	12.386		12.386
Covid-19 grant allocation		-38.438	-12.386
Forecast over / (under) spends	47.457	-39.281	0.242
Net total	8.176		
Children's Services	Over spend	Under spend	Changes
	£m	£m	£m
Learning & Inclusion	2.712		
Social Care	2.000		
Use of Home to School and College Transport Funding	0.747		0.747
Covid-19 grant allocation		-5.459	-0.747
Forecast over / (under) spends	-5.459	-5.459	-
Net total	-		
<i>Dedicated schools grant</i>			
High Needs Block	9.700		1.200
Increase in net deficit to be carried forward	-	-9.700	-1.200
Forecast over / (under) spend	9.700	-9.700	-
Net total	-		

Community and Environmental Services	Over spend	Under spend	Changes
	£m	£m	£m
Community Information and Learning	1.481		
Culture and Heritage	2.235		
Fire	0.511		
Growth and Development	0.376		
Highways and Waste	4.052		
Performance and Governance	0.110		
Director of Public Health	0.085		
Covid-19 grant allocation		-6.112	
Forecast over / (under) spend	8.850	-6.112	
Net total	2.738		

Strategy, Finance and Finance General	Over spend	Under spend	Changes
	£m	£m	£m
Strategy and Governance			
Registrars and other net loss of income	0.733		
Covid-19 grant allocation		-0.332	
Forecast over / (under) spend	0.733	-0.332	
	0.401		
Finance and Commercial Services			
ICT Services Management	-		
Client Property Management	0.364		0.056
Covid-19 related costs - loss of income/recharges	1.321		
Covid-19 related costs - savings delays	0.790		
Finance directorate reduced overheads and costs		-0.377	
Covid-19 grant allocation		-1.360	
Forecast over / (under) spend	2.475	-1.737	0.056
	0.738		
Finance General (see below for narrative)			
Covid-19 additional costs – including a large proportion of PPE, shielding and homeworking costs.	8.628		-0.167
Income: transfers of PPE to partner organisations		-0.144	
DEFRA Local Authority Emergency Assistance Grant for Food and Essential Supplies		-1.016	
Local assistance scheme	1.016		
Extended rights to free travel grant		-0.463	
Members travel		-0.068	-0.014
Interest on balances		-1.000	
Covid-19 grant allocation		-5.104	
Covid-19 grant tranche 3 – to be allocated		-6.001	
Forecast over / (under) spend	9.644	-13.796	- 0.181
Net total		-4.152	

Revenue Annex 1 continued

Finance General forecast over and underspends

Explanations for the Finance General forecast under and overspends are as follows:

Covid-19 additional costs and associated income:

- Covid-19 additional costs: forecast overspend £8.628m
- Income: transfers of PPE to partner organisations: forecast underspend £0.144m
- Covid-19 grant allocation: forecast underspend £5.104m
- DEFRA Local Authority Emergency Assistance Grant for Food and Essential Supplies £1.016m (see paragraph below)

Costs related to Covid-19 pandemic which have not been allocated to service departments have resulted in a forecast overspend, partly off-set by government grants. Expenditure includes the purchase of medical supplies and protective (PPE) clothing to ensure continuity of supply for council staff, care homes, early years providers and others. Some of this PPE is forecast to be transferred to partner organisations at cost.

Local assistance scheme (forecast overspend £nil)

The Norfolk Assistance Scheme helps by providing emergency food, cash and household expenses. Due to the coronavirus situation, a coordinated emergency relief response has been developed for Norfolk people in crisis, which increased scheme spend. In period 3, additional government funding was made available which is being used to provide food and essential supplies for those in the greatest need.

Extended rights to free travel grant (forecast underspend £0.463m)

Additional grant forecast in respect of extended rights to free travel.

Members travel (forecast underspend £0.068m)

Since the start of the financial year, meetings have not been held at County Hall. Members have instead held meetings electronically significantly reducing the costs of travel.

Interest on balances (forecast underspend £1.000m)

The interest payable/receivable budget was prepared on the basis of a number of assumptions including cash flows, interest rates and the amount of borrowing. The cost and timing of borrowing has resulted in a forecast underspend.

Covid-19 grant tranche 3 – to be allocated (forecast underspend £6.001m)

As noted in section 5 of this report, an additional £6.001m of government funding has been allocated to Norfolk County Council. This will be allocated to services once the details of other grant funding has been confirmed.

Revenue Annex 2

Impact of Covid-19 – forecast cost pressures

Forecast cost pressures summarised in paragraph 5 of the main report are as follows:

	2020-21 Forecast £m
<u>Identified / forecast costs</u>	
Adult Social Care	
Enhancements to packages of care where not related to hospital discharge (mainly LD and MH and includes care need escalation)	1.450
Additional Block capacity purchased from market	0.500
Provider support payments to cover liquidity/sustainability issues and any additional costs where not specifically related to a person's changing care needs	10.000
Other care market pressures	6.000
Paying for additional day time support to Supported Living/Residential providers whilst the day centres are closed	0.300
Loss of income: Adults: No charges for services not received	3.000
Equipment and Support for our teams (e.g. PPE for in-house teams)	0.035
Support for people experiencing domestic abuse	0.200
Loss of savings: Adults: Savings delivery risk	10.727
Temporary postponed implementation of the second phase of the charging policy implementation (2020-21 cost pressure)	3.000
Equipment - spike in usage and increase in costs	0.200
Weekend or Overtime staff costs	0.500
Vulnerable People Resettlement	0.200
Redeployed interims	0.100
Full use of infection control funding	12.386
Adult Social Care Total	48.598
Children's Services	
Loss of income - Children's Services - Initial estimate primarily relating to trading with schools	2.000
Loss of income - Transport	0.200
Safeguarding campaign - <i>Project Stay Safe</i>	0.010
Loss of savings: Children's: Savings delivery risk	2.401
Maintaining Early Year's Provision	0.500
Post 18s remaining in placements	0.202
Additional contracted provider costs	0.500
Additional respite care costs	0.100
Additional hardship funding for tier 2	TBC
Enhanced Zoom licenses	0.015
Additional frontline agency costs	0.550
CAMHS contract extension	0.010
Other support for the market	0.490
Grant support to charity	0.050
Book fund for Social Work apprentices	0.002
Full use of Home to School and College Transport Funding	0.747
Children's Services Total	7.777

Community and Environmental Services

	2020-21 Forecast £m
Food boxes for older people (NCC provision)	0.200
Waste – Contract costs reflecting 15% increase in residual waste volumes	0.600
Waste – Recycling credits reflecting 15% increase in recyclables / garden waste	0.240
Reopening Recycling Centres – (traffic management, security, volume increase)	0.117
Loss of income: CES including Museums / Libraries	1.962
Loss of income: CES including Highways	4.351
Loss of income: CES including Planning and Development	0.104
Loss of income: CES including other SFC	0.920
Loss of income: CES other	0.027
Staff time chargeable to projects	TBC
Loss of savings: CES	1.115
Community and Environmental Services Total	9.635
Strategy and Governance	
Norfolk Community Foundation - grant donation	0.100
Joint comms systems for the Norfolk Resilience Forum	0.035
Government Conferencing (BT)	TBC
NPLAW support and advice	TBC
Increased Coroner's costs	0.100
Loss of income: Other	0.250
Loss of savings: Strategy and Governance	0.075
Strategy and Governance Total	0.560
Finance and Commercial Services and Finance General	
Emergency Planning Director / Strategic Command Group / MAFG Director costs	0.039
Mortuary facility vans provided by NORSE	0.004
Corporate procurement of PPE	3.000
Food distribution hub - Site costs	0.050
Re-assignment of FES staff (HR and Finance System replacement) to COVID-19 response	0.375
Homeworking equipment	1.000
Extension of SWIFTS Pool Cars / Enterprise	0.007
Extension of Norfolk Assistance Scheme (NAS)	1.016
Software solution from Agilisys and Microsoft to handle the contacts to vulnerable adults in receipt of Letters and all related activities	0.060
Loss of income: Other	0.750
Loss of savings: Finance and Commercial Services / Finance General	0.790
Additional costs associated with the NCC schools contracts, between NCC and Norse Eastern Ltd	0.750
Vulnerability Tracker App	0.010
Provision for match funding Business Rates Pool to establish Norfolk Strategic Fund	1.000
Finance and Commercial Services and Finance General Total	8.851
Covid-19 financial pressures Norfolk County Council total	75.421

Revenue Annex 3

Commentary on forecast savings shortfalls

Commentaries on savings shortfalls referred to in paragraph 6 of the main report are as follows:

Adult Social Services:

ASC006 Promoting Independence for Younger Adults, budget £5.000m, shortfall £2.247m: Relies on our ability to offer alternatives (including accommodation) which are not currently available. Staff teams set up for dedicated reviewing have been repurposed to directly support COVID response. There is less ability to focus on prevention when in crisis and needs may escalate due to current pandemic.

ASC006 Promoting Independence for Older Adults, budget £5.000m, shortfall £4.000m: Operational teams are focused on the COVID response. Elements of plan to deliver requires governance that has not yet been set up and has been delayed due to programme manager redeployment.

ASC036 Maximising potential through digital solutions, budget £1.000m, shortfall £0.887m: The current climate adds difficulty in restructuring services and has materially impacted pricing structures.

ASC038 Procurement of current capacity through NorseCare at market value: budget £1.000m, shortfall £1.000m: The provider is focused on delivery of safe services in COVID and not on service transformation.

ASC046 Revise the NCC charging policy for working age adults to apply the government's minimum income guarantee amounts, budget £3.000m, shortfall £3.000m: At the outbreak of the pandemic, a decision was taken to mitigate the changes to the Minimum Income Guarantee (MIG) that would have been implemented in April, for four months, recognising the impact that the lockdown would have on people and the services they receive. The cost of this decision was covered by some of the Government's Covid-19 funding that the Council received. Cabinet has decided given the impact to date, and the uncertainty of the future for those affected by the changes, to continue to mitigate the impact of phase 2 of the changes to charging. This would be extended to allow for Government intentions around funding reform for social care to be published. Provided this is done within a reasonable timescale, the mitigation would continue, subject to the financial demands on the Council.

ASC049 Shift to community and preventative work within health and social care system – demand and risk stratification, budget £1.000m, shortfall £0.800m: The pandemic has meant that some areas of work and system changes have been delayed, although work is restarting and there will be potential for more opportunities through collaboration and remodelling of systems there remains risk in this financial year.

ASS001 Expanding home based reablement, which saves money in the long term by preventing unnecessary hospital admissions and supporting more people to swiftly return home from hospital, budget £3.000m, shortfall £0.750m: Service is focused on safe discharge and therefore long-term outcomes may suffer leading to higher ongoing costs.

ASS002 Expanding accommodation based reablement, which saves money by enabling people with higher needs to quickly return to their home from hospital without needing residential care, budget £0.750m, shortfall £0.600m: Provision of new

accommodation based reablement beds has been postponed due to pandemic and those we have, have been repurposed to COVID support.

ASS003 Extending home based support for people with higher level needs or dementia so that they can remain in their home especially after an illness or hospital stay, which saves money on residential care, budget £0.200m, shortfall £0.100m: The service is fully focused on supporting discharge.

ASS004 Working better across health and social care teams to help prevent falls, which in turn helps prevent hospital admissions and saves money on residential care, budget £0.140m, shortfall £0.140m: Elements of plan to deliver requires governance that has not yet been set up and has been delayed due to programme manager redeployment.

ASS005 Supporting disabled people to access grants that are available for access to education and support to attend university, budget £0.050m, shortfall £0.050m. This saving will continue to be pursued where possible, but is identified as at risk due to change of focus for many grants and universities.

ASS006 Increasing opportunities for personalisation and direct payments, which will help both increase choice of services and value for money, through more efficient commissioning, budget £0.500m, shortfall £0.200m. Some of the work has been refocused to support the pandemic response and recovery. Although there will continue to be opportunities to increase personalisation, there will be challenges for delivering the value for money aspect of the work.

ASS007 Reviewing how we commission residential care services to save money by making sure we have the right services in the right place, budget £0.500m, shortfall £0.200m. This saving will continue to be reviewed throughout the year, but commissioning actions have needed to focus on the system capacity and to secure adequate capacity as part of the hospital discharge service requirements. Challenges currently faced across the market will make it difficult to deliver savings from these contracts.

ASS008 Developing consistent contracts and prices for nursing care by working more closely with health services, budget £0.190m, shortfall £0.190m. The service is currently working under the Government Hospital Discharge Service Requirements, and the council is contracting for both health and social care nursing contracts. The challenges currently faced across the social care market will make it deliver savings from these contracts in this financial year.

Children's Services:

CHS001 Prevention, early intervention and effective social care – Investing in an enhanced operating model which supports families to stay together and ensures fewer children need to come into care, budget £1.000m shortfall £0.500m: At the start of the financial year, we were unable to work as closely with some families to support resilience during isolation, family support networks reduced, and pressure of people being at home together potentially leading to an increase in domestic abuse. Additionally, resources have been diverted away from transformation activity due to the covid-19 response, resulting in delays to planning and implementation of the programme.

CHS002 Alternatives to care – Investing in a range of new services which offer alternatives to care using enhanced therapeutic and care alternatives, combined with a

focus on support networks from extended families keeping families safely together where possible and averting family crises, budget £1.200m, shortfall £0.150m: At the start of the financial year, we were to work as closely with some families to support resilience during isolation, family support networks reduced, and pressure of people being at home together potentially leading to an increase in domestic abuse. Additionally, resources have been diverted away from transformation activity due to the covid-19 response, resulting in delays to planning and implementation of the programme.

CHS003 Transforming the care market and creating the capacity that we need – Creating and commissioning new care models for children in care – achieving better outcomes and lower costs, budget £3.500m, shortfall £1.751m: It is been harder to move forward new foster carers, people wanting to adopt, and permanency arrangements as social workers have been restricted to essential visiting only where necessary to ensure the safety and welfare of a child. Resources have also been diverted away from transformation activity due to the covid-19 response and, additionally, construction work delays have impacted upon the opening of new semi-independent accommodation for care leavers and solo / dual placements for children looked after.

Community and Environmental Services:

CMM045 Income generation – Norfolk Community Learning Services, budget £0.125m shortfall £0.125m: Closed sites and reduced activities impacting income generation opportunities.

CMM046 Income generation – Library and Information Service, budget £0.111m shortfall £0.111m: Closed sites and reduced activities impacting income generation opportunities.

CMM060 Increased income – Trading Standards and library service, budget £0.070m shortfall £0.070m: Closed sites and reduced activities impacting income generation opportunities.

EDT050 Improved management of on-street car parking, budget £0.350m shortfall £0.350m: Less on street parking during lockdown.

EDT065 Household Waste Recycling Centres – reuse shops, budget £0.050m shortfall £0.050m: Closed sites and reduced activities impacting income generation opportunities.

EDT068 Re-model back office support structure, budget £0.090m shortfall £0.090m: The support services have restructured following the transfer of works to Norse, however we have not been able to deliver the saving in the way that we had originally anticipated.

CES005 Adjusting our budget for recycling centres in line with predicted waste volumes, budget £0.200m shortfall £0.200m: In previous years we had seen reduced waste volumes at HWRC's, however due to the Covid-19 pandemic, based on recent activities we are expecting an increase in volumes.

CES020.1 Income generation across various Community and Environmental Services budgets. (Trading Standards calibration), budget £0.025m shortfall £0.025m: Closed sites and reduced activities impacting income generation opportunities.

CES020.2 Income generation across various Community and Environmental Services budgets. (Trading Standards trusted trader), budget £0.024m shortfall £0.024m: Closed sites and reduced activities impacting income generation opportunities.

CES020.3 Income generation across various Community and Environmental Services budgets. (Norfolk Records Office), budget £0.020m shortfall £0.020m: Closed sites and reduced activities impacting income generation opportunities.

CES020.5 Income generation across various Community and Environmental Services budgets. (Escape Room income), budget £0.015m shortfall £0.015m: Closed sites and reduced activities impacting income generation opportunities.

CES020.8 Income generation across various Community and Environmental Services budgets. (Developer travel plans), budget £0.030m shortfall £0.030m: Closed sites and reduced activities impacting income generation opportunities.

CES020.9 Income generation across various Community and Environmental Services budgets. (Equality and Diversity), budget £0.005m shortfall £0.005m: Closed sites and reduced activities impacting income generation opportunities.

Strategy and Governance Department:

SGD002 Reducing our spending on supplies and services by 5%, budget £0.155m shortfall £0.078m: Current forecasts indicate this saving will not be delivered in full.

Finance and Commercial Services:

B&P002 Property centralisation of budgets, budget £0.400m shortfall £0.100m: Finance and Commercial Services savings at risk of delay due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

DIE001 IMT savings, budget £0.700m shortfall £0.175m: Finance and Commercial Services savings at risk of delay due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

P&R027 Property savings, budget £0.650m shortfall £0.163m: Finance and Commercial Services savings at risk of delay due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

BTP005 Reviewing all of Norfolk County Council's traded services to make sure they are run on a fair commercial basis - IMT Schools, budget £0.099m shortfall £0.025m: Finance and Commercial Services savings at risk of delay due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

Finance General:

BTP001-5 Business Transformation savings: Currently forecasting no variance on the delivery of planned Business Transformation savings. A paper on the progress of the Business Transformation Programme is going to Corporate Select Committee in September. Any updates to the forecast delivery of savings will be included in future monitoring to Cabinet.

Appendix 2: 2020-21 Capital Finance Monitoring Report

Report by the Executive Director of Finance and Commercial Services

1 Capital Programme 2020-21

- 1.1 On 17 February 2020, the County Council agreed a 2020-21 capital programme of £282.688m with a further £253.909m allocated to future years', giving a total of £536.577m.
- 1.2 Additional re-profiling from 2019-20 resulted in an overall capital programme at 1 April 2020 of £645m. Further in-year adjustments have resulted in the capital programme shown below:

Table 1: Capital Programme budget

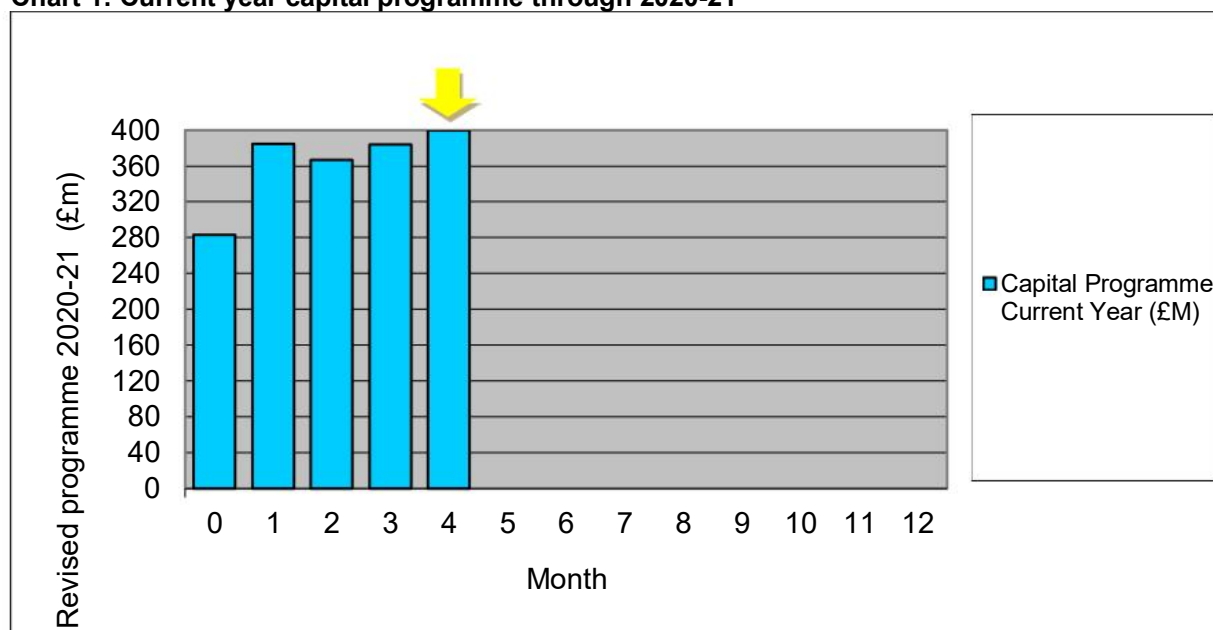
	2020-21 budget	Future years
	£m	£m
New schemes approved February 2020	21.497	24.414
Previously approved schemes brought forward	261.650	235.779
Totals in 2020-23+ Budget Book (total £543.340m)	283.147	260.193
Schemes re-profiled after budget setting	94.503	0.598
Other adjustments after budget setting including new grants	7.531	
Revised opening capital programme (total £645.972m)	385.181	260.791
Re-profiling since start of year	-53.948	53.948
Other movements including new grants and approved schemes	68.209	8.639
Total capital programme budgets total £722.820m	399.442	323.378

Note: this table and the tables below contain rounding differences

Changes to the Capital Programme

- 1.3 The following chart shows changes to the 2020-21 capital programme through the year.

Chart 1: Current year capital programme through 2020-21



- 1.4 Month “0” shows the 2020-21 capital programme at the time of budget approval, with schemes reprofiled after budget setting shown in month 1 followed by the most up to date programme. The current year programme will change as additional funding is secured, and when schemes are re-profiled to future years as timing becomes more certain.

- 1.5 The current year’s capital budget is as follows:

Table 2: Service capital budgets and movements 2020-21

Service	Opening programme	Previous report	Reprofil ng since previous report	Other Changes since previous report	2020-21 latest Capital Budget
	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m
Children's Services	122.963	88.372	1.000	10.917	100.290
Adult Social Care	15.604	23.675	0.000	0.000	23.675
Community & Environmental Services	165.262	190.334	-4.176	17.453	203.611
Finance & Comm Servs	81.252	81.252	-9.786	0.300	71.766
Strategy and Governance	0.100	0.100			0.100
Total	385.181	383.734	-12.962	28.670	399.442
				15.708	

Note:: this table may contain rounding differences.

Figures relating to the previous report have been amended in this and the following table to correct the services and Strategy and Governance budget between current and future years.

- 1.6 The revised programme for future years (2020-21 to 2021-22 and beyond) is as follows:

Table 3: Capital programme future years 2020+

Service	Previously reported future programme	Reprofil ng since previous report	Other Changes since previous report	2020+ Future Capital Budget
	£m	£m	£m	£m
Children's Services	142.089	-1.000	-	141.089
Adult Social Care	25.394	-	-	25.394
Community & Environmental Services	102.578	4.176	-	106.754
Finance & Comm Servs	39.369	9.786	0.586	49.741
Strategy and Governance	0.400	-	-	0.400
Total	309.830	12.962	0.586	323.378
			13.548	

Note: this table may contain rounding differences

2 Financing the capital programme

- 2.1 Funding for the capital programme comes primarily from grants and contributions provided by central government and prudential borrowing. These are supplemented by capital receipts, developer contributions, and contributions from revenue budgets and reserves.

Table 4: Financing of the capital programme

Funding stream	2020-21 Programme	Future Years Forecast
	£m	£m
Prudential Borrowing	201.742	224.794
Use of Capital Receipts	-	-
Revenue & Reserves	0.015	-
<i>Grants and Contributions:</i>	-	-
DfE	46.809	33.863
DfT	95.399	58.117
DoH	8.837	-
MHCLG	0.259	-
DCMS	5.532	0.183
Developer Contributions	24.611	4.889
Other Local Authorities	0.802	-
Local Enterprise Partnership	4.357	-
Community Infrastructure Levy	-	-
National Lottery	8.113	1.531
Other	2.967	-
Total capital programme	399.442	323.378

Note: this table may contain rounding differences

- 2.2 Significant capital receipts are anticipated over the life of the programme. These will be used either to re-pay debt as it falls due, for the flexible use of capital receipts to support the revenue costs of transformation, with any excess receipts used to reduce the call on future prudential borrowing. For the purposes of the table above, it is assumed that all capital receipts will be applied directly to the re-payment of debt and transformation projects, rather than being applied to fund capital expenditure.
- 2.3 Developer contributions are funding held in relation to planning applications. Section 106 (Town and Country Planning Act 1990) contributions are held in relation to specific projects: primarily schools, with smaller amounts for libraries and highways. The majority of highways developer contributions are a result of section 278 agreements (Highways Act 1980).

3 Capital Receipts

- 3.1 The Council's property portfolio is constantly reviewed to ensure assets are only held where necessary so that capital receipts or rental income can be generated. This in turn reduces revenue costs of the operational property portfolio.
- 3.2 The capital programme, approved in February 2020, gave the best estimate at that time of the value of properties available for disposal in the three years to 2022-23, totalling £14.0m.

Table 5a: Disposals capital programme forecast

Financial Year	Property sales forecast £m
2020-21	10.6
2021-22	1.5
2022-23	1.9
2023-24	1.0
	14.0

The timing of future year sales is the most optimistic case, and may slip into future years if sales completions are delayed.

- 3.3 The revised schedule for current year disposals is as follows:

Table 5b: Capital receipts and forecast use current financial year £m

Capital receipts 2020-21	£m
Capital receipts reserve brought forward	1.347
Actual property sales to P4 net of associated capital costs	0.500
Loan repayments - estimate	0.600
Sales with a medium to high chance of completion	7.998
Potential capital receipts	10.445
Forecast use of capital receipts	
Budget 2020-21 to repay debt	2.000
Maximum flexible use of capital receipts to support transformation costs	3.000
Total forecast use of capital receipts	5.000

The timing of sales cannot be guaranteed, particularly as sales activity has been affected by Covid-19.

4 Capital programme, new and amended schemes

4.1 LED streetlights upgrade

The current programme of residential LED streetlights upgrade has been largely completed. The next phase of rollout is the 15,000 main road streetlights across Norfolk, which are now the highest priority in terms of energy consumption. The estimated cost for this rollout is £8.5m, with the estimated annual energy savings being £0.900m, equating to 2,700 tonnes of CO2. The capital budget will be spent on energy efficient LED street light replacements, and the project will include the installation of a central management system and dynamic dimming.

It was originally proposed to fund part of the above programme using Transforming Cities / Future Mobility Zone funding. However, in light of recent government funding announcements, this is no longer possible and this proposal is to add £8.5m of prudential borrowing to the Capital Programme, to be spent in 2020-21.

4.2 County Hall Civic Area Accessibility and Inclusivity project

The County Hall Civic Area, comprising the Council Chamber, Cranworth room, Marble Map area, Colman room and Edwards room as well as associated facilities remain largely unchanged since the building was opened in 1968. As a result there is a significant maintenance backlog and the area does not meet the needs of Councillors and residents, particularly those with disabilities. There are issues with lighting, heating and cooling, and public gallery access. In addition, the lack of air handling does not meet Covid regulations.

A proposed Accessibility and Inclusivity project will address these issues. Due to the presence of asbestos, there is no way to repair the plant or utilise existing ducting and the works require extensive replacement of the walls. Officers have explored, with our architects, different options, but the nature of the works, mean fundamental redesign, particularly to allow accessibility.

The works at stage 1 are estimated at £2.7m and, if approved, will be funded from the existing Accommodation Rationalisation capital budget. It is anticipated that the majority of works will be completed by February 2021.

Capital Annex 1 - changes to capital programme since last Cabinet

			2020-21	2020-21	21-22+	21-22+	
Service	Project	Funding Type	Change (£m)	REPROFILE	Change (£m)	REPROFILE	Reason
Childrens Services	EC4747 SEND	NCC Borrowing		1.000		-1.000	Reprofile SEND budgets to account for in year allocations
	EC4285 Trowse Primary	Capital Maintenance	1.439				Budget reprofiled from 19/20 to account for over accruals
	EC4862 North Lynn, Lynnsport	Capital Maintenance	2.458				Budget reprofiled from 19/20 to account for over accruals
	EC4828 North Denes	Capital Maintenance	3.505				Budget reprofiled from 19/20 to account for over accruals
	EC4998 CS Transformation	NCC Borrowing	3.000				Agreed flexible use of capital receipts
	ECAPEQ Schools capital expenditure	NCC Borrowing	0.515				Increased funding of schools capital expenditure
Total Children's services			10.917	1.000	0.000	-1.000	
Fire	CF0506 Fire Vehicle replacement	NCC Borrowing		-3.499		3.499	Reprofiled as bulk of cost to be paid on delivery of vehicles in 21/22
	CF0508 Fire Retained alerter equipment	NCC Borrowing		-0.140		0.140	Project on hold due to resource directed to other projects
	CF0512 Fire Experience Unit	NCC Borrowing		-0.075		0.075	Project on hold due to COVID restrictions
Libraires	Vairous projects	S106 Developer contributions	0.031				Small amounts received across various projects
	Self Service refurbishment project	NCC Borrowing		-0.459		0.459	Reprofiled to current expectations as expenditure on this project has only just begun
	Norwich/Station Road Lingwood	S106 Developer contributions		-0.003		0.003	Reprofiled to expected spend
Highways	Marriotts Way Walking Scheme	Developer Contributions	0.143				Scheme has now been costed and forecast added
	Western Link	Dft Funding	1.024				Forecast adjusted to include work costs
		External Contributions	1.658				Forecast adjusted to include work costs
	Long Stratton Bypass	Dft Funding	0.157				GPRS survey task order sent to Norse - estimate received. Works forecast updated accordingly
	Local Road Schemes Gt Yarmouth	LEP	-0.836				Updated cost to include agreed fees for Norse
	Bridge Strengthening schemes	Dft Funding	-4.411				Updated costs to reflect current forecast
	Other highways schemes unallocated	Dft Funding	18.244				Additional £18m budget added from extra DfT pothole funding
	Various other smaller schemes		0.193				Updated costs to reflect current forecast
	Pump Farm	NCC Borrowing	1.250				Additional borrowing to account for the purchase of Pump farm in 19/20
Total CES			17.453	-4.176	0.000	4.176	

County Farms	CB0093 Burlingham	NCC Borrowing		0.214		- 0.214	Reprofiled for re allocation
Finance ICT	Scottow digitisation facility	NCC Borrowing	0.300		0.150		Additional borrowing agreed for Digitisation facility
Offices	Accommodation Rationalisation	NCC Borrowing			0.436		Replacement Funding agreed by Cabinet to cover the cost of purchase & refurb of Priory Nursery Gt Yarmouth
Finance	GNGB Supported Borrowing	NCC Borrowing		-10.000		10.000	Loan facility not likely to be required in current financial year
Total Finance			0.300	- 9.786	0.586	9.786	
Total			28.670	-12.962	0.586	12.962	

Cabinet

Item No: 11

Decision making report title:	Strategic and Financial Planning 2021-22
Date of meeting:	7 September 2020
Responsible Cabinet Member:	Cllr Andrew Jamieson (Cabinet Member for Finance)
Responsible Director:	Simon George, Executive Director of Finance and Commercial Services Fiona McDiarmid, Executive Director of Strategy and Governance
Is this a key decision?	No

Introduction from Cabinet Member

As set out in the Financial Monitoring report elsewhere on the agenda, the Council continues to work to deliver a balanced position for 2020-21. Simultaneously, work is underway to develop proposals to enable a balanced and robust Budget to be proposed for 2021-22. The impact of COVID-19, along with continued unprecedented uncertainty about future year pressures and funding, represent a very significant challenge for the Council in developing its Medium Term Financial Strategy. As set out in this report, the scale of the budget gap to be closed in future years remains subject to substantial uncertainty and there are a number of issues which could have a material impact on the level of resources available to Norfolk County Council to deliver services in the future.

In the face of these challenges, it will be critically important to bring forward balanced, sustainable budget proposals which will enable the Council to continue to deliver the essential services which are relied on by all Norfolk's people, businesses and visitors. This report represents an important milestone in the development of the 2021-22 Budget and provides an opportunity for Members to influence the shape of these emerging proposals.

Executive Summary

The latest estimates of the financial impact of the COVID-19 pandemic are set out in the Financial Monitoring report. This reflects additional costs, lost income and undeliverable savings in the current year, many of which will have an extended impact on the 2021-22 Budget. This report, and the Financial Monitoring paper, together provide an overview of the anticipated financial implications of COVID-19, for both the current year and for the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy as originally agreed in February 2020.

The Council continues to engage with MPs, the County Council Network (CCN), the Local Government Association (LGA), the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) and other Government Ministers and departments on the need for

sustainable and long term funding for councils. The latest opportunity to communicate our key concerns is provided by the Comprehensive Spending Review.

The 2021-22 Budget is being prepared in truly exceptional circumstances. These are inevitably having a profound impact on the organisation's ability to achieve planned budget savings and income for 2020-21, as well as on the capacity to develop and deliver new budget proposals for 2021-22, and on the wider budget position, which, as a result, is the subject of extremely high levels of uncertainty. As such, the report forms part of the budget planning process for 2021-22, which has been designed to recognise that there remains a need for ongoing flexibility to respond to changing circumstances. In this context, the report also provides a summary of key areas of wider risk and uncertainty for Cabinet to consider.

The MTFS position will continue to be updated in light of future government announcements and as the scale of the impact on the Council becomes clear. This will be reported to Cabinet and to Scrutiny Committee as the budget setting process progresses.

Recommendations

- 1. To comment on and agree key points to be included in the representation to the Comprehensive Spending Review in relation to:**
 - the uncertainty about wider funding allocations and reforms;
 - the urgent need for details to enable 2021-22 budget setting;
 - the need for adequate funding to meet pressures from Covid-19; and
 - the fundamental need to address underlying pressures including adults and children's social care.**Delegate to the Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance to approve the final response for submission on behalf of the Council reflecting the points set out in Paragraph 2.4.**
- 2. To comment on and agree the key points set out in Paragraph 2.6 to be included in the response to the consultation on Business Rates system and delegate to the Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance to approve the final response for submission on behalf of the Council.**
- 3. To consider the updated overall budget gap of £129.779m in the Medium Term Financial Strategy including a latest gap of £45.434m forecast for 2021-22, noting the key areas of risk which remain to be quantified. (Section 3)**
- 4. To agree that detail of saving proposals to aid in closing the budget gap should be presented to Cabinet in October, after being developed based on the approaches set out in Sections 4-8, and following input from Select Committees about the overall strategy in each Department during September.**

1. Background and Purpose

- 1.1. This report provides an update on the developing 2021-22 Budget and associated Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS). To inform discussion of the budget position it also:
- Summarises the latest position in relation to some of the significant uncertainties facing local government finances as a result of COVID-19 and other issues.
 - Sets out the latest view of the MTFS position for 2021-22 onwards, updating the assumptions agreed in February 2020. This position will be updated further as part of reporting to Cabinet in October.
 - Provides an overview of some of the key issues facing services in relation to their financial strategy, and proposes the approach being taken in each Department in order to develop saving proposals to seek to meet the targets agreed by Cabinet in July.
 - Details the key points to be made in the Council's representation to the 2020 Comprehensive Spending Review process, and the call for evidence on Business Rates reform, for endorsement.
- 1.2. Ultimately this report is intended to support the Council in preparing the 2021-22 Budget and developing the approach to identifying savings proposals which will assist in delivering a balanced budget for the year.
- 1.3. The content of the report is based on circumstances that are changing frequently and therefore some areas may become superseded by new information on an ongoing basis.

2. Government announcements with potential implications for local government funding

- 2.1. The Chancellor of the Exchequer, Rishi Sunak, announced the **2020 Comprehensive Spending Review (CSR)** on 21 July 2020¹. The CSR, which will be published in the autumn, is expected to set out the government's spending plans for the parliament, covering a three-year period for resource budgets (2021-22 to 2023-24) and a four-year period for capital budgets (2021-22 to 2024-25). Among the areas that the Chancellor stated the CSR will prioritise, the following are likely to have the most relevance for local government:
- Strengthening the UK's economic recovery from COVID-19 by prioritising jobs and skills;
 - Levelling up economic opportunity across all nations and regions of the country by investing in infrastructure, innovation and people – spreading opportunity, maximising productivity and improving the value add of each hour worked;
 - Improving outcomes in public services, including supporting the NHS and taking steps to cut crime and ensure every young person receives a superb education;

¹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/chancellor-launches-comprehensive-spending-review>

- Making the UK a scientific superpower, including leading in the development of technologies that will support the government's ambition to reach net zero carbon emissions by 2050; and
- Strengthening the UK's place in the world.

2.2. Taking into account the wider uncertainty, the Chancellor did not set a "spending envelope" for the CSR but confirmed that departmental spending "will grow in real terms across the CSR period". However, the Chancellor also stated that "there will need be tough choices in other areas of spending at the review. As part of their preparations for the CSR departments have been asked to identify opportunities to reprioritise and deliver savings."

2.3. The deadline to submit representations to the CSR is 24 September 2020. This timescale would suggest a Budget or Autumn Statement announcement of some sort in late October or early November. Realistically, this implies that as in previous years, **the Council will not receive detailed information about funding allocations for 2021-22 and beyond until December 2020 at the earliest.**

2.4. It is proposed that the Council's representation to the CSR cover the following key areas:

- How the Council contributes to the priorities set out for the CSR;
- The impact of COVID-19 and the continued uncertainty and further delay of significant planned reforms to local government finance (including the Fair Funding Review and Business Rates Reform) on the Medium Term Financial Strategy.
- The opportunity for Government to deliver a permanent step change, recognising the importance of children's and adults social care, and adequately funding local authorities to make a key contribution to national recovery.
- The need for a larger quantum to meet immediate pressures of COVID-19, and to provide a sustainable funding level for the future.
- The urgent need for clarity and certainty about the support that Government will provide for 2021-22 and beyond to enable budget setting to take place effectively.
- The need to address underlying key issues including:
 - Investing in infrastructure and delivering "levelling up";
 - Reforming council tax and addressing associated inequalities;
 - Adequately funding children's and adults Social Care pressures;
 - Addressing other unfunded pressures;
 - Providing adequate funding for schools, including addressing the High Needs Block deficit; and
 - Delivering on environmental commitments and supporting effective waste management.

Members' views are sought on this approach, and Cabinet is asked to delegate to the Leader and the Cabinet Member for Finance to agree a final representation for submission.

- 2.5. The Government committed to undertake a fundamental **Business Rates Review** at the Spring Budget, and launched a call for evidence on 21 July 2020². This seeks views on how the business rates system currently works, issues to be addressed, ideas for change and a number of alternative taxes. The Review is due to conclude in Spring 2021. While this timeframe means it will not impact on the 2021-22 budget setting process, the increasing significance of Business Rates income to local authorities means that this Review may be an important issue in relation to the Council's medium to long-term funding position.
- 2.6. The call for evidence asks a number of technical questions about the Business Rates system and its administration. It is proposed that the Council's response to the Business Rates Review address these where they are relevant to an upper tier authority and also covers the following key areas:
- The significant concern that growth in rates will not keep pace with the future pressures faced across the full range of local government services including, for example, the National Living Wage, and the need for any reforms to take account of this.
 - The pressing need to address fundamental issues in the business rates system including the under-taxation of online retailers while traditional "bricks and mortar" businesses bear a disproportionate share of the burden.
 - That the tax base is arguably overly dependent on a relatively small number of businesses and places which means much greater risk, volatility and fragility within the system as a whole.
 - The fact that there is a clear tension between some (entirely understandable) national government policies (for example to support the high street and reduce the rates burden) and an increased local authority share of retained rates and expectation of reliance on these as a source of income to meet demand driven cost pressures. In this context it will be critical that the impact of government policies continues to be fully compensated following any reforms.
 - That government should consider how the tension between continuing central control of business rates and the aspiration of further localisation to councils can best be resolved.

Members' views are sought on this approach, and Cabinet is asked to delegate to the Leader and the Cabinet Member for Finance to agree a final representation for submission.

3. Budget and Medium Term Financial Strategy context

- 3.1. In July, Cabinet agreed the following **principles for 2021-22 budget planning**:
- MTFS Budget planning to cover the period **2021-22 to 2024-25**.
 - **Budget Challenge** meetings for each directorate.

² <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/hm-treasury-fundamental-review-of-business-rates-call-for-evidence>

- Allocate the **February 2020 MTFS gap of £38.992m for 2021-22** based on “controllable spend” approach (with no additional corporate / transformation target given the £4.388m already assumed).
- In order to inform revision of 2021-22 MTFS and budget gap in September 2020, Cabinet to undertake a **fundamental review of MTFS assumptions** relating to:
 - council tax and business rates planning assumptions (informed by latest District forecasts).
 - forecast delivery of planned 2020-21 savings programmes and viability of previously planned 2021-22 savings.
 - cost and income pressures, including new pressures resulting from COVID-19.
 - any further Government funding announcements for 2020-21 and future years.
- Seek to identify **proposals to begin to address future years with target £10m per annum**, reflecting need for longer term planning in line with the Financial Management Code.
- Select Committees to have a role as part of the budget-setting process, considering areas for savings in September.
- Final **decisions about the 2021-22 Budget to be taken in February 2021** in line with the budget setting timetable (Appendix 1).

3.2. Taking account of these Government announcements and looking beyond the immediate impacts of coronavirus, the overall level of uncertainty means that the **financial outlook for local government remains extremely challenging** for the foreseeable future. As previously reported to Cabinet, local authorities continue to face a growing gap between funding and service pressures, driven in part by demographic changes, unfunded burdens such as the National Living Wage, and the needs of vulnerable social care users becoming increasingly complex. Children’s services, in both social care and education (particularly the High Needs Block), are also under very significant stress. There is a risk that these pressures increase in the medium-term as a result of additional needs driven by effects of COVID-19 and the associated lockdown.

3.3. The Council approved its 2020-21 Budget and MTFS to 2023-24 on 17 February 2020. This was based on one-year funding allocations for 2020-21 announced at the Spending Round 2019 and ultimately confirmed in the Local Government Settlement in January 2020. As set out in this report, funding for 2021-22 onwards remains a subject of considerable uncertainty. Although there are profound short-term impacts being experienced from the response to COVID-19, it remains to be seen precisely what the medium- and longer-term impact will be, and as such the full implications for the council’s Budget in 2020-21 and beyond remain to be confirmed. However, the pandemic will unquestionably also change the long term shape of some services, in relation to joint working, public expectations, levels of demand, and the underlying cost base. Risks remain that adult social services will incur changed volume and market prices into 2021-22, which are not included within the current budget plans. The key risks are from the cessation of the hospital discharge service arrangements, which are in operation until 31st March 2021. This could mean that above usual volumes and

prices of care, following transition of the NHS funding arrangements, are incurred by the council going forward. In addition, some providers have needed to change their business models to operate services in line with social distancing rules, which will reduce the capacity of some providers and increase unit costs. These additional costs could remain into the next financial year if the pandemic and associated government guidelines continue.

3.4. The budget setting principles agreed in July included a proposal that a fundamental review of budget assumptions be completed in September. At this point, a limited number of revisions to the MTFs have been identified, but it remains too early to forecast many elements with confidence. It is highly likely for example that key income sources including council tax (through both the Collection Fund and tax base growth) and business rates will be under significant pressure in 2021-22, requiring revision to planning assumptions. Detailed work is underway with District Council partners to understand the likely Norfolk impacts on both business rates and council tax. At this stage it is appropriate to begin to revise some of the assumptions associated with these elements of the Budget, but it is not yet possible to produce a comprehensive and robust forecast for 2021-22.

3.5. Likely impacts on Business Rates continue to include:

- Total business rates collectable will potentially reduce where increased numbers of businesses close (particularly as temporary financial support measures are withdrawn).
- An increase in the number of properties claiming empty property relief where businesses either cease trading or seek to take advantage of changed working patterns to reduce property costs.
- Appeals against rateable values may increase where rental values have been impacted.

Likely impacts on council tax continue to include:

- Tax base may not increase as forecast due to suppressed growth in new properties (reduced to 0.5% in latest assumptions, risk of further reduction remains).
- Council tax support is likely to increase linked to increased levels of unemployment and Universal Credit claims. This will also potentially suppress council tax growth, or may result in a reduction in the tax base.
- Changes in the council tax collection rate where households have experienced a reduction in income.

3.6. In addition to COVID-19 cost pressures, the final employer pay offer for 2020-21 has now been confirmed as 2.75%, compared to the budgetary provision of 2%. This will represent a one-off pressure of approximately £1.9m to be addressed in the current year, as well as an ongoing cost pressure that needs to be incorporated within budget planning. The final pay award level for 2020-21 has now been confirmed following union responses, and it is therefore prudent to make provision for this level of pay award in the MTFs.

3.7. The latest MTFS position is shown in Table 1 of this report, which updates the forecast considered in July 2020 for the latest known issues. **The MTFS now identifies a gap of £129.779m, incorporating a gap of £45.434m for 2021-22.** This will be further updated in the report to October Cabinet and kept under continuous review through the Budget process. Details of the approach to Services developing savings to assist in closing the Budget gap are set out in sections 4-8, and as reported in the July Cabinet paper, ultimately options to close the gap will include:

- Government providing additional funding;
- Corporate / centrally identified savings opportunities including the use of capital receipts to support transformation; and
- Service departments identifying further savings or removing budget pressures.

3.8. The current MTFS position is based on a number of further significant assumptions as set out below:

- 2020-21 funding levels will be broadly maintained (i.e. a further rollover settlement).
- Pay inflation will run at 3% from 2021-22 onwards.
- Non-pay inflation provided for on some budgets being reduced from 2% to 1%.
- Council tax will be increased by 1.99% per year, but with no increase in the ASC precept (this remains subject to both Member decision-making and Government announcements about referendum thresholds annually), helping to address pressures across all front line services including social care.
- Continuation of previous increases in the National Living Wage (NLW). The Government could indicate a more significant increase, without additional funding. Announcements about the April 2020 level were made in January this year. Each 1p rise in the NLW increases the costs of care by £0.200m. Many organisations have lobbied central government to make further increases in the NLW and in particular seek higher increases for care workers. Either would increase costs significantly above the current budget assumptions.
- The tax base will increase by 0.5% in 2021-22 and thereafter by 1% each year to 2023-24 (1.39% growth was forecast for 2020-21).
- Collection Fund surplus is assumed as £3m in 2021-22, £2m 2022-23, and £1.5m 2023-24. This remains an area of significant uncertainty and will be reviewed further in the Autumn.

Table 1: Updated Medium Term Financial Strategy 2021-22 to 2024-25

	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	Total
	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m
<u>Medium Term Financial Strategy 2020-25</u>					
Gap as reported to Cabinet 8 June 2020 (Surplus)/Deficit	38.992	24.500	30.203	24.158	117.852
Reduce Tax Base growth to 0.5%	5.624	2.415	2.566	0.319	10.925
Additional pay inflation 2020-21 of 0.75%	1.984	0.060	0.061	0.063	2.168
Children's transport pressure (+3 days 2021-22)	0.617	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.617
Adults grant assumption changes (2020-21 allocations for Local Reform and Community Voices, Social Care in Prisons, and War Pensions Disregard Grant)	0.005	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.005
Review of non-pay inflation assumptions	-1.788	0.000	0.000	0.000	-1.788
Latest forecast gap position as at 7 September 2020 Cabinet	45.434	26.974	32.830	24.540	129.779

- 3.9. A summary of the cost pressures and savings provided for in the February MTFS analysed by Service was reported to Cabinet in July. As set out in that report, the MTFS includes significant unavoidable ongoing pressures from 2021-22 to reinstate Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) budgets following the saving delivered over recent years. It should also be noted that the level of pressures included in the Children's Services budget for future years is substantially lower than has been provided for in 2020-21 and this may therefore be a particular area of risk for future cost pressures emerging through the remainder of the 2021-22 budget process. As set out above, the Adult Social Care budget for next year is subject to significant uncertainty particularly in relation to ongoing costs of care that are currently funded by health under the Hospital Discharge Service requirements and market prices affected by Covid-19 measures and national living wage. Further savings will be required to close the identified budget gap in addition to the £23.542m identified in the agreed MTFS. It should be noted that the MTFS already assumes £4.388m of savings from business transformation in 2021-22. This is a challenging target and it remains the case that the scope for any further savings in this area may therefore be limited. A report on the delivery of these business transformation savings is due to be considered by the September meeting of the Corporate Select Committee and will be reflected in a future update to the MTFS.

3.10. Cabinet in July noted that the budget setting principles agreed for 2020-21 could result in the saving targets currently allocated to Services being revised (and potentially materially increased) in September. **It is not currently the view of the Section 151 Officer that savings targets should be revised**, however it will be essential that **Service Departments develop sufficient sustainable savings proposals, to achieve the target level of savings set in July**, and ultimately enable a balanced budget for 2021-22 to be proposed. This judgement is naturally subject to any further Government announcements about financial support for both the current year, and for the medium term as part of the Local Government Settlement for 2021-22, and the way in which the Covid-19 pandemic and associated cost, income and saving pressures continue to develop.

3.11. The savings targets by Department as agreed by Cabinet in July are set out in the table below.

Table 2: Allocation of saving targets 2021-22 to 2024-25

Department	2021-22 £m	2022-23 £m	2023-24 £m	2024-25 £m	2021-25 £m	%
Adult Social Services	-17.723	-4.597	-4.628	-4.628	-31.576	46%
Children's Services	-8.782	-2.223	-2.213	-2.213	-15.431	22%
Community and Environmental Services	-8.771	-2.232	-2.207	-2.207	-15.417	22%
Strategy and Governance Department	-0.844	-0.215	-0.213	-0.213	-1.484	2%
Finance and Commercial Services	-1.753	-0.439	-0.430	-0.430	-3.052	4%
Finance General	-1.120	-0.294	-0.309	-0.309	-2.032	3%
Total	-38.992	-10.000	-10.000	-10.000	-68.992	100%

4. Service financial strategy and approach to developing 2021-22 Budget proposals – Adult Social Services

4.1. Financial Strategy

Adult Social Services continues to pursue the Promoting Independence strategy, focussed on delivering six priorities:

- Safeguarding people.
- Strong partners for integrated working.
- Strengthen social work so that it prevents, reduces and delays need.
- Supporting the Social Care market.
- Accelerate the use of technology.
- A positive working culture which promotes people's independence and uses public resources fairly.

4.2. Covid-19 Impact and Context

Covid-19 has caused a seismic and immediate refocus of services, process and planning. The financial consequences of this continue to emerge, but it is having a material impact on the ability to deliver the full level of planned savings in both 2020-21 and 2021-22. Currently, advice still remains to avoid all but emergency visits to care homes and public health advice to avoid transferring people, both mean that much of the previously successful demand management work as part of the Promoting Independence strategy has temporarily stopped. Adult Social Services is working to assess original plans, evolve them where appropriate, and restart areas of change governance where feasibly possible. As a result, alongside the longer term delivery of Promoting Independence, the immediate priority and context for Adult Social Services' financial planning in 2021-22 is the post-pandemic recovery – with services facing unprecedented challenges this year (2020-21) and continued uncertainty – particularly relating to demand, funding and the wider market.

The Covid-19 pandemic has inevitably had a major impact on the provision of support and services to vulnerable adults in Norfolk. The Council continues to support the care market, while recognising that the demand and supply of care services will change in the short, medium and longer term. Options for support for September and beyond are currently being assessed. For some services where future demand is less clear, such as day services, the long term sustainability of the market will be a key issue, and there may also be cost implications for the Council from this. Transport capacity is also creating a pressure and potential emerging cost pressures. For some vulnerable adults, the pandemic has created an escalation in social care needs. Supporting these people, and their families, will continue to be a priority for the Council, and has increased some costs, at least in the short term.

The Covid-19 response has given rise to some opportunities as well through some closer links with health and joint responses around discharge from hospital, but the longer term national plans for intermediate care post discharge is not certain and nationally the story for adult social care is still being written. Sir Simon Stevens has written in the last month to health organisations setting out the phase three plans for the overall health service. As part of this he has signalled the continuation of the hospital discharge services requirements for the remainder of this year, but for only up to the first six weeks of care to be funded by NHSEI from 1 September. In addition there is an expectation from 1 September that previous placements will be assessed and revert back to normal funding arrangements. The council is currently awaiting revised government guidance, but if a transition period is not built in to the changes, this will present a significant cost pressure for the Council. It is also clear that in some areas, where the nature of the supply is changing (for example Day Care), there is a need to understand the financial implications of the changes, how the Council should continue to meet need, and how demand may evolve as a result of new support arrangements. Finally, we need to look at the likely longer term costs for some providers, such as residential care providers and ensure that fees are appropriate but not inflated above genuine Covid-19 related expenditure, such as PPE. Current infection control funding for providers ceases at the end of September and future government support to meet these additional costs will be key.

4.3. Savings development 2021-22

The impact of the Covid-19 response on 2020-21 is therefore affecting decisions for next year and there is a need to be pragmatic about the starting position. In this context, the Service is developing saving proposals under four **new** saving themes as set out below. There will be a need for investment to deliver some of the associated savings in 2021-22.

Savings fall under five main themes.

- **Independence and enabling housing (new)**
Adult Social Services is already working to develop more alternative types of accommodation to give people other choices and more independence. Proposals will look to extend this focusing on making better use of existing accommodation, collaboration with health partners, and putting in place strategic funding arrangements for developing alternative accommodation.
- **Revising the short term out of hospital offer (new)**
Adult social services has historically played a significant role in funding and delivering out of hospital care. New Discharge to Assess guidance, post-COVID, highlights the importance of this for the health and social care system as whole. We want to review what our offer is – as part of a health and social care intermediate care offer. This will allow us to focus more resources on home first services, including greater therapy input, and moving away from reliance on short-term beds.
- **Our commissioned models of care (new)**
We will seek savings from some commissioned services, particularly maximising block contracts and re-shaping those which are no longer value for money. Part of this will include looking at the cost of care, given the significant changes in the market as a result of COVID.
- **Self-direction, prevention and early help (new)**
Our prevention and early help approach has enabled us to achieve significant savings in demand, by preventing, reducing and delaying the need for formal care. We will look to consolidate initiatives, strengthening those which are effective and ceasing some activities if there is duplication.
- **Digital efficiency, value for money (extension)**
We are already delivering significant savings through exploiting digital technology. Proposals will look to extend this, taking up new opportunities to improve productivity and drive out costs.

5. Service financial strategy and approach to developing 2021-22 Budget proposals – Children’s Services

5.1. Financial Strategy

The core strategy and transformation approach remains unchanged and Children’s Services continues to project benefits from existing schemes and new schemes in the same strategic areas:

1. Inclusion
2. Prevention and Early Intervention
3. Quality of Practice
4. Edge of Care and Alternatives to Care
5. Re-shaping the care and specialist support market

These areas are now supported by a major focus on modernisation, efficiency and opportunities to work differently which will be enabled by technology and the cultural shift that is being accelerated by Covid-19. These include:

- Efficient Processes
- Reduced Travel
- Using Buildings Differently
- Exploiting Technology

5.2. Covid-19 Impact and Context

Covid-19 has had a significant impact on Children’s Services. Initially, demand for core statutory services fell by around 40-50%, although this is now returning to normal levels. Numbers of children in care remained fairly stable, albeit with unit costs rising, and some additional costs have been incurred in managing the disrupted care market.

It is very likely that there will be a fairly significant spike in demand in the autumn once schools return – which may translate into higher demand for statutory services and children in care, although this remains highly uncertain.

In a best case scenario, the number of children in care will continue to fall in line with the recent trend – more likely is at least a temporary rise aligned to the surge in demand. Some authorities are projecting a significant rise over an extended period and so this will need to be closely monitored and an additional financial pressure could emerge which is not currently accounted for.

The Service has identified a range of other, less obvious, impacts on demand – including hidden need, trauma, and economic factors. It is hard to know what the experiences of children will have been during lockdown and how that will play out in the medium to longer term. In addition, there has been major disruption to the traded services model, and a review is now underway. Some key external markets are also

under major strain, for example transport, early years, the voluntary sector as well as care.

There are likely to be some opportunities emerging from the Covid-19 response, including:

- The relationship with the school system in particular has been strengthened, creating an opportunity to wrap support around in a preventative way;
- Greater family resilience is being evidenced and family networking is thriving in the current context, and this is an area to build on;
- Increasing responsiveness to meet families' needs at times better for them and professional assessment purposes rather than being constrained by office opening hours;
- The potential to unlock the capacity and budgets normally tied up at the higher tiers;
- Significant opportunity to strengthen recruitment and retention through greater flexible working and opportunity to increase workforce stability;
- In the mental health arena, the crisis has accelerated the move away from the previous clinic-based model;
- Volunteers have come forward in much greater numbers than previously;
- Virtual working is unlocking creative practice and improved relationship and engagement with families and young people that could be included in the overall offer as a "new normal" is established;
- Potential to move 'upstream' together and have more and better 'early help' across cohorts; and
- Partnership working has deepened and accelerated.

5.3. Savings development 2021-22

The impact of Covid-19 is projected to cause delays to the delivery of existing saving plans which will impact on 2021-22 as well as the current year, meaning the Service will need to make up for any potential shortfall on previously planned savings as well as delivering against new targets.

Saving proposals are being developed in line with the themes identified to date and will include expansion of the existing transformation programme in relation to:

- Transforming the care market and creating the capacity that we need
- Alternatives to care
- Prevention, early intervention and effective social care

This represents some continuation of existing programmes and some major new elements such as the "No Wrong Door" model, which is intended to achieve good outcomes at lower long-term cost for the children with the most complex need. The department is continuing to work up new initiatives through the autumn, including potentially a more substantial transformation in relation to children with disabilities –

offering a solution for children who require specialist education, intensive care and who have significant medical needs in an integrated model. That business case is being developed as rapidly as possible.

Proposals also seek to identify areas for efficiency but will require significant support to deliver, for example to drive out the benefits of technology, to enable teams to operate with reduced reliance on buildings, to progress the staff skills agenda. The department is looking to set fairly substantial savings targets in these areas, over and above those to be delivered through the major transformation programme.

The department is also commencing a close internal review of staffing – especially in support and ‘back office’ teams – in an effort to identify non-transformational staff reductions, such as any areas of duplication or where there might be potential for efficiency. This work will take further time to complete and whilst the focus will be upon achieving efficiency without compromising quality and effectiveness of service, there is a risk that the quality and quantity of service that can be provided will reduce to enable the required savings to be delivered in the context of the Council’s very challenging financial circumstances.

6. Service financial strategy and approach to developing 2021-22 Budget proposals – Community and Environmental Services

6.1. Financial Strategy

Community and Environmental Services (CES) has responsibility for the delivery of a wide range of services; there is no hierarchy as each area has a vital role to play in achieving better outcomes for the whole of Norfolk. CES proactively provide information and advice to help people to make better choices that enable them to live fulfilling, independent lives. Teams continue to provide vital services to ensure that residents are safe, both in their own homes and when out and about in the county.

There are large elements of the CES budget where there would be little scope to change or influence (such as capital charges, recycling credits, and concessionary fares), and these are treated as uncontrollable costs for the purposes of seeking savings.

In terms of an overall strategy for developing budget proposals, the broad range of services and outcomes means that a single approach would not be beneficial. Instead, CES is focussing on two general approaches:

- Cost reduction – including through use of new technology and contract renegotiations
- Ways of working – including efficiencies in back office processes and organisational re-design

In previous years, the department has also had a focus on income generation. However, given the current pressures and risks associated with existing income generation targets (as set out in paragraph 6.2) it is not considered prudent for new income generation to be a key strand of the financial strategy for next year.

6.2. Covid-19 Impact and Context

A significant number of staff within CES were redeployed in roles to support the emergency response efforts throughout the county. The service also plays a crucial role in supporting communities and businesses to respond to and recover from the impacts of Covid-19. Key activities have focussed around:

- Supporting Norfolk's businesses and workforce
- Keeping the county moving
- Delivering essential support and supplies to those most in need
- Keeping communities safe, healthy and well

In addition, colleagues in Public Health have continued to carry out significant work to:

- Develop and deliver the Local Outbreak Control Plan
- Deliver local management of outbreaks and contact tracing.
- Provide advice on infection control and management
- Media messaging on reducing the risk of infection, reassuring the public and seeking to mitigate the impact of social control measures
- Information and analysis – modelling the likely impact of an epidemic on the population of Norfolk (which started around 10 March, at a very early stage meaning we are now ahead of the curve in terms of epidemiological data and analysis available to plan service capacity)
- Providing mutual aid to Public Health England for infection control

Longer term impacts and potential future budget pressures for CES arising from Covid-19 include:

- Significant work will be needed to support delivery of the Norfolk and Suffolk Economic Recovery Restart Plan, working with New Anglia LEP. A number of projects and measures have been developed to support the Norfolk economy including through advice for businesses, support for the visitor economy, investment in infrastructure and support for individuals to reskill and upskill.
- The department is heavily reliant on generating external income, such as museums admissions income. Given the extended period that services were not able to operate, and new restrictions in the foreseeable future, this will have a significant impact on the income generating activities already built into the budget.
- Higher volumes of residual waste are anticipated due to residents being at home rather than places of work, therefore generating more waste through the kerbside collections.
- Whilst Government have provided support to transport operators, both directly and through the County Council, CES continues to work with operators to ensure there is resilience of the public transport network including home to school transport. Work is also underway with operators to ensure they have the

ability to provide viable services under social distancing measures and through a period where there may be low public confidence in using public transport.

- Increased costs are also expected for the delivery of capital schemes to accommodate safe working practices.
- Some services in the department continue to carry out significant work specifically on Covid-19 response and recovery, in particular the Public Health, Growth and Development and Resilience teams. It is anticipated that there will continue to be a need for significant support from these areas for some time.

6.3. Savings development 2021-22

CES has a very strong track record of securing external income off-setting the cost of service delivery. CES activities are at the heart of communities and further budget reductions will have a significant impact on the ability to continue to generate income and support communities. Some key considerations in relation to saving development are:

- The Fire Service 2020-23 IRMP, agreed by Full Council in March 2020, sets out the budget required for service delivery outcomes including the allocation of resources for the mitigation of risks. It sets out the management strategy and risk-based programme for enforcing the provisions of the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005. Any deviation from this would require public consultation and approval by Full Council.
- The library service provides front line service in communities across the county with critical computer access to a number of users and forms a fundamental part of the Children's Services Early Years offer as well as providing crucial facilities to support individuals seeking employment and to support the social care demand management agenda.
- Whilst the Museum Service is highly successful in securing external funding, it is based on a level of local authority commitment to the Service and further reductions could undermine the relationships with key external funders such as Arts Council England and the National Lottery Heritage Fund.
- Public Health is funded via a ringfenced grant and opportunities are already being taken to use it to fund activities across the wider Council that meet the criteria of the grant.
- Performance and Governance budgets largely provide centralised support to the rest of CES and wider parts of the organisation, these are constantly reviewed for opportunities for efficiencies and in many instances are delivering services at a lower cost than a decentralised model.

CES have historically delivered savings primarily through service efficiencies, cost reduction, management of vacancies and collaboration activities, and will continue to explore all opportunities, although over time this becomes more difficult. The service will continue to look for opportunities for efficiencies especially through new ways of working as a result of Covid-19.

7. Service financial strategy and approach to developing 2021-22 Budget proposals – Strategy and Governance

7.1. Financial Strategy

The Strategy and Governance department brings together a number of professional services which fulfil different functions, and need to be differentiated in the way they operate and the focus of their advice and support.

The functions provide a **continuum of services** including strategic direction, and resource stewardship as well as support to services, managers and staff.

- A strategic focus - to advise and support the political and managerial leadership of the Council in their strategic approach. At a time when resources are stretched, the organisation is in recovery and there are so many “unknowns” in the financial and government policy space, it is essential to:
 - have the capability to look to the future and anticipate change
 - identify and frame strategic issues for the executive team
 - provide analytical and problem-solving expertise to the executive team and the business units
 - offer **professional leadership** to the organisation in key areas such as strategic communications, intelligence and analytics to drive insights and actions
- A support service focus – to support and enable **transformation change** and seek to drive innovation, as well as operations at departmental and service level. It is important to have capacity to:
 - define transformational solutions to strategic problems
 - implement transformation initiatives
 - provide more responsive internal services to managers and staff, while achieving lower costs through greater use of technology, and simpler and more streamlined processes
- A governance focus – to ensure the organisation is **safe, compliant and governed effectively** and with strategic focus and purpose, with strong stewardship / control systems and processes, joining up across the local government system.
- An **income generating** focus – to create value for NCC through maximising the opportunities provided through public service provision, for genuine fee earning activities which don't deviate from, but enhance, our statutory purpose and core offer.

7.2. Covid-19 Impact and Context

As set out above, services within Strategy and Governance fulfil a key role in supporting the Council to continue to operate in a safe, well-governed and compliant way during the response to the COVID-19 emergency, and have played a key role in supporting the wider organisational response, including:

- Maintaining democratic functions and Member support;
- Ensuring effective communications both internally and with key stakeholders and supporting delivery of key Public Health messaging;
- Providing advice on statutory and regulatory changes arising from the response to the pandemic;
- Maintaining effective HR functions and supporting the wider workforce through a period of radical change;
- Supporting wider organisational capacity and the management of the response to the pandemic.

7.3. Savings development 2021-22

Strategy and Governance provides an integrated set of services that support strategy development, underpinned by insight and analytics, performance management, business planning, HR, communication and engagement with residents and staff delivering critical central services, which drive good governance, change and transformation.

As a consequence, any budget proposals can have significant impact in the bigger service departments.

Strategy and Governance as a whole relies heavily on income particularly Nplaw and Registrars, so proposals to reduce headcount need to balance the loss of fee earners.

Reserves for Strategy and Governance are all committed to supporting Business Transformation.

In this context, saving proposals are being developed which:

- Align to departmental strategy.
- Ensure that we keep the organisation **safe and legal** as **efficiently** and **effectively** as possible.
- **Balance opportunities to maximise income for genuine fee earning services**, against cost savings, without deviating from our core service offering.
- Work to **drive our professional leads model**, in providing support across the organisation to maximise efficiency, and effectiveness.
- Maximise any saving opportunities arising from changed expectations and **working practices** as a result of COVID-19.

8. Service financial strategy and approach to developing 2021-22 Budget proposals – Finance and Commercial Services / Finance General

8.1. Financial Strategy

Finance and Commercial Services provides the capacity to enable the organisation to act swiftly, innovatively and effectively in the context of rapid change. Core departmental priorities include:

- Enhancing financial performance
- Supporting and training service managers
- Effective management of property assets to make best use and maximise the return on investments
- Efficient and effective contract management
- Providing information which supports good decision making
- Reducing the costs of our services whilst improving their effectiveness, utilising new technology and implementing smarter ways of working
- Rolling out technological infrastructure, improving customer service and saving money

8.2. Covid-19 Impact and Context

Services within Financial and Commercial Services deliver essential support functions which have enabled the Council to continue operating during the response to the COVID-19 emergency, and have played a key role in supporting the wider organisational response, including:

- Ensuring safe, effective and appropriate use of property and assets;
- Effective procurement of vital equipment including PPE;
- Provision, development, delivery, and maintenance of effective ICT solutions to enable remote working and organisational resilience;
- Maintaining effective, prompt and secure payment systems, and ensuring appropriate financial control and oversight of decision-making;
- Supporting wider organisational capacity and the management of the response to the pandemic.

8.3. Savings development 2021-22

Savings proposals for 2021-22 are being developed with a focus on:

- Ensuring critical functions and capability are maintained;
- Maximising any opportunities arising from changed expectations and working practices as a result of COVID-19; and

- Protecting the quality of service and level of support provided to front line services and colleagues across the Council.

9. Impact of the Proposal

9.1. This paper sets out further details of the Council's budget planning process for 2021-22, while recognising that significant risks and uncertainties remain. The proposals in this report will:

- set the context for service financial planning for the year to come;
- provide an opportunity for Cabinet to comment on and provide guidance about the development of departmental budget proposals;
- support the Council in continuing its engagement with Government in relation to the Comprehensive Spending Review and Business Rates reform; and
- contribute to the Council setting a balanced budget for 2021-22.

10. Evidence and Reasons for Decision

10.1. The County Council faces an unprecedented financial and public health crisis which has the potential to have significant implications for future budget setting. It will be essential to continue to engage with Government, MPs and other stakeholders to continue to push for adequate and sustainable funding for Norfolk to continue to deliver vital services to residents, businesses and visitors. It is also important that Government issues guidance on financial planning assumptions, particularly indicative funding allocations for 2021-22, as soon as possible. Otherwise there is a significant risk that the Council will be obliged to reduce service levels. The Council's MTFS planning builds on the position agreed in February 2020 and it is important to note that this will need to continue to be updated as more reliable information about cost pressures and funding impacts emerges through the process. Nevertheless, it remains prudent to move forward with planning for savings at the level required to close the underlying gap identified in February 2020.

10.2. The proposals in the report reflect a prudent response to the challenges and uncertainties present in the 2021-22 planning process and will ultimately support the Council to develop a robust budget for the year.

11. Alternative Options

11.1. This report sets out a framework for developing detailed saving proposals for 2020-21 and at this stage no proposals have been agreed, meaning that a range of alternative options remain open.

11.2. In addition, there are a number of areas where Cabinet could choose to consider different parameters for the budget setting process, such as:

- Considering alternative approaches to the development of savings from those proposed.
- Adopting an alternative allocation of targets between services, or retaining a higher or lower target corporately.

- Considering an alternative timetable within the time constraints required to develop proposals, undertake public consultation, and meet statutory deadlines for the setting of council tax.
- Changing assumptions within the MTFs (including the level of council tax) and therefore varying the level of savings sought.

11.3. Final decisions about the overall shape of the 2021-22 Budget, savings, and council tax will not be made until February 2021.

12. Financial Implications

- 12.1. Financial implications are discussed throughout the report. This paper sets out the proposed approach to developing savings proposals to address the targets agreed in July and which will need to be found by each department to contribute to closing the 2021-22 and future year budget gap, subject to formal approval by Full Council in February 2021. The proposals in the paper will require departments to identify further significant savings to be delivered against current budget levels. The scope to achieve savings at the level required may be limited by delivery of the response to COVID-19.
- 12.2. The Council is legally required to set a balanced Budget annually and should plan to achieve this using a prudent set of assumptions. However, Members could choose to vary the allocation of indicative targets between Directorates, or to establish an alternative approach to identifying savings. Work to deliver additional Government funding could also have an impact on the overall budget gap to be addressed. As a result, the budget setting process and savings targets will be kept under review as budget planning progresses. In the event that additional budget pressures for 2021-22 emerge through budget planning, there may be a requirement to revisit the indicative saving targets.
- 12.3. However, the scale of the budget gap and savings required are such that if the Council is required to deliver savings at this level there is a risk that this could result in the Council failing to fulfil its statutory responsibilities. As such the Government's response and decisions about Council funding in 2021-22 will be hugely significant. Government has an opportunity as part of the COVID-19 response to deliver a permanent step change in the recognition of the importance of social care, and to fund local authorities to provide a key contribution as part of the national recovery. Any changes in Government funding could have a material impact on both the level of savings to be identified, and the Council's wider budget process. Fundamentally there is a need for a larger quantum of funding to be provided to local government both to meet the immediate pressures of the COVID-19 pandemic, and to provide local authorities with a sustainable level of funding for future years.

13. Resource Implications

13.1. Staff:

There are no direct implications arising from this report although there is a potential that staffing implications may arise linked to specific saving proposals developed. These will be identified as they arise later in the budget planning process.

13.2. Property:

There are no direct property implications arising from this report although existing saving plans include activities linked to property budgets and assumptions around capital receipts to be achieved. In addition, activities planned within Business Transformation will include further work to deliver property related savings.

13.3. IT:

There are no direct IT implications arising from this report although existing saving plans include activities linked to IMT budgets. In addition, activities planned within Business Transformation will include further work to deliver savings through activity related to digital and IT initiatives.

14. Other Implications

14.1. Legal Implications

This report forms part of the process that will enable the Council to set a balanced budget for 2021-22 in line with statutory requirements, including those relating to setting council tax, and undertaking public consultation.

14.2. Human Rights implications

No specific human rights implications have been identified.

14.3. Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA)

Any saving proposals with an impact on service delivery will require public consultation and an Equality and Rural Impact Assessment of all proposals will need to be completed as part of budget-setting in due course. The results of public consultation and the findings of all EqIAs will be presented to Cabinet in February 2021 in order to inform budget recommendations to County Council.

No specific EqIA has been undertaken in respect of this report, although the dynamic EqIA in respect of the Council's response to COVID-19 can be found [here](#).

15. Risk Implications/Assessment

15.1. The ultimate impact and financial cost of the response to the COVID-19 outbreak will be highly dependent on a wide range of factors including the length of time that the pandemic continues, the severity of the impact (both nationally and in Norfolk), the impact of any second wave of infection, and the wider actions taken in response.

15.2. Further (non COVID-19) cost pressures may emerge through the 2021-22 budget setting process, these would increase the gap to be closed. Similarly, central Government funding decisions could have a material impact on the level of the budget gap.

15.3. The ongoing COVID-19 pandemic may continue to impact on the county council's budget setting process in a number of ways, most significantly:

- The council's available resources and capacity to plan robust future year savings while responding to a rapidly changing operating environment;
- The ability to adhere to the proposed process and timetable;

- The need to provide for any immediate or ongoing cost pressures emerging for the council; and
- The medium to long term financial implications including the impact on the wider economy and council tax and business rates base and income.

15.4. It will be necessary to operate with some flexibility in response to these and any other issues which may arise during the budget setting process.

15.5. As set out elsewhere in the report, the overall gap position will be kept under review throughout the budget setting process to inform changes to the MTFS gap. In the event that any other additional budget pressures for 2021-22 emerge through budget planning (for example as funding reductions, non delivery of savings, or additional pressures in services), it should be noted that there may be a further requirement to revisit the indicative saving targets for 2021-22.

15.6. Other significant risks around budget setting are detailed in the 2020-21 budget papers to County Council³, and these will continue to apply in 2021-22. Any saving proposals with an impact on service delivery will require public consultation and an Equality and Rural Impact Assessment of all proposals will need to be completed as part of budget-setting.

15.7. There remains considerable uncertainty about reforms to local government finance and any funding changes that will be faced in 2021-22 as reflected in the report. The Norfolk County Council Corporate Risk Register details key financial risks in this area, and all risks associated with COVID-19 are also documented in the Risk Register.

16. Select Committee comments

16.1. None.

17. Recommendations

17.1. Cabinet considers the recommendations as set out in the Executive Summary.

18. Background Papers

18.1. Norfolk County Council Revenue and Capital Budget 2020-21 to 2023-24, County Council 17/02/2020, agenda item 5 ([here](#))
 COVID-19 financial implications for Norfolk County Council, Cabinet 11/05/2020, agenda item 9 ([here](#))
 NCC response to COVID-19, Cabinet 11/05/2020, agenda item 8 ([here](#))
 Strategic and Financial Planning 2021-22, Cabinet 08/06/2020, agenda item 12 ([here](#))

Officer Contact

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

Officer name: Titus Adam

Tel No.: 01603 222806

³ [Agenda Item 5](#), County Council, 17 February 2020

Email address: titus.adam@norfolk.gov.uk



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

Appendix 1: Budget setting timetable 2021-22

Activity	Date
June Cabinet (to consider 2021-22 budget process and timetable, agree allocation of savings required and framework for service planning).	08/06/2020
Scrutiny Committee	23/06/2020
FFR exemplifications to be published by Government	Originally Spring / Summer, now delayed
Treasury Fundamental Business Rates Review	July 2020 to Spring 2021
Comprehensive Spending Review	July 2020 to 24/09/2020
NCC Financial Regulations update	Autumn 2020
Budget Challenge (Corporate Board and portfolio leads to consider proposals at extended Corporate Board / Budget Challenge session)	July 2020 (Round 1) September 2020 (Round 2)
September Cabinet (to review MTFS assumptions, proposed areas for savings, and agree any revisions to 2021-22 budget gap targets)	07/09/2020
Select Committees to consider proposed areas for savings	September 2020
Scrutiny Committee	23/09/2020
October Cabinet (to consider final 2021-22 savings proposals for consultation, and overall budget position. Key decision – agree 2021-22 budget proposals for consultation)	05/10/2020
Scrutiny Committee	21/10/2020
Public consultation on 2021-22 Budget proposals	22/10/2020 to December 2020
Autumn Budget 2020 and Provisional Settlement (5 December Government's target date for provisional Local Government Finance Settlement)	November-December*
Final Settlement	January 2021*
February Cabinet (to recommend 2021-22 Budget and council tax to County Council).	01/02/2021
Scrutiny Committee (scrutiny of 2021-22 budget proposals, consultation and EQIA)	17/02/2021
County Council Budget Setting (to agree final 2021-22 Budget and level of council tax)	22/02/2021

Notes:

- *Dates or activities to be confirmed.
- Additional reports to Cabinet to be presented through the year as required (e.g. in the event of FFR or CSR announcements, or the ongoing COVID-19 response impacting on the planning assumptions).

Cabinet

Item No: 12

Decision making report title:	Wymondham Market Town Transport Network Improvement Strategy
Date of meeting:	07 September 2020
Responsible Cabinet Member:	Cllr Wilby (Cabinet Member for Highways, Infrastructure and Transport)
Responsible Director:	Tom McCabe (Executive Director Community and Environmental Services)
Is this a key decision?	No
If this is a key decision, date added to the Forward Plan of Key Decisions.	N/A

Introduction from Cabinet Member

Market Towns are important settlements, providing a range of services and facilities to the residents of the towns as well as often large surrounding rural areas. Many towns have seen relatively large amounts of growth in recent years and growth is also planned in many in the future. The transport infrastructure within the towns has often not kept pace with this. A series of Network Improvement Strategies was agreed in 2017 to consider the impacts of past and planned future growth on market towns and set out actions which Norfolk County Council should consider taking in order to provide suitable transport infrastructure.

The studies and proposed further work support the County Council's vision for Norfolk, assisting the aim of putting in the necessary infrastructure first. The work will facilitate Norfolk's market towns' sustainable development through addressing the transport pressures of planned housing and employment growth.

Executive Summary

In September 2017, Members agreed a programme of ten studies looking at the transport impacts of growth in market towns, titled Market Town Network Improvement Strategies (NISs). At that time members agreed the programme of studies to be started in 2018. Studies have been completed and agreed for Dereham, Diss, North Walsham, Swaffham, Thetford, Aylsham, Downham Market, Fakenham, and Wroxham and Hoveton. Wymondham is the last of the series of studies to be agreed and adopted; Members having agreed in April 2020 that, instead of further studies, attention is turned to taking forward the findings of the studies.

Following its completion, and circulation of the draft report to stakeholders (see Appendix A), the Wymondham NIS was reviewed at the Infrastructure and Development Select Committee meeting on the 15 July 2020. Members noted the study and the comments received from local stakeholders, which have been incorporated into the final report for adoption.

This report summarises the Wymondham transport network improvement study along with the comments from stakeholders and actions taken from these. It is recommended that Cabinet agree and adopt the study.

Recommendations

- 1. To agree and adopt the completed Wymondham Network Improvement Strategy as published on the website [here](#)**

1. Background and Purpose

- 1.1. Members agreed in 2017 to undertake a programme of Market Town Network Improvement Strategies (NISs). This report updates members on the final NIS and the proposed next steps, following the adoption of the Wymondham NIS.
- 1.2. During 2018 the following NISs were undertaken (as agreed by the Environment, Development and Transport Committee (EDT) 17 March 2017):
 - Dereham
 - North Walsham
 - Swaffham
 - Thetford
 - Diss

The following were undertaken in 2019 (as agreed by EDT 6 July 2018)

- Aylsham
 - Downham Market
 - Fakenham
 - Wroxham and Hoveton
 - Wymondham
- 1.3. The purpose of the work was to examine growth within the market towns (both growth that had happened as well as planned, or likely, future growth) and identify its impacts on the transport network in order to identify suitable interventions that could be planned and delivered. The studies undertaken were prioritised in towns where growth has had, or in the future could have, the most impact. The studies have addressed some of the major questions – eg around evidence for bypasses or other major transport interventions – and led to the identification of areas where further study and feasibility work would be beneficial.

- 1.4. Cabinet has now adopted all of the studies except Wymondham and agreed that no further studies be done; instead officers will work to identify how to take forward the issues arising from the completed rounds.
- 1.5. Cabinet is now asked to agree and adopt the Wymondham NIS which will complete the final round of market town NISs.
- 1.6. The full draft of the Wymondham NIS, alongside the other strategies, can be found on Norfolk County Council's [website](#).

2. Proposals

- 2.1. Cabinet is asked to adopt the Wymondham NIS. This is the last of ten Market Town NISs and any further work will be to identify how to take forward the issues arising from the two completed rounds.

2.2. Overview of the Market Town Network Improvement Strategies

The Market Town NISs identify potential measures to help address existing transport network constraints and transport improvements to facilitate growth identified in Local Plans. The process of forming the Market Town NISs was very similar for each town. The focus of the work was informed by an examination of the issues through stakeholder engagement. Officers met with several external stakeholders in each town including the local member(s), district, town and parish councils, Sustrans, police, bus operators, business forums and Highways England / Network Rail as appropriate. The transport issues raised, along with findings from other completed studies and reports, were considered to see where there were gaps in information around certain known issues. The proposed scope of the studies and the technical work was circulated to, and agreed by, stakeholders before the work commenced. In most cases, officers are continuing to work with the stakeholders to address the issues

- 2.3. The Network Improvement Strategies and their action plans provide a valuable evidence base to inform other work. It is expected that some of the measures identified should be delivered as part of planned growth to mitigate impacts on the local highway network. The action plans should inform investment planning and provide the context for funding bids from all three tiers of local government.

2.4. Summary of the Wymondham Network Improvement Strategy

The main objective of the study, agreed with the stakeholders, is to improve walking, cycling, public transport and parking in Wymondham town. The following issues were identified:

- Traffic calming on the Harts Farm estate
- Cycling and walking routes around the town
- Public transport in the town
- Walking, cycling, bus and parking arrangements in the Market Cross area.

Technical study work was commissioned to understand these issues and identify potential solutions where appropriate. This is summarised below. The main

bullet points summarise the output of the consultant's technical work; the indented bullets summarise how the findings might be taken forward to implementation by the county council (included in the action plan of the NIS):

- The existing traffic calming measures on the Harts Farm estate are within legal standard but a number of improvements could be considered
 - Changes could be considered as part of future programmed maintenance or improvement work in the area
- Walking, cycling and public transport networks are of a good standard compared to other towns, however, there is room for improvement. Corridor options were identified with the aim of connecting residential areas, schools and the town, creating a joined-up Wymondham network
 - Out of the routes considered, a route along Norwich Road, connecting the town centre, residential, retail and employment areas and Wymondham High School, was considered the highest priority to take forward for implementation
- The bus network coverage in Wymondham and the frequencies of services are high, however, there are some notable issues such as lack of coverage to the south of the town and Hethel Technology Park and poor interaction between modes of transport in the area surrounding the railway station. The lack of coverage for the south of the town has a technically viable solution but may not be economically viable
 - The highest priority relates to better bus and rail integration at the railway station, included in the Transforming Cities bid. Suggested changes to services will be raised with bus operator(s).
- The stakeholder group raised some concerns about the existing bus and parking facilities in the Market Cross area, especially with the proximity between pedestrians and buses manoeuvring around the Market Cross and the lack of any stop infrastructure. Two potential options were put forward for addressing the key issues.
 - Further investigation of the options will be required before any could be considered for permanent implementation (see 2.5 below).

2.5. Since completion of the draft Wymondham NIS, Norfolk County Council has been engaged with delivering measures, under the government's Emergency Active Travel Fund stream, focussed on enabling a restart of the economy by ensuring that people can start to travel (to jobs and to access other services) whilst maintaining physical-distancing conventions. Measures have been focussed on smaller-scale, sometimes temporary, schemes and all have been kept under constant review with changes made as necessary. Vehicular restrictions were introduced in the Wymondham market cross area, although these have now been revised. Other measures within the NIS are also being considered for implementation as part of phase 2 of the active funding stream but programmes have not been finalised at the time of writing.

- 2.6. At the time of writing, officers are in the process of preparing a bid for government's Emergency Active Travel Fund. Government has also just issued new guidance on cycling and walking: *Gear Change A bold vision for cycling and walking*. The Wymondham NIS provides a good foundation for the development and delivery of schemes post Covid-19 in line with government's new agenda.

2.7. **Stakeholder Comments**

Following completion of the Wymondham NIS a draft of the final report was circulated to stakeholders for comments. Appendix A details these and how they have been taken into account in the final NIS

2.8. **Next Steps**

Officers will look to identify suitable funding sources to progress the projects and schemes which have been recommended, as summarised above.

- 2.9. Officers will review the NIS delivery programmes annually and report progress to the stakeholders. If the need for a refresh of the NIS is required, or any further study work identified, it will be added to the action plan and the work undertaken as resources allow.

3. Impact of the Proposal

- 3.1. The Network Improvement Strategies have been very effective in considering some of the key transport infrastructure requirements required to enable sustainable growth within the towns and ensure their continued vitality. Taking forward the further stages of the work, as summarised above, will ensure that the transport infrastructure continues to support the town's future development.

4. Evidence and Reasons for Decision

- 4.1. This market town NIS has identified a range of infrastructure measures to support growth and which will be added to forward plans for a range of partners, including the county council, to take forward.

5. Alternative Options

- 5.1. The Wymondham NIS is the final NIS to be adopted from the two rounds of strategies and its adoption will put its status on a par with the other studies enabling its recommendations to be fully taken into account in future work programmes.

6. Financial Implications

- 6.1. The capital programme agreed by Cabinet on 13 January 2020, included funding identified for market towns remains unallocated (£145,000 for interventions in 2020-21 and indicative allocations of £220,000 and £505,000 for studies and interventions respectively in 2021-22). Potentially, this could be used to fund the work recommended in the Wymondham NIS. This would need to be considered alongside the measures identified in the other market town NISs and alongside other potential similar streams of work. Officers will also pursue all sources of

other potential funding that would enable the work arising from the NISs to be taken forward.)

7. Resource Implications

7.1. Staff:

Activities in terms of developing the Network Improvement Strategies, including consultation, have been undertaken within existing financial resources. Any further study work will be undertaken within existing staff resources.

7.2. Property:

None at this stage. Any impacts on property are only likely to arise from delivery of individual transport schemes. These will be identified at later stages of project development.

7.3. IT:

None at this stage.

8. Other Implications

8.1. Legal Implications

None at this stage.

8.2. Human Rights implications

None at this stage.

8.3. Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA)

An EqIA has not been undertaken for the market town studies. Equality implications will be considered at the appropriate stages of project development for schemes taken forward.

8.4. Sustainability implications (where appropriate)

The Wymondham market town NIS has considered sustainable transport issues of walking, cycling and public transport. The strategy has considered walking and cycling networks with detailed technical work commissioned to identify the corridors where use is most likely, and an assessment of the barriers to walking and cycling on these corridors. The Wymondham NIS study therefore has considered sustainable transport issues and how these can be improved to support growth.

9. Risk Implications/Assessment

9.1. There are no other significant issues and risks that arise from this decision. This market town NIS study has provided an innovative approach to considering the transport networks in market towns.

10. Select Committee comments

- 10.1. The matter was considered by the Infrastructure and Development Select Committee on 15 July 2020.
- 10.2. The committee made only minor comments regarding the Wymondham NIS, noting that the comments made by stakeholders (on a draft of the final study) were local in nature and had been addressed in the final report; see Appendix A. The one concern raised centred around the physical distancing measures which had been put in place in the town centre as a response to the Covid-19 pandemic and the impact this was having on movements in the town and on business.
- 10.3. As stated above, all such measures have been kept under constant review. The temporary measures implemented in the town have subsequently been extensively revised and these changes will have addressed the member's concerns. They did not form part of the Wymondham NIS.

11. Recommendations

- 11.1. 1. To agree and adopt the completed Wymondham market town Network Improvement Strategy as published on the website [here](#).

12. Background Papers

- 12.1. Market Town NISs were first discussed at the March 2017 EDT Committee where Members agreed to a programme of five studies and requested that a report be brought back to note progress and agree priorities. The report can be found on page 96 of the [agenda](#) for March 2017 EDT Committee.

In July 2018, a programme of five more studies were agreed and this [report](#) provided an update on the studies and asked committee to agree the next steps that should be taken.

In April 2020 the Cabinet Member agreed the remainder of the market town NISs, except Wymondham, in lieu of Cabinet which was cancelled due to Covid-19 restrictions. This report can be found [here](#).

The market town NISs can be viewed on [this page](#) of the Norfolk County Council's website.

Officer Contact

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

Officer name: David Cumming

Tel No.: 01603 224225

Email address: david.cumming@norfolk.gov.uk



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

Appendix A: Comments received from stakeholders

Introduction

The following table summarises the comments received from local stakeholders following completion of the Wymondham Network Improvement Strategy (NIS). A draft of the Wymondham NIS was sent to local stakeholders. Where comments were received these are summarised in the first column 'Comment'. The second column sets out the officers' considerations of the comments whilst the final column sets out what action has been taken in the light of each comment.

Comment	Response	Action
Need for improvements to the access of Platform 2 at Wymondham railway station for elderly or mobility impaired passengers, cyclists, passengers with luggage and pushchairs. This should have more prominence in the report.	Improvements to the platform are being looked at through the Transforming Cities Fund. Norfolk County Council are currently waiting for this funding to be secured which would enable improvements to this platform.	This information has now been added to the report and the improvements to the platform have been placed as a high priority in the Action Plan
Cycle racks will be needed at Platform 2 once the access has been improved.	Access improvements to platform 2 are in the very early stages and hence such detail has not been covered yet. However, this comment has been noted by colleagues working on the design of the TCF Platform 2 improvements scheme and will be picked up as part of the detailed design and delivery of this project, should we receive the funding from DfT.	Comment has been emailed to and noted by colleagues working on the Platform 2 project.
The Covid-19 pandemic will have altered the town centre and may overtake the Market Place Improvements section of the WNIS.	Sections outlining the potential impact of Covid-19 on the Market Place have now been added to the report. NCC will also regularly review the Wymondham Network Improvement Strategy to highlight the changes that have been made as we begin to understand this more.	A section outlining Covid-19 and the impact on the Market Place has now been added to the report.
Check recent work on the road humps	Work was completed on the road humps last year, funded through our capital funding and requested by the County Councillor. Road hump ramps have been elongated on Holy Blue Road and Blackthorn Road. The situation is much improved, and humps are now more suitable for bus use.	The report has been updated and adjusted accordingly.
Underpass improvement needed as the current road under the railway bridge at Station Road/Silfield Road is unsuitable for the volume of traffic and unsafe for pedestrians and cyclists. This should be brought up the agenda.	The Greater Norwich Local Plan presents the potential for an underpass improvement to the railway station. This will be funded by developers and South Norfolk District Council are progressing this scheme with Network Rail in the coming years. This action has been changed to high priority.	This information has been added to the report and improvements to the underpass have now been included as a high priority in the Action Plan.

<p>Poor bus service provisions especially in South Wymondham, connecting to Hethel. There issue of no bus stops near the railway station needs to be rectified urgently.</p>	<p>It should be noted that bus services are run on a commercial basis and hence certain services will not be run if providers do not see a commercial return. NCC is not in the position to subsidise the cost of buses and will therefore be raising the findings of the report with the relevant bus operators, to make them aware of possible improvements and changes to services.</p> <p>The Bus Services Assessment identified a possible bus route connecting Wymondham to Hethel whilst serving the new South Wymondham developments. If such a route were to be implemented. it would currently need to be subsidised as it would not be profitable, hence deterring commercial bus providers from running such a service. However, as the South Wymondham development comes to fruition, the demand for this service may increase and the route could be seen as commercially viable by operators.</p> <p>Part of the Transforming Cities Fund bid is for a bus service linking Norwich Research Park, University of East Anglia and the Norfolk and Norwich University Hospital from the city centre and Wymondham Train Station.</p>	<p>This information has been added to the report and the findings from the Bus Services Assessment will be shared with relevant operators.</p>
<p>Suggested alternative bus stop at the Bridewell Street junction near to the Wymondham Museum.</p>	<p>New bus stop suggestions have been passed onto the area engineer to make them aware of the comments and concerns raised. There are some initial concerns regarding the Bridewell Street suggestion as there are several vehicle movements in this location from multiple junctions, a zebra crossing, surgery and school, making it an unsafe location.</p>	<p>Forwarded comments and suggestions to area engineer.</p>
<p>Images 6.10 & 6.11 would include removal of a disabled parking space that is well used. I could not see any proposal for its relocation.</p>	<p>The Market Place Improvement study has been completed at a very high level and if a scheme like this was to be taken forward, there would always be a consultation period where such issues can be raised and considered.</p>	<p>Information on this has been added to the report.</p>
<p>The plan should cover both leisure and work cycle use and it should cover all of Tuttle's Lane as it is Wymondham's ring road.</p>	<p>There was no specific differentiation for routes but NCC did focus on routes within the town and any potential for a route out to Hethel. The routes all serve a dual purpose for leisure and work for both residents of the town and people coming in from outside. The purpose of the study was never to look at leisure or work routes outside the town (except in so far as they connect to routes within the town).</p>	<p>This has been clarified within the WNIS.</p>
<p>Out of date speeds map from 2015.</p>	<p>Have now enquired whether there is a more up-to-date version of the speed map to include in the final report. The report will be updated as and when a new map can be obtained. It should be noted that the NIS has been based on the 2015 speed/congestion figures hence any update to these will not influence the work already done.</p>	<p>Update report with new speed map when received.</p>
<p>Central hall car park is private ownership, and</p>	<p>A line stating the ownership of the car parks in Wymondham has been added to the report.</p>	<p>Information added to the report.</p>

this is important as it already has a different charging regime from other car parks.		
Some typos in the report		These have now been amended.
The report is fixated on walking and cycling. We still need cars for practical reasons.	The scope of the study was decided by stakeholders and at the time of agreement, roads were not seen as an issue to address in the WNIS. Walking and cycling infrastructure made up a large proportion of the agreed scope hence why this has a large focus in the report.	No further action required at this moment.
Concerns over the safety of pedestrians on Tuttle Lane and generally the 40mph speed limit. It has previously been agreed that a review to lower the speed limit to 30mph would not occur as the road is a bypass and not an estate road. However, since Covid-19 and the opening of road space has brought further enquiries and perhaps a scheme should be considered at some point.	These concerns have now been highlighted in the report.	Added to the report.
Concern over the safety of the proposed contra-flow cycling route at Fairland Hill. Access across Avenue Road for pedestrians is much more of a problem and suggest an additional road crossing at the junction of Browick Road and Avenue Road and across Browick Road to the footpath through to Norwich Road should be installed. The former could have a light controlled crossing as traffic can be busy here and not always keeping to the 20mph speed limit.	The option of a contraflow on Fairland Hill would be looked at in more detail with safety assessments, etc should funding become available. The suggestions made have been noted by colleagues for consideration if funding becomes available.	Made colleague aware of this concern and suggestion.
Would like to see that there are good connections to the Lime Tree Road local shopping centre for pedestrians and cyclists.	Connections to Lime Tree Road local shopping centre will be considered as an when there are the funds to undertake such a scheme.	No further action at this moment in time.

Corridor 4 is a popular walking and cycling route and deserves to be upgraded to give access to other walks beyond the A11, the nature reserves, Ashwellthorpe and Longs Woods. Downgrading Rightup Lane to pedestrians and cycles is part of the Planning Conditions for the South Wymondham developments and there seems no reason to delay this.	The comment has been raised with colleagues. The south eastern corner of Rightup Lane only allows for vehicular access to fields. When the South Wymondham development is built out, it is expected that this will continue to only serve pedestrians and cyclists and farm traffic, much as it does now. Rightup Lane will continue to mainly serve pedestrians and cyclists between the new access road for the South Wymondham development and the A11 footbridge.	This has been updated in the report.
Corridor 4 crossing located on the Stanfield Road would be welcome as this is a busy road, could it be a signalised crossing? It would be worth costing this option to see if parts of it could be brought forward, as usage from South Wymondham is growing.	After speaking with colleagues, it has become apparent that given the nature of the road, a signalised crossing would not be appropriate, although a D island could be.	Comment raised with colleagues.
Are the improvements to the Norwich Road/Tuttles Lane roundabout in addition to those carried out last year?	The improvements to the Tuttles Lane/Norwich Road roundabout were to improve the capacity of the roundabout and enhance the pedestrian and cycle links in the area. The improvements to the roundabout suggested in the report have now been edited as roundabout has already been altered to remedy the issues experienced.	Report has been updated.
Better use could be made of Flexibus to bring elderly and disabled people into the town centre.	Short section on the Flexibus has been added to the report.	Added to the 'Access' section of the report.

Cabinet

Item No: 13

Decision making report title:	Devolution and Local Government Reform
Date of meeting:	7 Sept 2020
Responsible Cabinet Member:	Cllr Andrew Proctor, Leader of the Council
Responsible Director:	Fiona McDiarmid
Is this a key decision?	No

Introduction from Cabinet Member

This paper provides the context for Norfolk County Council's current position on devolution and local government reform and for Cabinet to approve the suggested next steps.

The paper draws together an update of work in progress around the Norfolk Working Better Together project, recovery planning across Norfolk and what is known to date of recent government thinking around local government reform, devolution and recovery planning.

The Working Better Together initiative has been developing the ambitions of the County Council and District Councils collectively for Norfolk as a place in the future and the sorts of things we want from government that can make those ambitions happen. It started before any details of government's devolution proposals were known but are relevant to informing any potential devolution bid.

Our initial devolution thinking was that a deal was a prize worth pursuing as it could bring in more funding, allow more freedoms and give local government more powers to maximise opportunities for Norfolk's economy, places and people.

We now know that local government reform is likely to be a prerequisite for a devolution "deal" but we will not know the exact requirements or potential prize until the white paper is published in September 2020. In particular much has been said about the population numbers to comprise a new unitary council but any such direction needs to take into account far more than just those numbers. The costs of change are considerable although it is accepted that savings will accrue downstream. The implications of disaggregating and aggregating services, especially the large scale peoples services, must be clearly understood. Any work done before the publication of the white paper towards developing a detailed deal or unitary proposals will take up time and effort and will not be the best use of scarce resources at a time when we are focused on the COVID19 impact and recovery.

It is fully recognised that this is emerging government policy and that we must take a positive approach to working to deliver it but only once the white paper is published or we are completely certain of its content and direction.

Recommendations

- 1. To support the approach taken to date by Norfolk Leaders Group and the County Council's ongoing commitment to closer collaboration and joint working to deliver the best possible services in the most efficient, effective and inclusive manner.**
- 2. To endorse Norfolk County Council's approach to devolution and local government reform.**
- 3. To authorise the Leader to pursue further conversations on devolution on an appropriate geography whilst we await the white paper.**

1. Background

- 1.1. At Full Council on 20 July 2020, questions were raised regarding the County Council's intentions on devolution and local government reform, and the Working Better Together initiative.
- 1.2. The Government has confirmed its intention to publish a Local Recovery and Devolution White Paper in Autumn 2020, setting out their thinking and proposals on local governance structures and the opportunity to devolve powers, duties, responsibilities and resources to local communities. At the Local Government Association Conference in July 2020, the Minister for Regional Growth and Local Government, Simon Clarke MP, said this would mean creating "many more elected mayors and more unitary authorities".
- 1.3. The Norfolk Leaders Group are unanimous in their aspirations for working better together to collaboratively deliver the best possible services for local people in the most efficient, effective and inclusive way. Our better together planning started before the pandemic, during which our collaborative working has provided swift and decisive actions to deliver targeted and co-ordinated responses across Norfolk, underpinned by local evidence.
- 1.4. Joint economic recovery planning is now underway, led across Norfolk and Suffolk by the New Anglia LEP, to ensure that our local economy makes a speedy recovery. Norfolk County Council is leading on the development of the Norfolk specific COVID 19 recovery plan. The Norfolk Leaders group sees the best future arrangement for Norfolk as one that gives Norfolk real benefits and real choices. Until we have further details of central government's recovery and devolution plans, including any required re-structure, anything that is progressed should be done, ideally, with unanimity across Norfolk. This might be difficult to achieve as we are not yet in that place but that should be our aim.

2. Devolution in Norfolk

- 2.1. In 2014, Norfolk worked with Suffolk, Cambridgeshire, Peterborough and the New Anglia LEP to develop an East Anglia devolution deal. Several councils rejected the proposals, so in 2015 work started on the development of separate deals that would create two Combined Authorities chaired by elected mayors - one for Norfolk and Suffolk, and one for Cambridgeshire and Peterborough.
- 2.2. Cambridgeshire and Peterborough negotiated a deal giving them greater control over transport, skills, business support and other areas. Government published the agreed deal in March 2017.
- 2.3. A significant amount of work was invested in negotiating a Norfolk and Suffolk deal which, at the time, would have been one of the best deals in England. The deal was withdrawn in 2016, as it was not supported by every local council, a condition, at that time, for the deal to go ahead. The requirement for an elected Mayor proved to be major obstacle.
- 2.4. The Norfolk and Suffolk proposals would have secured significant additional funding and powers to support economic growth, employment, health, infrastructure, housing, skills, flood and coastal management.

3. Working Better Together

- 3.1. Since 2016, Norfolk Leaders have sought to work together to prioritise the strategic needs of the County, driven by changing demands and financial pressures. Leaders recognise the need to use whole system thinking and deliver the best possible services for local people in the most efficient and effective way. At this time, thinking around this has been driven by a PwC workshop and paper on non-structural reform of local government.
- 3.2. Norfolk Leaders' Group asked the East of England Local Government Association to facilitate both Leaders and Chief Executives to think strategically about closer collaboration, and specifically to develop unity of purpose for local authorities in Norfolk. This resulted in a commission with Blue Marble, through EELGA's Talent Bank, to develop a jointly owned vision for Norfolk and a programme of work to deliver it.
- 3.3. The commission has been carried out against the background of a rapidly changing political and economic environment. Since the start of the commission, the Conservative Government has been returned with a substantial majority, and a substantive policy agenda. It quickly signalled its support for the devolution agenda initially promising a White Paper on devolution in Spring 2020. This has been delayed to September by the COVID 19 pandemic and subsequent lockdown. This has been a significant public health crisis which has impacted significantly on our economy and changed substantially the way we work.
- 3.4. Stage 1 of the commission, carried out in November 2019, established a willingness on behalf of Norfolk's local authorities to start working more closely and to common objectives. Stage 2 of the commission, began in January and consisted of a series of facilitated workshops for leaders to agree a joint vision for the County, a set of prioritised programmes to jointly deliver it and to start to discuss the related governance proposals. The tail

end of this programme was delayed due to the pandemic, but it is now reaching its conclusion. The commission has flexed to changing circumstance to incorporate both likely COVID 19 impacts and likely policy changes from government on devolution and local government reform.

- 3.5. A Norfolk and Suffolk recovery plan is being developed by New Anglia LEP (NALEP). The tactical “Restart” plan covering the next 6-12 months, endorsed by Norfolk and Suffolk local authority Leaders, was approved by Cabinet in July 2020 alongside the Norfolk County Council led Norfolk Delivery Plan. Further work is being developed by NALEP to create the longer-term strategic “Rebuild” plan. The Rebuild plan will be co-produced by NALEP, Government and local partners and will be published in early 2021. In all of our recovery planning, we need to be mindful of the views predicating an ongoing risk of a resurgence of COVID19 during the autumn and winter months. There is already a rise in the number of infections which, albeit mainly in the north of the UK, requires our ongoing attention and preparedness.

4. Local Recovery and Devolution White Paper

- 4.1. The Government has started to trail what might be included in the Devolution White Paper, due in September, which is now referred to as the Local Recovery and Devolution White Paper. The Minister for Regional Growth and Local Government has expressed his belief that devolution and a move to unitarisation will “streamline the delivery of good governance, place local government on a more sustainable financial and population footing, inject more accountability into democratic structures and save money that can be re-invested in those communities”.
- 4.2. There are a number of knowns already:
- The White paper will set out a roadmap for devolution and the establishment of new mayors across England over a ten year period.
 - It will confirm the government’s ambitions to link devolution deals with the establishment of new unitary councils across England, with local government reform a prerequisite for any devolution deal.
 - “Local recovery” devolution deals may be offered to those who meet the government’s preferred models. Whilst this is yet to be detailed, government’s admitted preference is for Mayoral Combined Authorities.
 - There is likely to be a phased approach, due to capacity issues in central government, and there are already a number of different proposals emerging.
 - Government has stated it will not force areas where there is ‘no desire at all’ for unitary reform – there is an expectation of consensus.
- 4.3. Ahead of the White Paper, government has stated it is open to proposals. This has led to several local authorities, of different shapes and sizes, positioning themselves leading to an increase in proposals for unitary reform and devolution deals, including Surrey, Hertfordshire, Somerset, Lancashire, North Yorkshire, Warwickshire, Lincolnshire and Leicestershire. Most have been met with mixed reactions across the two tiers. In some places, competing proposals have been submitted or are being planned. Whilst giving

indicative support to some, government has pointed out that they wish for evidence of local support before accepting any competing local proposals.

- 4.4. It is not yet clear what government's preferred models of size and geography for new unitaries might be, with a range of options being discussed. The Minister has recently indicated that "whilst various population ranges have been mentioned as providing, in general terms, a starting point for considering establishing a unitary council, the particular circumstances of each case must be considered"¹.
- 4.5. We are aware of the recent "Making Counties Count" report from Henham Strategy² which calls for a fairer and more consistent approach to devolution across the country, and that PWC are to publish a report at the end of August that will look at disaggregation, scale and structural reform within the context of the upcoming White Paper.
- 4.6 It is very much hoped that the White Paper will also provide clarity on central government's expectations of local government, some uniformity to the powers and responsibilities devolved to local government, and level the playing field between counties, particularly rural counties, and metropolitan areas.

1. Norfolk County Council's Current Position

- 1.1. Norfolk County Council is keen to pursue the prize of devolution with government on an appropriate economic geography, to leverage more money and powers into the County. A good devolution agreement would help unleash stronger economic recovery, deliver broad ranging benefits for residents and the business community, and support infrastructure development.
- 1.2. We want to pursue the best arrangements for all of Norfolk, which give real benefits and real choices for our people and businesses, and to pursue them with unanimity. Effective partnership working has been one of the ways in which the Norfolk public sector has ensured the county has fared relatively well in the pandemic. We want to build on this partnership working into recovery and renewal.
- 1.3. The possibilities of devolution are now very real, as the government views English devolution as a means of providing fairer funding, creating more opportunities and better life chances for people across the country, and addressing historic inequalities. The timing of any potential proposals and responding to them is likely to impact upon Norfolk's recovery from the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic which is why we must ensure the prize is worth having.
- 1.4. Norfolk County Council welcomes these opportunities and is not opposed to local government reform in principle. We believe that, building on our county's identity, our size, scale and influence, the council will continue to

¹ Letter to North Yorkshire chief executive Richard Flinton, dated 3 August

² Making Counties Count, Henham Strategy, August 2020

play a significant and strategic role in delivering growth, opportunities and good quality of life across Norfolk.

- 1.5. We also believe that, at this point in time, the huge amount of preparatory work needed would be a distraction from focusing on recovering from the Covid-19 pandemic and planning ahead, ensuring our economy recovers and is revitalised and sustainable funding for local government is secured. Although the worst of the pandemic appears to be behind us, our priority has to be to plan for the winter ahead in the short term, as well as continue support our residents, and particularly those who are most vulnerable, our communities and our economies to recover and get on a sustainable footing for the future. Over the coming weeks and months, we will be focusing on reopening our services, working with our partners in Health to prepare for winter, supporting our schools to start again safely, collaborating with government departments to support our recovery.
- 1.6. Now is certainly not the time for the County Council to commit precious resources or time on working up detailed deals or re-structure responses ahead of September 2020 without knowing the full requirements of the white paper or having more certainty about the ongoing risk of a resurgence of COVID 19.

2. Conclusion

- 2.1. As Norfolk starts to emerge from the immediate COVID-19 crisis, we are looking ahead to the challenges the county now faces, and the opportunities we have to plan our long-term recovery and resilience from future shocks and uncertainty. The pandemic has demonstrated the importance of local services working more effectively together to minimise the impact on Norfolk's economy and the health, wellbeing and livelihoods of residents.
- 2.2. The recession we are now facing will have profound and lasting effects, with some inequalities in the county that existed before the pandemic likely to worsen. The magnitude of these challenges urgently requires collaborative solutions to support our communities and businesses, at the same time as seeking to ensure the long-term financial sustainability of our critical services through a multi-year financial settlement. There is a need to act now to avert a future crisis as we emerge from the current COVID-19 crisis.
- 2.3. Whilst we would certainly welcome further funding and devolved decision-making that would enable us to get the best deal for Norfolk, we do not yet have sufficient detail of the government's White Paper proposals and requirements.
- 2.4. We want to reassure our residents that we are focussed on continuing to play our crucial role in tackling Covid-19, helping the county and local economy to recover, and delivering essential high-quality public services. Our objective is to continue to work better together with all our partners across Norfolk to get the best for our economy, people and place.
- 2.5. Norfolk County Council's position is that until such time as the White Paper is published initiating work on potential re-structures to unitary models or working up a potential deal is premature and not the best use of our collective resources.

3. Financial Implications

3.1. There are currently no financial implications arising from this report.

4. Resource Implications

4.1. There are currently none arising from this report.

5. Staff:

5.1. There are currently none arising from this report.

6. Property:

6.1. There are currently none arising from this report.

7. IT:

7.1. There are currently none arising from this report.

8. Other Implications

8.1. **Legal Implications:** None identified.

8.2. **Human Rights implications:** None identified.

8.3. **Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA)** EQIA will be undertaken and brought to members as relevant to any future developments.

8.4. **Health and Safety implications:** None identified.

8.5. **Sustainability implications:** None identified.

9. Risk Implications/Assessment

9.1. None identified.

10. Background papers

10.1. [Making Counties Count Henham Strategy, August 2020](#)

Officer Contact

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

Officer name: Markella Papageorgiou **Tel No.:** 01603 224345

Email address: Markella.Papageorgiou@norfolk.gov.uk



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

Cabinet

Item No: 14

Decision making report title:	County Council Highway Authority - Planning Consultation response to South Norfolk Planning Application 2018/2631
Date of meeting:	7 September 2020
Responsible Cabinet Member:	Cllr Graham Plant (Cabinet Member for Growing the Economy)
Responsible Director:	Tom McCabe (Executive Director, Community and Environmental Services)
Is this a key decision?	No
If this is a key decision, date added to the Forward Plan of Key Decisions.	
<p>Introduction from Cabinet Member</p> <p>The proposals from Ben Burgess to relocate their headquarters provide clear economic benefits to Norfolk and represent an investment in the Norfolk economy and infrastructure at what is proving to be one of the most challenging times in economic terms.</p> <p>In particular, the proposal will support both the agriculture sector in Norfolk, as well as supporting the challenging rural economy.</p> <p>I welcome Cabinet's consideration of the proposals set out in the planning application.</p> <p>Executive Summary</p> <p>This report asks Cabinet to determine the County Council's statutory consultee response to planning application number 2018/2631. The application was made on behalf of Ben Burgess (a national farm machinery company) for the relocation of their headquarters currently in Norwich. The new site would be in Swainsthorpe to be served from roundabout on the A140 which is part of the national Major Route Network (MRN).</p> <p>The views of relevant officers and the guidance used to assess the application are detailed in the report.</p> <p>Recommendation</p> <p>1. To determine the County Council's statutory consultee response to this planning application, as highway authority i.e. to support or object to the proposal, and to set out the reasons for this determination.</p>	

1. Background and Purpose

- 1.1. A planning application has been submitted to South Norfolk District Council, as the relevant Planning Authority. The County Council has been consulted on this application and has a statutory duty, as local highway authority, to respond to consultations on planning applications from Local Planning Authorities.
- 1.2. In this case, Cabinet wanted to ensure that they had the opportunity to consider the economic benefits of the proposal alongside the highway considerations. Therefore, Cabinet will consider the proposals and determine the response.

2. Proposal

- 2.1. It is proposed that Cabinet determine the County Council's response as Highway Authority to the consultation on this planning application. Relevant information for Cabinet to consider is set out below.

2.2. The planning application

- 2.2.1. The planning application has been made on behalf of Ben Burgess (a national farm machinery company) for the location of their new headquarters. This includes provision of an agricultural, horticultural and construction vehicle and machinery repair, retail and education hub with office accommodation and areas for internal and external storage and external areas for best practice demonstration purposes. The application proposes that access will be via a new roundabout on the A140 which is part of the national Major Route Network (MRN).
- 2.2.2. A copy of the consultation documents from South Norfolk District Council, to which Cabinet are asked to determine the highway authority's response, are available to view at <https://info.south-norfolk.gov.uk/online-applications/simpleSearchResults.do?action=firstPage>

2.3. Officer highway authority consideration

- 2.3.1. The Major and Estates Development Team in CES deals with hundreds of major planning application consultations of various types (residential, employment and infrastructure related) across the county each year. Each application is not only assessed by the case officer but also referred to Development Team to ensure consistent consideration of highway safety, network impacts, maintenance impacts and any potential issues around design of highways & transport infrastructure.
- 2.3.2. NCC was initially consulted by South Norfolk District Council (SNDC) on 8 January 2019 regarding planning application number 2018/2631. This application included the proposal for access to be via a new roundabout on the A140.

Officers engaged with the applicant before the application was submitted. Officers, in these pre-application discussions, informed the applicant that a new junction on the A140 would be contrary to the highway authority's guidance

which clearly states that a new junction on a strategic route and in particular on the Major Route Network would attract a recommendation of refusal. During these discussions various options were considered including a new roundabout which incorporated an existing junction, and which would overcome any potential recommendations of refusal.

However, when the application was submitted, the access proposal was for a new junction (in the form of a roundabout) which would only serve the development. Therefore, after much consideration, officers recommended refusal to South Norfolk District Council on the following grounds:-

“The proposed development would lead to the creation of a new access on a stretch of classified highway of nationally strategic importance which carries significant traffic movements, usually at speed. Furthermore, the vehicular movements associated with the use of the access would lead to conflict and interference with the passage of through vehicles and introduce a further point of possible traffic conflict particularly with the introduction of slow-moving traffic. Contrary to South Norfolk District Council’s Development Plan Policy DM 3.11.”

- 2.3.3. Officers then further engaged with the applicant to explore other potential solutions. Discussions centred on the potential for a roundabout junction which would replace an existing junction and serve the development, and which would be in accordance with guidance. We understand from the applicant that these options are not possible, primarily due to third party land ownership.
- 2.3.4. On 13 August 2020, an amended application was submitted on behalf of Ben Burgess. The access proposals via a new roundabout remain unchanged from the January application.
- 2.3.5. Officers have given the proposed access arrangements further consideration and do not consider that they address the points in the original consultation response set out in para 2.4.
- 2.3.6. Officers considered the relevant guidance (see Appendix A) in formulating the view that the introduction of a new junction on the A140 as set out in the planning application would have a detrimental impact on the free flow of traffic on the A140 between the new Hempnall roundabout and the A140/A47 junction at Harford. Considering the investment in the A140 which seeks to improve journey times and reduce accidents along this section of MRN, officers consider that a new junction would undermine efforts to improve the A140 relative to a proposal that offers little highway benefit by reason of not being located at an existing junction.
- 2.3.7. The Local Member, Cllr Colin Foulger, does not support the proposal set out in the planning application.
- 2.4. **Safety and view of the Head of Profession**
 - 2.4.1. To enable Cabinet to have access to all relevant information to assess this application, the views of the Director of Highways of Waste have been sought on

the proposal. The Director of Highways and Waste is the Council's Head of Profession for highways and civil engineering and holds the relevant qualifications and experience.

- 2.4.2. In particular, irrespective of the specific guidance considered above, the Director of Highways and Waste has reviewed the planning application and considered whether the proposed access arrangements via the roundabout configuration proposed can be considered as safe. The view of the Director of Highways and Waste is that the correct form of junction on this type of road with the current and forecast traffic flow volumes is a roundabout junction. Providing this roundabout can be designed to comply with the latest national requirements specified in the national Standards for Highways, and in particular the Design Manual for Roads and Bridges, then it can be considered safe. As highlighted earlier in this report, the preference remains to have a single roundabout junction serving the proposed development and the Stoke Lane junction, both in terms of network management, road safety and to comply with the Council's current Safe and Sustainable Guidance for developers. However, if this cannot be achieved, on balance a stand-alone roundabout constructed to the current design standards will be a safe form of junction

2.5. **Economic benefits**

- 2.5.1. The applicant maintains that the economic benefit of the application is such that it outweighs any concerns that the highway authority has.

- 2.5.2. Economic benefit is not a direct consideration for the highway authority but is a consideration for Cabinet). Economic Development officers in CES have considered the information supplied in the planning application and, for the purposes of this report, have considered other potential economic benefits as follows:

- Agri-food is a key sector in a number of key local strategies and plans:
 - The [New Anglia Economic Strategy](#) and [Local Industrial Strategy](#), its [Covid19 Restart Plan](#) and the [Norfolk Rural Strategy](#)
 - Ben Burgess are a key player in the agri-food sector and wider rural economy, and so are represented on the Board of the New Anglia Agri-Food Industry Council, which oversees delivery of actions to grow and develop the sector.
 - Ben Burgess supports the agricultural sector, and wider Norfolk rural economy, both of which are even more important in light of Brexit and the post-Covid19 recovery of the county.
- There would be a number of economic benefits of Ben Burgess moving from their current location, both to the company and the wider economy:
 - A move would allow the business to expand and attract new customers and retain the current skilled workforce.
 - The proposal may also provide an increase in the number of jobs from 95 to approximately 122, with an opportunity to expand apprenticeships.

- Expansion would strengthen the supply chain that supports farmers and producers in close proximity to their operations, which is vital to the future competitiveness of the agricultural sector in Greater Norwich.
- The business will be able to fully embrace new technology and train and demonstrate to existing and potential customers the capabilities of the new machinery and technologies – a key objective of the Norfolk Rural Strategy.
- Linked to this, a new innovation and education hub is proposed, to enable Ben Burgess to assist rural businesses in south Norfolk to fulfil their competitiveness and achieve the most out of new technologies.
- The proposed location also has good access to the A11, and fits with the aims of the Norwich-Cambridge Tech Corridor strategy, to drive clean, efficient, technology-based economic activity
- In summary, Ben Burgess provide significant services to the sector, both regionally and nationally. If they are not able to successfully relocate within Norfolk there is a risk that they have to seek a location outside Norfolk, meaning that the jobs and economic benefits of the operation will be lost.

3. Impact of the Proposal

- 3.1. As set out in Section 2 above.

4. Evidence and Reasons for Decision

- 4.1. As set out in Section 2 above.

5. Alternative Options

- 5.1. Cabinet could determine to support or object to the proposal and should set out the reasons for this determination.
- 5.2. If Cabinet feel that further information is needed in order to make a determination, we could request an extension of the deadline for making a response to South Norfolk District Council to enable this. Note that the original deadline for response was 4 September and that has been extended to enable Cabinet to debate this issue.

6. Financial Implications

- 6.1. There are no financial implications for the County Council.

7. Resource Implications

- 7.1. **Staff:** There are no staff implications.
- 7.2. **Property:** There are no property implications.

7.3. **IT:** There are no IT implications.

8. Other Implications

8.1. **Legal Implications** There are no legal implications.

8.2. **Human Rights implications:** There are no implications

8.3. **Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA):** The highway authority is a technical consultee in the planning process. The decision maker is the Local Planning Authority and so the requirement for an Equality Assessment lies in this instance with South Norfolk Council. However, if approved, any detailed design of the roundabout, would require an Equality Assessment to be undertaken as part of an associated Highway Safety Audit.

8.4. **Health and Safety implications:** The view of the Head of Profession and the Highways Development officers is very clear that a roundabout is the only acceptable solution at this location.

8.5. **Sustainability implications:** The proposed development is remote and would be significantly reliant on access by vehicular mode. Whilst a footway is proposed to the adjacent village and bus stops, there is unlikely to be any significant demand for use.

9. Risk Implications/Assessment

9.1. As set out in section 2 above.

10. Select Committee comments

10.1. N/A

11. Recommendations

11.1. **1. To determine the County Council's statutory consultee response to this planning application, as highway authority i.e. to support or object to the proposal, and to set out the reasons for this determination.**

12. Background Papers

12.1. South Norfolk Planning Application 2018/2631 documents - <https://info.south-norfolk.gov.uk/online-applications/simpleSearchResults.do?action=firstPage>

12.2. [Safe, Sustainable Development: Aims and Guidance notes for Local Highway Authority requirements in Development Management](#)

Officer Contact

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

Officer name: Tom McCabe

Tel No.: 0344 800 8020

Email address: tom.mccabe@norfolk.gov.uk



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

Extract from “Safe, Sustainable Development: Aims and Guidance notes for Local Highway Authority requirements in Development Management”

Aim 7 To ensure the Major Road Network and Principal Road Network can safely cater for sustainable development, which, if not suitably addressed, would otherwise cause fundamental road safety and accessibility concerns.

7.1 Need

Outside of urban areas with high connectivity, the Major Road Network (MRN) and Principal Road Network (PRN) have a strategic role to play in carrying traffic, usually at speed. Development in the vicinity of these roads or their junctions can compromise the ability for people to travel more sustainably whilst also prejudicing the ability of strategic routes to carry traffic freely and safely. For these reasons the MRN and PRN are additionally designated 'Corridors of Movement' (CoM) where development is normally resisted. The emergence of the MRN gives an additional weight to these issues as a formalised tier of nationally recognised inter urban/regional routes.



On CoM outside of urban areas, drivers do not generally expect to encounter slowing; stopping; turning; manoeuvring or parked vehicles; nor do they expect to encounter pedestrians. This lack of expectancy increases the hazards caused by an access that exists in isolation. Furthermore, the generally more rural location dictates that the opportunity to provide high quality access to public transport and safe walking/cycling routes is severely curtailed.

7.2 Requirements

- Development needs to be located in accessible locations recognising the needs and travel patterns of patrons, avoiding the need to create new accesses, or to increase or change the use of an existing access onto a CoM. Development contrary to this aim is likely to attract a recommendation of refusal from the LHA unless well founded reasons exist to permit development. This is strictly applied.

Exceptions may be made where the development is of overriding public/national need or the access is required to serve essential development where it has been proved incapable of being sited elsewhere. In such instances the development must be served by a safe means of access.

Where improvements to transport infrastructure are necessary developers may be required to enter into agreements to secure their provision.

The full document can be viewed at

<https://www.google.co.uk/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=&ved=2ahUK Ewj4zO OyrbrAhWuQ0EAHfvxDIIQFjAAegQIBBAB&url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.norfolk.gov.uk%2F-%2Fmedia%2Fnorfolk%2Fdownloads%2Frubbish-recycling-planning%2Fplanning%2Fsafe-sustainable-development.pdf%3F1a%3Den&usq=AOvVaw2p7E8eaG6Dv5DdVMILYF3e>