

Cabinet

Minutes of the Meeting held on Monday 6 March 2023 in the Council Chamber, County Hall, at 10am

Present:

Cllr Andrew Proctor	Chairman. Leader & Cabinet Member for Strategy and 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 and Prevention
Cllr Margaret Dewsbury	Cabinet Member for Communities and Partnerships
Cllr Fabian Eagle	Cabinet Member for Growing the Economy
Cllr John Fisher	Cabinet Member for Children's Services
Cllr Tom FitzPatrick	Cabinet Member for Innovation, Transformation and Performance
Cllr Andrew Jamieson	Cabinet Member for Finance
Cllr Greg Peck	Cabinet Member for Commercial Services and Asset Management

Executive Directors Present:

James Bullion	Executive Director of Adult Social Services
Paul Cracknell	The Executive Director of Transformation and Strategy
Kat Hulatt	Assistant Director of Governance
Tom McCabe	Executive Director of Community and Environmental Services
Sara Tough	Executive Director of Children's Services

Cabinet Members and Executive Directors introduced themselves. Also present were the Director of Norfolk Fire & Rescue Service and the Police and Crime Commissioner for Norfolk.

1 Apologies for Absence

- 1.1 Apologies were received from the Executive Director of Finance and Commercial Services, (Harvey Bullen, Director of Financial Management, substituting) and the Cabinet Member for Environment and Waste.

2 Minutes from the meetings held on 30 January 2023

- 2.1 Cabinet agreed the minutes of the meetings held on 30 January as an accurate record.

3 Declaration of Interests

- 3.1 The Cabinet Member for Commercial Services and Asset Management declared a non-pecuniary interest in relation to item 18 as Nominated director of Hethel Innovation Ltd and Repton Property Developments Ltd.
- 3.2 The Chairman declared a non-pecuniary interest in relation to item 18 as Nominated director of Norse and Repton Property Developments Ltd.

3.3 The Cabinet Member for Communities and Partnerships declared a non-pecuniary interest in relation to item 18 as her son worked for Norse.

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

4.1 Cabinet received the report outlining the recommendation to Cabinet from Scrutiny Committee from their meeting held on 26 January 2023 when they considered a report providing an overview of Education Health and Care Plan performance. The recommendation asked that the Cabinet Member for Children's Services "be asked to review the adequacy of the support for families that were currently going through the appeal process with the aim of reducing the incidence of appeals".

4.2 The Cabinet Member for Children's Services provided a verbal response to the recommendation from Scrutiny Committee:

- The written scheme of action board would be replaced by the local first inclusion board and Members would be invited to sit on this. Monthly meetings of the delivery group, practitioner reference group, schools' forum and parent carer groups would input into this board.
- The aim of the local first inclusion board was to support children and families at an earlier stage so that they did not need to seek an Education Health and Care Plan. Increased help and support would also be developed, and more specialist provision would be made available in mainstream schools.
- A new role would be invested in to restore relationships with parents and help minimise disputes.
- This work could be reviewed through the Select Committee if required.

4.3 Cabinet:

- **Considered** the recommendation from Scrutiny Committee outlined in the report responding to issues raised
- **Noted** the verbal response to the recommendation from Scrutiny Committee given by the Cabinet Member for Children's Services who explained the developments which would be put in place to support families and children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities to reduce the incidence of appeals relating to Education Health and Care Plans.

5 **Update from the Chairman/Cabinet Members**

5.1 The Cabinet Member for Children's Services gave an update to Cabinet:

- Since the last Cabinet meeting on 30 January 2023, the report from the Ofsted revisit looking at the Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) written scheme of action had been received. Ofsted noted that the Council was on the right track and no longer showing any significant areas of weakness and that support for services and children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities was satisfactory.
- The Cabinet Member for Children's Services was keen to recognise that there was more to be done to support children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities and their families and Local

First Inclusion and the improvement programme would build on what had been done so far.

- The inspection came after the standard inspection in which the service was found to be good across the board, with exemplary practice in place to support care leavers and exceptional services provided to children in care. The Cabinet Member for Children's Services thanked staff involved in this service.
- The Cabinet Member for Children's Services thanked the Executive Director for Children's Services for her work and thanked the Council for its continued investment in children's social care.
- Further work would continue to develop the investment programme for more schools for children with Special Educational Needs and Disability.

5.2 The Chairman also thanked staff for their work.

6 Public Question Time

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

6.2.1 Liam Calvert asked a supplementary question:

- Mr Calvert asked, given that police had not prosecuted anyone for exceeding a 20mph speed limit in the last year, whether the Cabinet Member would encourage them to do so.

6.2.3 The Vice-Chairman replied that speed limits were put in place for a reason and felt that if the police had the powers to enforce them, they should do so.

6.2.4 The Chairman asked the Police and Crime Commissioner to add to this response. The Police and Crime Commissioner noted that the minimum speed limit in law in England was 30mph. 20mph speed limits were usually advisory unless backed by specific laws, and so work was being done by parliament to review this. As 20mph speed limits were being put in place more often outside of schools and in residential areas the Police and Crime Commissioner hoped that there would be a change in the law from this review.

7 Local Member Questions/Issues

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

7.2.1 Cllr Brenda Jones asked a supplementary question:

- Cllr Jones noted that in order to get better quality care, there needed to be a real term increase in funding and asked whether the Cabinet Member supported the principle of paying more to increase quality.

7.2.2 The Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, Public Health and Prevention replied that he believed in good quality care; good quality care had a cost and as a society it was important to invest in care. The Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, Public Health and Prevention believed it was important to spend what was necessary to get people the care that they needed.

7.3.1 Cllr Maxine Webb asked a supplementary question:

- Cllr Webb noted that in the reply to her substantive question it had been reiterated that the number of children in independent and Special Educational Needs and Disabilities schools had been increasing for a number of years, with the safety valve programme proposing a loss of 1000 children from independent places which would impact on the sector, children and families. Cllr Webb asked what engagement had been carried out with independent providers during these years since the increases had been being seen, to reduce costs and balance budgets.

7.3.2 The Cabinet Member for Children’s Services replied that the Council engaged with independent schools but had recently started to increase this engagement to ensure they were aware of issues in the market.

8. Norfolk Fire and Rescue Service Community Risk Management Plan 2023/26

8.1.1 Cabinet Received the report detailing Norfolk Fire and Rescue Service’s Community Risk Management Plan which all fire and rescue authorities are required to produce in accordance with the Fire and Rescue National Framework for England 2018, setting out the authority’s strategy in collaboration with other agencies, for reducing the commercial, economic and social impact of fires and other emergency incidents.

8.1.2 The Director of Norfolk Fire & Rescue Service gave an introduction to the report: The Community Risk Management Plan previously presented to Cabinet had been through a public consultation and brought back following feedback. The main changes had been in relation to proposal 5 regarding the response to the summer heatwave, with the proposals having been strengthened following an in-depth review, and a proposal for a roaming pump, which was amalgamated into proposal 7. Part of proposal 5 had also been included for an in-year request in 2023-24 for support for wildfire PPE.

8.1.3 The Police and Crime Commissioner for Norfolk supported the Community Risk Management Plan especially the proposal for support for PPE.

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

- In accordance with the Fire and Rescue National Framework all local authorities were required to produce a management plan to reduce commercial, economic and financial risk to fire and other incidents covering 3 years. The Community Risk Management Plan involved collaboration with other agencies.
- Norfolk Fire and Rescue Service played a critical role in the county’s emergency response to protect businesses, properties and the countryside, as shown in the summer of 2022 when their skills and dedication were put to the test in the extreme summer weather conditions.
- Consideration and analysis of risk and key elements took place to ensure a risk infrastructure was in place so the service could provide a robust service when responding to extreme and small emergencies
- It was also important to plan for prevention and protection work to ensure that vulnerable residents had training to reduce incidents. A recent inspection highlighted the progress made by the service in its prevention work and that the service was making this a high priority.

- The Community Risk Management Plan formed part of the policy framework of the Council; it was subject to consultation and had been to the Strategic Development Oversight Board made up of Members and unions.
- The equality impact assessment had been nominated for an Equality Diversity and Inclusion award by the Local Government Association for work with seldom heard communities.
- The plan had 7 proposals covered by 3 main aims which were shown in the report.
- The Cabinet Member for Communities and Partnerships moved the recommendations as shown in the report.

8.2 The Cabinet Member for Growing the Economy thanked the Norfolk Fire and Rescue Service for their work fighting the fires at Ashill in summer 2022 and the work which had been done to improve the conditions for fire fighters in the future.

8.3 The Cabinet Member for Finance confirmed that the finance monitoring report, at item 19 of the agenda, would include an additional £600,000 funding for purchasing wildfire PPE.

8.4 The Vice-Chairman noted the stress put on the fire service in summer 2022 and thanked them for their hard work at this time. He noted that page 63 of the report showed the service's commitment to support the wellbeing of their staff including mental health and inclusive culture, pointing out that the job included a number of pressures and stresses which it was important to support.

8.5 The Cabinet Member for Innovation, Transformation and Performance discussed that Walsingham village hall and two shops in Fakenham had recently caught fire and thanked Norfolk Fire and Rescue Service for their professional work attending these incidents. He also noted the important job they carried out in attending traffic accidents and other incidents

8.6 The Cabinet Member for Children's Services welcomed the report and the review of the extreme weather response. He noted that a review of battery storage had been included in the Community Risk Management Plan.

8.7 The Chairman noted that the Community Risk Management Plan had been through consultation and financial implications were laid out. He welcomed what had been said by Cabinet Members about the hard work of the service and endorsed their comments.

8.8 Cabinet **RESOLVED** to:

1. Agree the CRMP23-26 (Community Risk Management Plan) Final Version as set out in Appendix A of the report
2. Recommend to full council that the CRMP23-26 is adopted

8.9 **Evidence and Reasons for Decision**

The proposals are based on an assessment of community risk and reflect the views of the public based on our consultation. The full consultation report is provided in appendix B of the report.

8.10 **Alternative Options**

It is technically feasible to extend the period of the current IRMP, rather than develop a new Community Risk Management Plan. However, there is also scope to review the proposed Community Risk Management Plan once published in-year and alter or amend (with due public consultation) should significant change occur that warrants amendments. This Community Risk Management Plan acknowledges areas for immediate change and areas that are likely to require change within the lifetime of the Community Risk Management Plan and therefore it is considered appropriate to move forwards with the new Community Risk Management Plan at the current time.

9. Adult Learning Annual Plan

9.1.1 Cabinet Received the report setting out details of the Adult Learning Plan for 2023-24.

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

- Norfolk's Adult Learning Service was rated Good by Ofsted.
- The service was externally funded by grant funding from the Education Skills Funding Agency and through tuition fees. The total income raised by the service was £5m per academic year and this was used to deliver qualifications, apprenticeships and personal development courses to 8000 learners.
- 63% of classes were classroom based and the rest were delivered online. During the Covid-19 pandemic, all courses were delivered online except for silversmithing and pottery.
- The service would be managing delivery of Norfolk's multiply allocation over the next 3 years from the Department for Education to help people learn more about numeracy.
- The service was one of the best in the country and played an important role in the sector nationally as well as in Norfolk. The service had led the way with technology in education and in 2022 led the Department for Education's programme to improve teaching schools across 10 local authorities.
- The service received £568,000 from the Community Renewal Fund to establish new construction training facilities. From this a training centre had been set up in Wensum and a construction centre had been opened on the Hellesdon Industrial Estate. A further centre was due to open in King's Lynn. These centres were welcomed as there was a shortage of construction workers in Norfolk, and it was noted that 33% of learners were female compared to 1% of women in the industry as a whole.
- The Annual Learning Plan set out the industry vision and linked service delivery to the strategic aims as set out in Better Together for Norfolk 2021-25. The Annual Learning key priorities were the same as Norfolk's Key Priorities.
- The Cabinet Member for Communities and Partnerships moved the recommendations as set out in the report.

9.2 The Cabinet Member for Commercial Services and Asset Management attended the opening of the construction centre in Hellesdon and was impressed with the site which would help support young people into construction. The Chairman was also impressed with this new centre when he attended on the opening day.

9.3 The Cabinet Member for Innovation, Transformation and Performance noted the success of adult learning in Norfolk in supporting a range of sectors from construction to digital to help people learn, change careers or engage in leisure activities with other people.

9.4 The Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, Public Health and Prevention noted that this service was supporting people to empower themselves by taking on new skills and lead more fulfilling lives. He therefore supported the work of this department moving forward.

9.5 The Cabinet Member for Growing the Economy noted that this plan was a foundation base for helping the Norfolk economy grow.

9.6 The Vice-Chairman noted that page 163 of the report showed how the service played a role nationally as a leader in the sector, for example, responding to the needs of guests from Ukraine and reducing the pay gap. There had been 2,244 responses to learner surveys with 93% of people saying they enjoyed their course.

9.7 The Chairman noted the 5 key points for learning and their links to Better Together for Norfolk. He also noted there was a wide range of courses offered by the service which would support the economy with a wider range of skills. The service brought in £4.9m in the last academic year; from the County Deal, there would be a possibility for the whole Adult Education budget to be brought to the Council to commission in the way that would be best for the people of Norfolk.

9.8 Cabinet **RESOLVED** to:
1. To commend the Adult Learning service for its exceptional performance and contribution to Norfolk priorities.
2. To approve the Adult Learning Annual Plan for 2023/24.

9.9 **Evidence and Reasons for Decision**

This paper demonstrates that the performance of the Adult Learning service, which has gained national recognition for Norfolk County Council, is exceptional in meeting the needs of Norfolk residents and communities.

The Adult Learning Annual Plan is based on the identified needs and priorities for adults in Norfolk. The service's external funding and income enables Norfolk County Council to provide wide-ranging opportunities to Norfolk residents and communities to learn, gain new skills and qualifications and to progress.

9.10 **Alternative Options**

The proposed Adult Learning Annual Plan enables Norfolk County Council to best use its external Further Education funding and tuition fee income to deliver a comprehensive service to adult residents across Norfolk through its Adult Learning service, the largest provider of adult education in Norfolk. This results in the delivery of strong outcomes and exceptional support, that respond directly to the Council's priorities for Norfolk and have a significant impact on residents, proactively targeting those who are the furthest from education and training.

Cabinet could decide not to deliver adult education in-house in Norfolk and the outcome of this decision would result in the loss of this high-quality, placebased, community-focused service that responds so well to the diverse needs of Norfolk residents, communities and employers.

10. Highway Parish Partnership Schemes 2023-24

10.1.1 Cabinet Received the report setting out the 2023-24 programme for the Highway Parish Partnership scheme.

10.1.2 The Executive Director for Community and Environmental Services noted that this scheme was a good example of Norfolk County Council making a difference in local communities across Norfolk.

10.1.3 The Vice-Chairman introduced the report to Cabinet

- The Council established the Parish Partnership scheme in 2011; the scheme gave local communities the opportunity to directly influence the programme of small highway improvements and continued to be very popular.
- This year the programme would see 95 small local schemes from town and parish councils, delivering what communities told the council they needed, including village gateways, trods, bus shelters and vehicle activated signs. These would impact positively on local communities
- The schemes were funded with town and parish councils making a 50% contribution meaning that the impact of funding could be doubled. This year, the Council's contribution would be £344,781.50 with a bid to the Safety Camera Partnership pending of £40,556. This would support the delivery of schemes totalling £770,675.
- The Vice-Chairman thanked town and parish councils who had taken part in the scheme over the last 12 years, helping to make the scheme a success.
- Bids were also taken for the scheme from un-parished councils, such as King's Lynn and Norwich City Council.

10.2 The Cabinet Member for Children's Services congratulated the service for this scheme; his parish council considered how this fund could be used to support their local area each year.

10.3 The Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, Public Health and Prevention felt this was a good scheme, bringing forward important local projects and showed how the council could give local people a voice and the opportunity to make decisions about their local areas.

10.4 The Cabinet Member for Communities and Partnerships noted that her local parishes welcomed this fund as it had supported them to put in place beneficial schemes.

10.5 The Cabinet Member for Innovation, Transformation and Performance agreed that this fund helped local parishes and brought real benefits across the county

10.6 Cabinet **RESOLVED** to:

1. To approve the 75 local schemes listed in Appendix B of the report for inclusion in the Parish Partnership Programme for 2023/24.
2. To approve the 20 vehicle activated sign schemes listed in Appendix C of the report for inclusion in the Parish Partnership Programme for 2023/24, subject to securing funding from the Safety Camera Partnership.

10.7 **Evidence and Reasons for Decision**

A County Council contribution £344,781.50 and a Safety Camera Partnership contribution of £40,556, along with funding from Town and Parish Councils, will enable a programme of local works totalling £770,675 to be delivered.

10.8 **Alternative Options**

This Parish Partnership scheme enables delivery of schemes which have been identified as important by local communities.

The contribution from Town and Parish Council's and the Safety Camera Partnership means that we can deliver more schemes on the ground. In addition, where local communities support lower cost solutions, there is a positive impact on the wider highway's improvement programme. For example, over the last five years, the implementation of trods has enabled 36 much more expensive footway schemes to be removed from the forward programme.

11. **Highways Capital Programme 2023/24/25 and Transport Asset Management Plan (TAMP)**

- 11.1.1 Cabinet Received the report summarising the three-year settlement following the Government's 2022 autumn statement and the proposed allocations for 2023/24/25/26 and the successful progression of the 3rd River Crossing in Great Yarmouth, the Transforming Cities Fund in the Greater Norwich Area and Long Stratton Bypass.
- 11.1.2 The Executive Director for Community and Environmental Services gave a brief introduction, noting that the report set out the complexity and scale of the highway capital programme, which was built on delivery and getting schemes built in communities, and showing the success of the Council in drawing down national funds.
- 11.1.3 The Vice-Chairman introduced the report to Cabinet:
 - Highway and Transport infrastructure was crucial for the county's growing economy as the council sought to maintain and develop its significant highway network, facilitating major developments and delivering efficient transport services to support sustainable growth and quality of life for residents and visitors and businesses
 - The report supported Better Together for Norfolk 2021-25 and the programme contributed to the strategic properties of "a vibrant and sustainable economy", "strong, engaged and inclusive communities" and "a greener, more resilient future". The programme was a key part of implementing the council's Strategic Delivery Infrastructure Plan.
 - The programme summarised the three-year settlement following the Government's autumn statement in 2022 and the proposed allocations for

2023/24/25/26 based on the current financial year funding allocations.

- A programme of schemes would help everyone to travel the county freely on a well-managed highway network and ensure infrastructure was in place to support the growing economy, such as the Great Yarmouth third river crossing and Long Stratton Bypass.
- The council had continued success in attracting investment from Government such as £50m received for the Bus Service Improvement Fund bid, zero emission bus funding and local Levelling Up funding for a sustainable and regeneration scheme in King's Lynn. Many of these funds received from Government were linked to sustainable travel, which helped the Council to achieve its net zero objectives.
- The Vice-Chairman was pleased to announce, that in the previous week, the council had achieved funding from Government to boost the work on delivering its environmental plan and net zero ambitions. From an £11.5m investment from Government, 55 electric buses would be funded, meaning that the first bus depot in Norwich would be fully electric by March 2024. This would make it one of the first electric bus depots outside of London, bringing the electric fleet in Norwich to 70.
- The Vice-Chairman moved the recommendations as set out in the report.

- 11.2 The Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, Public Health and Prevention welcomed the 3-year settlement which helped the council to plan and deliver. Maintaining the road network was crucial to the county as, due to the size of the rural county, people needed to be able to travel easily.
- 11.3 The Cabinet Member for Children's Services thanked the department for mitigations to address flooding at Green Lane and for the delivery of the pedalways and cycleways which local residents had reported to him as positive.
- 11.4 The Vice-Chairman noted the work carried out in Long Stratton to mitigate flooding by local members and thanked them for this.
- 11.5 The Cabinet Member for Finance congratulated the Vice-Chairman and team for the success in generating so many schemes and participating in so many grant-funded schemes. The Cabinet Member for Finance looked forward to more flexibility in delivering schemes in a way which would benefit Norfolk under the Norfolk County Deal.
- 11.6 The Chairman noted the collaborative work being undertaken such as with Transport East which had been positive for Norfolk.
- 11.7 Cabinet **RESOLVED** to:
1. Approve the Highways Capital Programme including the proposed draft allocations and programme for 2023/24 and indicative allocations for 2024/25/26 (as set out in Appendices A, B and C of the report).
 2. Approve the proposals for the £10m Highway Maintenance Fund (as set out in Appendix D of the report).
 3. Approve the proposals for the Road Safety Community Fund (as set out in Appendices E and F of the report).
 4. Approve the Transport Asset Management Plan (TAMP) for 2023/24 to 2027/28.
- 11.8 **Evidence and Reasons for Decision**

The Highways Capital Programme represents a significant investment in the Norfolk economy.

It helps protect the investment already made in establishing the £15bn highway asset in Norfolk.

It supports the Council's business plan, Together, For Norfolk, and its strategy 'Better Together for Norfolk' 2021-25. The latter contains a strategic priority of a "Vibrant and Sustainable Economy".

Our two key outcomes for the Highway Capital Programme are; -

- A well-managed highway network that enables everyone to travel the county freely and easily;
- A strong infrastructure for our growing economy.

It helps implement our Strategic Delivery Infrastructure Plan.

11.9 **Alternative Options**

Please see section 5 of the report

12 **Norfolk Investment Framework Pilot Projects**

12.1.1 Cabinet Received the report setting out details of the Norfolk Investment Framework, set up to allow Norfolk to self-determine long-term investment priorities and ensure the collective benefits of those investments are shared by all residents, and the pilot projects recommended for approval.

12.1.2 The Vice-Chairman introduced the report to Cabinet:

- The Council commissioned an investment framework in response to a number of factors including the Government's Levelling Up White Paper which aimed to boost productivity, pay, jobs and living standards by growing the private sector and improve public services.
- There was a desire to create a step change in the economic profile of the county set by the Norfolk and Suffolk Economic Strategy. There would be a move away from EU funding to a new financial framework with more competition for funding meaning there would be a need to evidence Norfolk's challenges and scope to contribute to the national economy.
- There were four grand challenges and associated objectives identified to indicate where to target intervention.
- In December 2022 an in-principle County Deal for Norfolk was announced which would help boost the economy through jobs, training and development, improve the environment and transport. It would allow the council to work with key stakeholders to take forward local priorities. Norfolk Infrastructure Framework would support this work as it showed a strong evidence base to address key issues for Norfolk. The Council would work with stakeholders to identify interventions that communities needed and work together to provide social, economic and environmental benefits.
- Norfolk Infrastructure Framework funding had been secured from the Norfolk County Council retained business rates pool 2023-24.

- The council had started pilot projects to boost business growth, new supply chains and move towards net zero and included exploring the development of the seaweed industry, water storage and desalination, a digital and creative media centre in Watton, work with colleges to support recruitment and training of tutors, investigating development of a solar panel network across Norwich and a feasibility study to look into retrofitting homes for improving energy efficiency. The report showed the list of schemes on page 293 and a description of them.

12.1.3

The Cabinet Member for Growing the Economy also introduced the report to Cabinet:

- The Cabinet Member for Growing the Economy welcomed the initiatives set out in the report which dispelled myths about Norfolk's economy and took it into the 21st century with a wide range of industries.
- There was lots of cooperation seen with partners.
- The seaweed industry was a positive industry to investigate and develop as it helped to reduce the reliance on soy for livestock feed, which was a high carbon crop.
- Developing the ability for the gaming industry to be supported in Norfolk was beneficial; the gaming industry brought more income to the UK than the film industry each year.

12.2 The Cabinet Member for Children's Services felt that all initiatives set out in the report were excellent for Norfolk, with most being linked to climate mitigations and reducing carbon dioxide emissions.

12.3 The Cabinet Member for Commercial Services and Asset Management noted the clean hydrogen strategy discussed in the report as a positive strategy.

12.4 The Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, Public Health and Prevention was pleased to see the innovations being brought forward as part of this project particularly noting the rural electric vehicle charging.

12.5 The Cabinet Member for Finance noted that the funding came from retaining £5.8m of the business rates pool of which 40% was retained for the council to develop businesses.

12.6 The Cabinet Member for Innovation, Transformation and Performance was pleased to note the digital innovation project at Wayland and the development of the gaming industry in Norwich as part of developing the digital economy in Norfolk.

12.7 The Chairman felt that this report showed the Council were right to hold on to the business pool money to be able to invest in this way and noted that a lot of the work set out in this report related to achieving net zero and working with partners. Using the money in the right way would be important in the light of reduced EU funding

12.8 The Cabinet Member for Growing the Economy noted that the France Channel England Project, which had been in place under EU funding, had been one of the largest projects managed by a local authority.

12.9

The Vice-Chairman discussed the countywide retrofit housing strategy. A feasibility study would be carried out in partnership with district authorities; Norfolk had an ageing housing stock, meaning that houses cost a lot to heat and therefore made up a large contribution to the county's carbon dioxide emissions.

12.10 Cabinet **RESOLVED:**

1. To approve £1,500,000 funding within the 2023/24 budget, to deliver the Norfolk Investment Framework (NIF) pilot projects recommended for approval in this report.
2. For a performance update report on the NIF Pilot Projects to be brought back to Cabinet in April 2024.

12.11 **Evidence and Reasons for Decision**

A strong evidence base, and clearly defined investment priorities, agreed with local stakeholders, is required to compete for future funding and help prioritise investment decisions. The Norfolk Investment Framework will support us to deliver a seismic shift in approach, seeking to improve pay, productivity, and skills levels, and setting a framework for economic intervention.

The pilot projects recommended for approval in this report scored the highest in terms of strategic alignment with the Norfolk Investment Framework, additionality, development of concept, deliverability, impact, and sustainability.

The pilot projects recommended, will enable Norfolk County Council to work with stakeholders to start to implement the Norfolk Investment Framework and address the grand challenges identified. The learning from the pilots will help inform the design for scaled up, med-longer term interventions, that work towards addressing improvements in pay, productivity, skills in addition to improvements in public services and tackling climate change.

12.12 **Alternative Options**

Option 1: Do nothing. Alternative options, including doing nothing and simply responding to calls for funding as they arise, is not felt to be the best policy, as it would not deliver the strategic ambition to create a step-change in the economic profile of the county.

Option 2: Source alternative funds: As part of the assessment criteria for the pilot projects prozed, the business cases had to demonstrate additionality, including information that alternative funds had been explored and could not be sort elsewhere.

Option 3: Deliver pilot project Interventions to address the challenges identified through the Norfolk Investment Framework. This is the preferred option. The pilot projects will help generate growth in key sectors, support the ambition to create a higher skilled and more productive workforce, with a clear focus on inclusive growth, as well as harnessing the opportunities to mitigate the impacts of climate change on the Norfolk economy.

13 **Harleston Independent Living**

- 13.1.1 Cabinet Received the report summarising the business case for approving £4,095,000 capital funding from the existing Independent Living (extra care) capital programme to Saffron Housing Trust to support the development and secure nomination rights for NCC for 91 apartments in a new 91-unit Independent Living scheme for older people in Harleston, South Norfolk district.
- 13.1.2 The Executive Director for Adult Social Services gave an introduction to the report. This project was part of a 10-year housing programme for care. It was the fourth scheme following developments delivered in Fakenham, Acle and Stalham. This scheme was proposed to deliver 91 flats and save £0.5m per year from care outcomes as well as delivering better outcomes.
- 13.1.3 The Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, Public Health and Prevention introduced the report to Cabinet:
- The Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, Public Health and Prevention thanked Cabinet for their support when the project for provision of funding for independent living units across the county was initially proposed. He was pleased to set out this scheme, committing money previously allocated by Cabinet, as this would make a difference to people's lives and deliver on the Council's commitment to help people live independently in their communities for as long as possible.
 - Helping people to remain independent for as long as possible delivered what people said they wanted, but also gave a significant saving in the Adult Social Services budget.
 - The report showed that provision for independent living in the county was low; analysis showed that approximately 2,800 units were needed by 2028. This development in Harleston would support in meeting this demand. A pipeline of further schemes would be brought forward in the future.
 - People were interested to take up the units being proposed, showing that there was a role for planning authorities to ensure they were part of the planning mix in future housing developments. The council therefore asked partners to think about providing this type of housing in their future developments.
 - The Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, Public Health and Prevention moved the recommendations as set out in the report.
- 13.2 The Cabinet Member for Innovation, Transformation and Performance supported the report, noting that the recently opened scheme in Fakenham had been a success; this development gave people another option and freed up larger houses which were no longer suitable for people's needs.
- 13.3 The Cabinet Member for Children's Services attending the opening of the Acle unit which he noted as positive and a good way to provide support for the elderly in the community.
- 13.4 The Cabinet Member for Communities and Partnerships agreed that more of these developments were needed to support people who wanted to be independent for as long as possible.
- 13.5 Cabinet **RESOLVED:**
- a) To approve £4,095,000 of capital contribution funding from the existing £29m Independent Living (extra care) capital programme to Saffron Housing Trust

to support the development and secure nominations rights for 91 apartments in a new Independent Living scheme for older people in Harleston, South Norfolk

- b) To approve an exemption under paragraph 10(a)(iii) of contract standing orders
- c) To delegate the responsibility to the Director of Commissioning to complete the relevant contract(s) with Saffron Housing Trust

13.6 **Evidence and Reasons for Decision**

Please see section 4 of the report

13.7 **Alternative Options**

The decision on this paper is to proceed or not with the development.

14 **Market Sustainability Plan**

- 14.1.1 Cabinet received the report setting out Norfolk's Market Sustainability Plan, which detailed the significant challenges that the adult social care sector was facing, and the significant additional resources and market re-shaping needed to secure a sustainable market for the future.
- 14.1.2 The Executive Director for Adult Social Services gave a short introduction, noting that this was a technical report underpinning the publication of the market sustainability plan. This plan sets out the sustainability of the market while the Government paused its reform of Adult Social Care.
- 14.1.3 The Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, Public Health and Prevention introduced the report to Cabinet:
 - The Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, Public Health and Prevention recognised the remarkable efforts of all working in the care sector over the 2022-23 challenging winter and was grateful for their dedication. He thanked them all for the work they did on behalf of the council
 - The report outlined Norfolk's Market Sustainability Plan; it was a government requirement to publish this as part of the delay of the Adult Social Care reforms.
 - The Norfolk's Market Sustainability Plan looked at sustainability of the care market, impact of future market changes and the funding gap if the median care rate was achieved. This was despite a record care funding increase for next year and work being done to support the care market and providers.
 - Norfolk had an ageing population and the number of people over 85 was set to double to 60,000 by 2040.
 - The report also set out the recruitment challenges seen in Norfolk and nationwide. The council was doing everything it could to pay record care fee increases and promote care as a career.
 - Work was underway to help people live independently with the development of independent living and work to support a reduction in demand on care services. Connecting Communities would use data to support people earlier and connect people to services and support in their communities.

- Long term sustainable funding was needed from Government; it was important that Government gave parity to health and care and recognised the challenges experienced by large rural counties like Norfolk. As such, the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, Public Health and Prevention would continue to lobby Government for a sustainable settlement for Adult Social Care.
- Planning to ensure the care market was sustainable would continue, and senior officers were asked to provide an annual update for the report.
- The work of the council to reshape the market with providers was set out in paragraph 1.25-1.27 of the report. To make services sustainable, the council wanted to set a cap on agency rates for care, in line with rates in the NHS.
- The Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, Public Health and Prevention moved the recommendations as set out in the report.

14.2 The Cabinet Member for Finance agreed that the national discussion for long term sustainable funding for Adult Social Care should be supported and commended the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, Public Health and Prevention's efforts to date to do so.

14.3 The Cabinet Member for Children's Services noted the high population of over 65s in Norfolk, particularly in North Norfolk.

14.4 Cabinet **RESOLVED** to:

- a) To continue to support the national discussion for sustainable funding for local authorities
- b) To approve publication of the Norfolk Market Sustainability Plan (attached at Appendix A of the report)

14.5 **Evidence and Reasons for Decision**

N/A

14.6 **Alternative Options**

N/A

15 Modern Slavery Statement 2021-22

15.1.1 Cabinet Received the report setting out Norfolk's County Council's Modern Slavery Statement for 2021-22 which set out the steps that Norfolk County Council had undertaken to help ensure that there is no slavery or human trafficking within our organisation, our sub-contractors, partners or supply chains.

15.1.2 The Chairman introduced the report to Cabinet:

- Central Government intended for local authorities to adopt a modern slavery statement, but this was not yet in legislation. It was appropriate in the meantime for the council to set out how they supported the Modern Slavery Act 2015 and mitigated risks of modern slavery.
- Norfolk County Council directorates and relevant representatives of the Norfolk Anti-Slavery Network had been consulted when preparing the statement.

- The statement focussed on areas of high-risk, contract management and how staff are or would be trained to identify issues.
- The work was ongoing, and the statement and policies and procedures would be adapted in line with new policies, feedback and best practice
- The report reviewed progress and outcomes from 2021 and introduced an updated statement to fall in line with finalisation of the annual accounts for 2021-22.
- The statement showed the steps undertaken by the council to ensure there was no slavery or trafficking within the organisation its sub-contractors or supply chains.
- Norfolk County Council recognised the risks of all forms of modern slavery and committed to identify and disrupt modern slavery using its statutory powers, its role as a contracting authority, utilising strengths with all partnerships including the police, NHS and other organisations, and awareness raising. The council had a zero-tolerance approach to all forms of slavery and would act with integrity and transparency in all business dealings. Many policies and procedures were in place across the council which linked to addressing this topic. Cabinet's role included establishing an appropriate role for the delivery of cross cutting and departmental functions.
- Page 379-383 set out the Modern Slavery Statement for 2021-22
- The Chairman moved the recommendations as set out in the report.

15.2 The Cabinet Member for Innovation, Transformation and Performance felt that treating people as commodities was shameful and therefore it was important that the council took a lead in this area and made a statement, ensuring that people were paid a proper rate for the work they do.

15.3 The Vice-Chairman noted that slavery had no place in our society; policies and procedures in place throughout the council's operation which were shown in the report to support the modern slavery statement.

15.4 The Cabinet Member for Communities and Partnerships agreed it was positive that the council was helping to lead the way on this, contributing to the wellbeing of people in Norfolk.

15.5 Cabinet **RESOLVED:**

- A. To agree:
1. The Modern Slavery Statement for the year 2021/2022 (in Appendix B of the report); and
 2. The Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) at Appendix A of the report.
- B. To note progress against the action plan and agree that Corporate Select Committee should be asked to review progress on modern slavery this summer, before the 2022/23 statement is brought to Cabinet for approval

15.6 **Evidence and Reasons for Decision**

Please see section 4 of the report

15.7 **Alternative Options**

Although the content of the statement could differ, the Council is expecting a requirement to produce and publish a statement, so no alternative option has been considered.

16 Equality Diversity & Inclusion (EDI) Objectives for 2023-2026

- 16.1.1 Cabinet Received the report proposing proposes four Equality Diversity & Inclusion objectives for 2023 to 2026, supported by a range of priorities, summarising the arrangements to prepare the new Plan, including public consultation, and the operational challenges to address and noting that on 16 January 2023, Corporate Select Committee endorsed the four objectives and requested an annual report on progress, supported by a six-monthly member briefing.
- 16.1.2 The Executive Director for Community and Environmental Services commented that this report showed the cutting edge and award-winning work done by the council to remove barriers, and ambition to continue to drive the agenda to make Norfolk a better place for everyone.
- 16.1.3 The Cabinet Member for Communities and Partnerships introduced the report to Cabinet:
- Norfolk County Council aimed for Norfolk to be one of the highest performing councils in the country, creating jobs and cherishing the environment, countryside and heritage and empowering residents to be in control of their lives and influencing decision making.
 - The current Equality Diversity and Inclusion plan was due to expire, and work had been undertaken to set new Equality Diversity and Inclusion objectives for 2023-26. Every 2 years, common sense actions were prioritised from across the services, workforce and communities.
 - Many objectives had been delivered; the council was quadruple award winning in its work to promote equality, diversity and inclusion. The awards won were set out on page 384 of the agenda.
 - A whole-council review of equality had been completed to identify strengths and inequalities. Racism affected many ethnic minority residents and employees. Young people in Norfolk who were black or from a Gypsy, Roma or Traveller background experienced the poorest lifelong outcomes, as seen across the UK.
 - Many disabled people had barriers to physical and digital environments.
 - Promoting inclusion for the LGBTQ+ community was a priority for the council.
 - One of Norfolk's strengths was its diversity, which continued to increase
 - There was an aim to make a difference in Norfolk over the next 3 years by using influence to improve life for all. The four equality, diversity and inclusion objectives were supported by priorities and summarised arrangements to prepare the new plan including consultation and challenges.
 - The Cabinet Member for Communities and Partnerships moved the recommendations as set out in the report.
- 16.2 Cabinet **RESOLVED** to:
1. Note the progress to date;
 2. Consider the operational challenges set out in Section 2 of the report and the evidence gathering that has taken place to prepare new objectives;

3. Agree the proposed objectives and priorities for 2023 to 2026 set out in Section 4 and Appendix 1 of the report.

16.3 **Evidence and Reasons for Decision**

The evidence for the proposals is set out in Section 3 of the report.

16.4 **Alternative Options**

The Cabinet could consider amendments to the proposed objectives or priorities. Alternatively, it could consider not progressing some priorities. This should be considered against the legal implications summarised in Section 9.1 and the operational challenges summarised in Section 2 of the report.

17 **Strategic Review and Future Transformation**

17.1.1 Cabinet Received the report providing an update on the work carried out as part of the Strategic Review so far and future work which would be carried out.

17.1.2 The Executive Director for Community and Environmental Services noted that transformation was not a one-off event. The Council had a track record of changing service delivery across a range of services and wanted to deliver the best services possible for local communities

17.1.3 The Chairman introduced the report to Cabinet:

- The strategic review would need to be ongoing; there would be financial challenges over the coming years, and it would be important to respond to these to deliver the services that residents relied on.
- The review work was designed as a whole organisation exercise to meet the challenges being faced by the council and which it would face in the future.
- As the review approached the end of its first year it was important to look at the progress to date and set the direction for continuation for the future and for the next 2 years at least.
- There was a need to be stable at times of pressure and keep critical services safe, including those subject to external inspections.
- The continuing transformation journey would be balanced with delivering services as efficiently as possible.
- Among the priorities for the first stage of the review were removing areas of duplication, adjusting management layers and improving spans of control, designing a pay and rewards strategy based on transparency and market alignment to support recruitment and retention ensuring the organisation was competitive in the job market, as well as improving consistency to support career development and equality.
- The work was ongoing and would lead to the council being able to recognise and respond to change in a positive manner to benefit staff, residents and the organisation and make financial savings.
- The council's financial position for the next 3 years was set out at Full Council in February 2023. Financial gaps were predicted and reviewing how services are delivered would help to meet this challenge. It was anticipated that £10m of the £46m funding gap for 2024-25 could be achieved through the strategic review.

- The first phase of the work had been a challenge, looking at how the organisation should look and feel departmentally and council wide. Planning and sequencing of implementation of activities was well advanced. In the coming months, new ideas would need to be identified, their validity tested and their impact on financial and non-financial positions analysed. There had been a focus on improving internal operations as these services allowed wider activity across the council and ensured resources were directed at supporting communities.
- The chairman moved the recommendations as set out in the report.

- 17.2 The Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, Public Health and Prevention noted that this was an important piece of work and the progress shown in the report indicated that this work needed to continue. It was important for the council to be fit for purpose moving forward.
- 17.3 The Cabinet Member for Innovation, Transformation and Performance noted that change would be important to ensure the organisation could deliver what was needed and ensure efficiency.
- 17.4 The Cabinet Member for Finance supported continuation of the strategic review, noting that it would allow the council to deliver the best services possible for the people of Norfolk and achieve savings required for the future financial year.
- 17.5 The Vice-Chairman noted that it was important to review ways of working on a regular basis to keep up with demand and challenges and ensure the organisation was efficient.
- 17.6 The Cabinet Member for Children’s Services highlighted that changes to senior management in Children’s Services would allow a more streamlined service for families and children
- 17.7 The Cabinet Member for Growing the Economy supported this piece of work and the importance of responding to change.
- 17.8 The Cabinet Member for Commercial Services and Asset Management agreed that it was important for the review to continue.
- 17.9 The Chairman noted that this piece of work would need to continue for at least 2 years and with a plan in place to show that the work could be done and how it would be done.
- 17.10 Cabinet **RESOLVED**:
1. To agree to the Strategic Review being continued, as part of our ongoing transformation journey, to meet the challenges being faced by the Council
 2. To ask officers to bring further reports to Cabinet on the review method and intended financial savings
- 17.11 **Evidence and Reasons for Decision**

Given the outlook for local government funding over the medium term, it is likely that the County Council will need to continuously review our funding priorities, the value for money of services we procure, manage or deliver and the efficiency and effectiveness of the organisation. The review has been one strand of this

work and this type of transformational approach will remain an important part of how we continue to deliver a balanced budget.

17.12 **Alternative Options**

Cabinet could decide not to proceed with transformation activity, but this risks the organisation operating in a sub optimal manner and not being able to manage our budget pressures in future years. Cabinet has previously decided to undertake such review activity and so this would be reversing that decision (See background Papers).

17.13 Cabinet took a break at 12:02 until 12:17

18 **NCC Companies Business Plans**

18.1.1 Cabinet received the report seeking Cabinet's approval for each of the four main companies to operate within their 2023/24 Business Plan as approved by their respective Boards.

18.1.2 The Cabinet Member for Commercial Services and Asset Management introduced the report to Cabinet:

- The County Council created several companies to help in delivering its aims and objectives and this report sought for their business plans to be approved by Cabinet. The business plans had been reviewed by the Norfolk County Council owned Companies Governance Panel and recommended to Cabinet for consideration.
- Hethel Innovation Ltd
 - This company managed Scottow Enterprise Park and Easton Food Hub.
 - The company aimed to make a profit of £123,000 in 2023-24. They aimed to deliver their objectives by growing businesses until they were able to operate unaided and the business plan outlined the plan to increase the offer, set out on page 423 of the report.
 - The company had increased inquiries from new customers and had plans to reduce their carbon footprint.
- Independence Matters Group
 - Independence Matters was a provider of support and enablement for adults with learning disabilities, dementia and associated mental health problems through personal assistants, supported living, day care and sheltered employment.
 - They supported people to pay an active part in their local community and access their local community.
 - Home Support Matters was a subsidiary company of Independence Matters, providing a range of specialist care, including domiciliary care, live in care, reablement, care for the elderly and crisis support.
 - Trading for Independence Matters was forecast to be challenging in 2023-24.
- Norse Group
 - Norse Group was the largest of the Council's owned companies and the largest Local Authority trading company in Britain, employing 8750 people. The Group had 3 main trading divisions delivering a range of services: Norse Commercial Services, providing frontline and statutory services such as environmental services, domestic

refuse collection, restoration of public spaces and highways maintenance; Norse Consulting, providing services for estate management, architecture, project management and design; and Norse Care, which had 21 residential homes and supported care with housing, including residential and enhanced care, nursing with care and dementia care.

- The business plan stated that Norse Commercial Services would support growth of the wholly owned brand. Growth for Norse Consulting would come from the project pipeline of existing customers, looking to increase their margin by adjusting the cost-base in-year. Norse Care were looking to reduce agency staff costs; there was a national trend post-Covid of staff shortages across the sector and high use of agency workers. Norse Care would use targeted recruitment and retention to impact on this.
- The Group had £6.1m pre-tax trading profit of £6.1m and this would facilitate a rebate to Norfolk County Council of £2.7m
- Repton Property Developments Ltd
 - This company was established in 2017 with the primary objective of undertaking direct property development to maximise the financial returns to Norfolk County Council.
 - The council as the shareholder sought wider social, economic and environmental outcomes. The business plan set out how the company would achieve these objectives.
 - The company was performing well against the objectives and producing a range of environmental and social benefits. There was progress seen on a number of sites, with high quality and affordable housing being developed and the company going above the required level of social housing on its first three schemes. The company had so far exceeded its targets for private sale receipts.
 - It was expected that the council would receive a £1m dividend per annum from March 2024.
- The Cabinet Member for Commercial Services and Asset Management moved the recommendations as set out in the report.

18.2 The Chairman noted that the boards of each company had approved each business plan.

18.3 The Vice-Chairman noted that on the first page of Hethel Innovation Ltd Business plan, on page 423 of the agenda, it stated that the business would “integrate” with the Norfolk County Council economic development team. The Vice-Chairman felt that this should state “collaborate” instead and proposed this be amended. The Cabinet Member for Commercial Services and Asset Management agreed with this proposal to amend the business plan.

18.4 The Vice-Chairman noted the algae project at Hethel Innovation Ltd, which he welcomed.

18.5 Cabinet **RESOLVED** to:

1. Review and approve the Hethel Innovation Ltd 2023/24 Business Plan in Appendix A of the report with the following amendment:

- Alter the wording of the objective “integrate with NCC’s economic development team” on the first page of the Hethel Innovation business

plan, shown on page 423 of the Cabinet agenda, to instead state
“**collaborate** with NCC’s economic development team”

2. Review and approve the Independence Matters C.I.C 2023/24 Business Plan in Appendix B of the report.
3. Review and approve the Norse Group Limited 2023/24 Business Plan in Appendix C of the report.
4. Review and approve the Repton Property Developments Limited 2023/24 Business Plan in Appendix D of the report.

18.6 Evidence and Reasons for Decision

Each company’s board has approved a 2023/24 Business Plan and are seeking Cabinet’s consent to operate the company in accordance with their Business Plan.

18.7 Alternative Options

Norfolk County Council, as shareholder, could set alternative objectives for the company and request a revised Business Plan.

19 Finance Monitoring Report 2022-23 P10: January 2023

19.1.1 Cabinet Received the report providing a summary of the forecast financial position for the 2022-23 Revenue and Capital Budgets, General Balances, and the Council’s Reserves at 31 March 2023, together with related financial information.

19.1.2 The Cabinet Member for Finance introduced the report to Cabinet:

- The focus of financial planning had moved on to 2023-24 however the current financial monitoring report laid the foundation for next year; it was important to ensure there were no unforeseen overspends.
- The Cabinet Member for Finance was pleased to report that as of January 2023, a balanced budget was being forecast.
- Children’s Services continued to experience significant operational pressures, summed up in paragraph 2.4 onwards; the £20m overspend was mitigated by use of departmental reserves and finance general’s deployment of one-off measures such as savings in MRP and additional Government funding from business rates relief.
- Adult Social Services were forecasting a balanced in-year position having used departmental reserves.
- The Community and Environmental Services position was unaltered from last month’s report.
- Table 3 of the report showed the rise in forecast departmental provisions and reserves due to an increase in the Adult Social Services forecast balance.
- An overspend in the high needs block meant that a negative continued to be seen in the dedicated school reserve at £73m. The Department for Education had invited the Council to take part in the safety valve programme; officers had engaged in this and a multi-year proposal had been submitted to the Department for Education to bring the in-year position back into balance and identify how the debt can be repaid. The decision from the Secretary of State was being awaited on whether the Norfolk Plan was approved.

- Paragraphs 7.1 and 7.11 on page 526-527 of the report discussed delayed savings from the Supported Housing Programme, Norse Care and My Oracle.
- Achieving over 90% of the savings target was reasonable; in recommendation 9, executive directors were asked to attempt to mitigate this.
- Cabinet were asked to approve Craig Chalmers as director of Independent Matters Group as part of the process of bringing this company under council ownership.
- Each year the council had to write off debts where estates could not pay for care; this year there were 7 debts of £114,658.40
- The Council's borrowing requirement for the current year was complete and by working with capital programmes £1.3m had been saved on what was forecast. Rising deposit rates had meant the council received an additional £2.3m more than budgeted. In 2023-24 the council would borrow less and were forecasting £50m.
- Recommendations 1,2 and 11 recommended an addition of £60,963m gross to the capital programme consisting of £7.4m to a new Kings Lynn multi-user hub, £60,000 for wildfire PPE and £43m additional borrowing, agreed at the February Full Council meeting.
- Breakdown of funding sources was shown on page 544 of the agenda.
- Page 541 of the agenda showed forecast revised capital receipts of £52m available for the forthcoming financial year, of which £29m were from asset disposal.
- £34m had been set aside for the cost of funding short life assets, transformation and the Norwich Western Link; officers would continue to be instructed to monitor use of the property portfolio
- The Cabinet Member for Finance asked Cabinet to accept the two, well-won Arts Council England grants, set out in recommendation 6.

19.2 The Cabinet Member for Children's Services was grateful that other departments had supported with the overspend in Children's Services. The pressures still remained in Children's Services related to transport, pandemic related costs and agency staffing costs. Some agency costs had increased by 300%.

19.3 The Executive Director for Children's Services confirmed that the secretary of state had responded positively to the council's proposal for the Local First Inclusion, but further confirmation was being awaited.

19.4 The Cabinet Member for Innovation, Transformation and Performance noted the amount of money spent to support people in Norfolk and the work carried out to manage these funds.

19.5 Cabinet **RESOLVED**:

1. To recommend to full Council the addition of **£9.228m** to the capital programme to address capital funding requirements funded mostly from various external sources as set out in detail in capital Appendix 3, paragraph 4.2 of the report, as follows:
 - £0.657m S106 contributions to various Schools projects
 - £7.4m Town Deal funding and previously approved £3.148m NCC Borrowing to fund the Kings Lynn Multi User Hub

- £0.194m miscellaneous minor adjustments to project budgets for S106 contributions and final estimates
 - Offset by a budget reduction of £2.171m in Department of Transport funding for Highways based on the latest forecast for the Norwich City Centre E-bound traffic reduction scheme
2. To recommend to Full Council the addition of £0.6m to the capital programme for the purchase of Wildfire Personal Protective Equipment as set out within the Norfolk Fire and Rescue Service Community Risk Management Plan elsewhere in this agenda
3. Subject to full Council approval of recommendation 1 and 2 to delegate:
- 3.1) To the Director of Procurement authority to undertake the necessary procurement processes including the determination of the minimum standards and selection criteria (if any) and the award criteria; to shortlist bidders; to make provisional award decisions (in consultation with the Chief Officer responsible for each scheme); to award contracts; to negotiate where the procurement procedure so permits; and to terminate award procedures if necessary.
- 3.2) To the Director of Property authority (notwithstanding the limits set out at 5.13.6 and 5.13.7 of Financial Regulations) to negotiate or tender for or otherwise acquire the required land to deliver the schemes (including temporary land required for delivery of the works) and to dispose of land so acquired that is no longer required upon completion of the scheme.
- 3.3) To each responsible chief officer authority to:
- (in the case of two-stage design and build contracts) agree the price for the works upon completion of the design stage and direct that the works proceed; or alternatively direct that the works be recompeted
 - approve purchase orders, employer's instructions, compensation events or other contractual instructions necessary to effect changes in contracts that are necessitated by discoveries, unexpected ground conditions, planning conditions, requirements arising from detailed design or minor changes in scope
 - subject always to the forecast cost including works, land, fees and disbursements remaining within the agreed scheme or programme budget.
 - That the officers exercising the delegated authorities set out above shall do so in accordance with the council's Policy Framework, with the approach to Social Value in Procurement endorsed by Cabinet at its meeting of 6 July 2020, and with the approach set out in the paper entitled "Sourcing strategy for council services" approved by Policy & Resources Committee at its meeting of 16 July 2018.
4. To note the progress towards achieving 100% ownership of Independence Matters and the share transfer due to take place in March 2023, and delegate to the Executive Director of Finance and Commercial Services to agree updated Articles of Association to reflect the change in ownership, controls are in place as are required to ensure the relationship with the company is

compliant with regulation 12 of the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 and consequential changes to Board membership.

5. To approve the appointment of Craig Chalmers, Director of Community Social Work, as County Council Director on the Independence Matters Board with effect from the date of the share transfer, and note that an additional Director appointment will be proposed to Cabinet in April 2023, if required
6. To approve the acceptance of two Arts Council England (ACE) grants for investment in the Norfolk Museums Service comprising of
 - a. £4.126m National Portfolio Organisations (NPOs) over 2023-26 at £1.375m per year
 - b. £0.444m annual grant to SHARE Museums East for 2023-24
7. To approve the write-off seven debts over £10,000 totalling £114,658.40 due to the exhaustion of estate and legal options where there is no further possibility of recovery, as set out in Appendix 2 paragraph 3.9 of the report;
8. To recognise the period 10 general fund revenue forecast of a balanced budget, noting also that Executive Directors will take measures to reduce or eliminate potential over-spends where these occur within services to maintain a balance budget at the year end.
9. To recognise the period 10 forecast of 92% savings delivery in 2022-23, noting also that Executive Directors will continue to take measures to mitigate potential savings shortfalls through alternative savings or underspends;
10. To note the forecast General Balances at 31 March 2023 of **£24.340m**, assuming the Council will mitigate the overspends reported in P10 of the report.
11. To note the expenditure and funding of the current and future 2022-27 capital programmes has been increased by **£51.135m** as set out in detail in capital Appendix 3, paragraph 4.1 of the report, as follows:
 - £7.8m uplift to Highways schemes as previously approved by Full Council in September 22
 - £43.35m additional NCC Borrowing for various capital schemes approved by Full Council on 21 February 23 in the 2023-24 Capital Strategy
 - £0.201m NCC Borrowing to fund the Electric Vehicle Charging points

19.6 Evidence and Reasons for Decision

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

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

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

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

- Treasury management
- Payment performance and debt recovery.

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

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

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

19.7 **Alternative Options**

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

20 **Authority to enact capital programme**

20.1.1 Cabinet received the report asking Cabinet to take the necessary executive decisions for the capital programme to be enacted.

20.1.2 The Cabinet Member for Finance moved the recommendations as set out in the report.

20.2 Cabinet **RESOLVED**:

1. To undertake a programme of capital works for which the Council has agreed a budget, as further set out in the paper *Capital strategy and programme 2023-24* (the "Programme Paper") approved by Cabinet on 30 January 2023
2. To delegate:
 - a. to the Director of Procurement authority to undertake the necessary procurement processes including the determination of the minimum standards and selection criteria (if any) and the award criteria; to shortlist bidders; to make provisional award decisions (in consultation with the Chief Officer responsible for each scheme); to award contracts; to negotiate where the procurement procedure so permits; and to terminate award procedures if necessary;
 - b. to the Director of Property authority (notwithstanding the limits set out at 5.13.6 and 5.13.7 of Financial Regulations) to negotiate or tender for or otherwise acquire the required land to deliver the schemes (including temporary land acquired for delivery of the works) and to dispose of land so acquired that is no longer required upon completion of the scheme;
 - c. to each responsible chief officer authority to:
 - i. (in the case of two-stage design and build contracts) agree the price for the works upon completion of the design stage and direct that the works proceed; or alternatively direct that the works be recompleted
 - ii. approve purchase orders, employer's instructions, compensation events or other contractual instructions necessary to effect changes in contracts that are necessitated by discoveries, unexpected ground conditions, planning conditions, requirements arising from detailed design or minor changes in scope subject always to the forecast cost

including works, land, fees and disbursements remaining within the agreed scheme or programme budget.

3. That the officers exercising the delegated authorities set out above shall do so in accordance with the council's Policy Framework, with the approach to Social Value in Procurement endorsed by Cabinet at its meeting of 6 July 2020, and with the approach set out in the paper entitled "Sourcing strategy for council services" approved by Policy & Resources Committee at its meeting of 16 July 2018.

20.3 Evidence and Reasons for Decision

Cabinet recommended adoption of the capital budget, including adoption of new schemes, on the basis of the justifications set out in Appendix D to the programme paper. It is now logical that it approves enactment of the programme. Expedient execution of the programme requires the delegations to officers set out in this paper.

20.4 Alternative Options

Cabinet could choose not to approve the delegations set out herein. This would require a plethora of individual cabinet or cabinet member decisions and be likely to delay programme execution: this course of action is not recommended.

21 Disposal, acquisition and exploitation of property

21.1.1 Cabinet received the report setting out proposals aimed at supporting Norfolk County Council priorities by exploiting properties surplus to operational requirements, pro-actively releasing property assets with latent value where the operational needs can be met from elsewhere and strategically acquiring property to drive economic growth and wellbeing in the County.

21.1.2 The Cabinet Member for Commercial Services and Asset Management introduced the report:

- The report set out proposals for 5 disposals, 2 acquisitions and a policy update. All disposals had been referred to Corporate Property Strategy Group to identify if there was any service use for the sites.
- **Norman House, Tarworks Road:** It was proposed to dispose of this property. The internal structure of the property was in poor condition and Children's Services intended to vacate the property and relocate to more suitable premises nearby.
- **Land at King's Lynn Academy, Queen Mary Road:** This was a small strip of land acquired as part of the school site, falling outside of the school fence. It was excluded from the lease to the academy and the local council had planning permission to use this for a development.
- **Woodside Complex, Norwich:** this consisted of 4 sites; a community hub, nursery, sensory support unit and the professional development centre. The nursery was closed, and the rest of the site was used by Children's Services. It was proposed to relocate all services and staff and explore the possibility of the site being redeveloped by adult social services as independent living or care housing. If this potential was not realised then the site would be disposed of by auction or tender.
- **Low Farm, The Street, Ringland:** this property was located on the route of the Norwich Western Link; as such the owners had put in an application

for their property to be purchased due to blight. The council had accepted the notice put in for this and had negotiated a price with the owners including a home loss payment.

- **Land at Ward's Chase, Stow Bardolph:** this was part of the County Farms Estate and not required for operational use. It was proposed to offer this to the adjacent landowners or alternatively disposed of by auction or tender.
- **Land at Lynn Road, Swaffham:** Children's Services had identified a need for a 224 place Special Educational Needs and Disabilities school in West Norfolk. This would replace the Fred Nicholson School which had no room to expand. This site had been identified as the preferred site for this.
- **Land at Terrington Fern House Estate:** this land was declared surplus to county council requirements by Cabinet at a previous meeting however an incorrect plan was included in the report. Following consultation with the Monitoring Officer and Head of Democratic Services this was being re-submitted to Cabinet so they could reaffirm their decision with the correct plan.
- **Metal detecting and field walking policy:** this policy had been updated to encompass all of the Norfolk County Council property estate. There had been a recent increase in significant historical finds in Norfolk and it was important to support detectorists.
- The Cabinet Member for Commercial Services and Asset Management moved the recommendations as set out in the report.

21.2 The Cabinet Member for Children's Services discussed that, with the impact of Covid, it had been possible to move meetings from the Woodside Centre to county hall making this building available for disposal. Having looked for a site in the Swaffham area, the new site at Lynn Road had been located for a new SEND school. A consultation about closure of and moving the Fred Nicholson school would start soon.

21.3 The Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, Public Health and Prevention noted that this report summed up why it was important to review the property estate regularly as sites could be acquired to provide services in future; disposing of redundant sites helped fund providing services for people who relied on them.

21.4 The Cabinet Member for Growing the Economy supported the development of the SEND school in the Swaffham area.

21.5 Cabinet **RESOLVED:**

1. To formally declare Norman House, Tarworks Road, Great Yarmouth NR30 1QR (6009/025) 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 & Commercial Services and Cabinet Member for Commercial Services & Asset Management is authorised to accept the most advantageous offer.
2. To formally declare Land at King's Lynn Academy, Queen Mary Road, Gaywood, King's Lynn PE30 4QG (2045/067B) 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 & Commercial

Services and Cabinet Member for Commercial Services & Asset Management is authorised to accept the most advantageous offer.

3. To formally declare the Woodside Complex, Norwich surplus to County Council requirements and:
 - (i) Instruct the Director of Property to dispose of the site to an independent living/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.
4. To agree to the purchase of Low Farm, The Street, Ringland NR8 6JG on terms agreed as detailed in confidential Appendix A and instruct the Director of Property to oversee the implementation of the acquisition.
 5. To formally declare the Land at Ward's Chase, Stow Bardolph (2075/130 part) surplus to County Council requirements and:
 - (i) Instruct the Director of Property to dispose of the site to the adjoining owner, 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.

6. To authorise the purchase of the land at Lynne Road Swaffham on the terms as detailed in confidential Appendix A and instruct the Director of Property to implement the acquisition.
7. To reaffirm their decision made on the 7 November 2022 Cabinet report as follows: to confirm their agreement to formally declare the Land at Terrington Fern House Estate (part), Terrington St Clement (2078/108A) (edged red on plan (as noted on the correct plan)) amounting to 1.65 hectares surplus to County Council requirements and instruct the Director of Property to dispose of the property. In the event of the disposal receipt exceeding the valuation figure limits the Director of Property in consultation with the Executive Director of Finance and Commercial Services and Cabinet Member for Commercial Services and Asset Management is authorised to accept the most advantageous offer.
8. To formally adopt the metal detecting and field walking policy as detailed in Appendix 1 of the report.

21.6 **Evidence and Reasons for Decision**

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

The acquisition of Low Farm, The Street Ringland NR8 6JG supports the Norwich Western Link project.

The acquisition of the land at Lynne Road, Swaffham provides a suitable site to

construct a new Special Educational Needs school.

In respect of the Corporate Property Policy, adoption will improve the understanding of the procedures of obtaining permission to metal detect/field walk on Council owned land and property.

21.7 **Alternative Options**

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

The acquisition of Low Farm, The Street Ringland NR8 6JG is the result of the issue of a Blight Notice.

The acquisition of the land at Lynne Road, Swaffham followed a comprehensive search for a site and this site has been made available and is in the appropriate location.

The adoption of the Corporate Property Policy formally acknowledges the procedures and principles, the alternative would be not to do so.

22 **Reports of the Cabinet Member and Officer Delegated Decisions made since the last Cabinet meeting**

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

23 **Exclusion of the Public**

23.1 Cabinet **RESOLVED not** to exclude the public from the meeting

24 **Disposal, Acquisition & Exploitation of Property: Exempt Appendix A**

24.1 Cabinet did not discuss the exempt appendix.

The meeting ended at 12:58

Chairman of Cabinet

Cabinet
6 March 2023
Public & Local Member Questions

	Public Question Time
6.1	<p>Question from Liam Calvert On 27th February a cyclist died after a collision on Norwich's ring-road involving the driver of a motor vehicle. There have been around 200 collisions resulting in serious injury or death to cyclists and pedestrians in Norwich in the last five years. Not only do these collisions destroy lives, the perception that the roads are unsafe significantly reduces people's freedom to travel in the way they choose. Vision Zero strategies involving safer speeds, junctions, behaviours and vehicles have been successful in reducing road casualties in many cities. Will the cabinet undertake, within 6 months, to publish a plan based on Vision Zero principles and in collaboration with Norfolk Police.</p> <p>Response from the Cabinet Member for Highways, Infrastructure and Transport The Norfolk Road Safety Partnership is committed to delivering a new Road Safety Strategy based on 'Safe System' principles. The 'Safe System' approach is closely aligned with Vision Zero and has the long-term goal for a road traffic system which is eventually free from death and serious injury. The Safe System is based on five principles: safe vehicles, post-crash response, safe roads, safe speeds and safe road use. Planning work for this new Safe System Strategy is currently taking place with input from all members of the Norfolk Road Safety Partnership. With regard to cyclist safety, several projects and initiatives are already taking place. The Transforming Cities and Active Travel Fund are providing opportunities to radically improve cycling and walking infrastructure across the county. Our Road Safety Team is expanding Bikeability cyclist training having secured Active Travel England and Capability funding. We will also working be with the police on a publicity campaign based around keeping cyclists safe.</p>
6.2	<p>Question from Calix Eden The First Norfolk & Suffolk bus services 24 and 24A running through Thorpe St Andrew are particularly unreliable and many residents have complained. In one case a resident could not hold down her job because of this unreliability. Can the cabinet member for highways put pressure on the bus company to improve their service so it is reliable?</p> <p>Response from the Cabinet Member for Highways, Infrastructure and Transport We have passed on your concerns to First Bus who will look into the issues of unreliability and make improvements where necessary. It is also worth highlighting that the measures being implemented by this Council via the funding awards from government for Transforming Cities and Bus Service Improvement Plans, all aim to improve bus journey reliability.</p> <p>Supplementary question from Calix Eden We all know many businesses and work places keep going on Sunday. Therefore, many residents need to get to work on Sunday, but at the moment there is no service. It is also important for social and family contact, and important for the local shopping economy. Can the cabinet member for highways help convince First Norfolk & Suffolk to reinstate a Sunday service?</p>

Response from the Cabinet Member for Highways, Infrastructure and Transport

We have asked First Bus if they can consider putting on a Sunday service, and evening services. We may be able to provide some kickstart funding for this but ultimately it would need to be financially sustainable in the long term for First to include it in their commercial network.

**Cabinet
6 March 2023
Local Member Questions**

	Member Question Time
7.1	<p>Question from Cllr Jamie Osborn A significant number of the risks listed in the NWL risk register (at least, the most recent version that I have been able to obtain) are listed as “low risk” when in fact they have already occurred and have led to rising costs and reputational damage. Notable among these is the claim that delay to getting DfT approval for the OBC would be low-risk. Furthermore, the risk register fails to address the risk to revenue reserves should the capital spent so far revert to revenue. In light of this, will the Cabinet Member commit to an immediate, complete and transparent overhaul of the risk register for the NWL?</p> <p>Response from the Cabinet Member for Highways, Infrastructure and Transport Risk is closely monitored as part of the governance arrangements in place for all our major infrastructure projects. Delay getting DfT approval for the NWL is shown currently at a medium risk in the latest risk register. The programme implications related to the sufficiency of time risk allowances and terminal float allowances within the overarching programme is shown as high risk. The risk register is updated by the project team on a monthly basis and reported to the Project Board and Member Group where there is an opportunity to review and comment.</p> <p>The NWL risk register covers the capital project cost implications and not revenue implications. The report to Cabinet on 4 July 2022 set out the funding implications should the project not proceed to construction. The specific point related to revenue funding should the scheme not proceed is considered within the corporate risk register.</p> <p>Supplementary question from Cllr Jamie Osborn The completion of the “missing link” of the Riverside Path between St Georges Street and Duke Street would boost the local sustainable economy and benefit active travel. Disappointingly, this relatively small investment has been put on hold due to inflationary costs (and yet work on the NWL is proceeding despite those same inflationary pressures). Can the Cabinet Member confirm what is being done to restart the work on completing the Riverside Path?</p> <p>Response from the Cabinet Member for Highways, Infrastructure and Transport Although funding towards this project has been secured from Sustrans and from the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL), through the Infrastructure Investment Fund, the project is currently paused due to cost increases due to the complexity of the build and inflationary pressures affecting many construction schemes across Norfolk and the UK. We are currently reviewing the design and considering options for the scheme to continue.</p>
7.2	<p>Question from Cllr Ben Price The riverside walk between St Andrews Hall and Pulls Ferry is one of the most beautiful in the country, helping to support tourism. This route is well used by cyclists. The one place where this journey is disrupted is at Whitefriars bridge, where it is dangerous to cross directly. Our current environmental policy states that we will support the community to make sustainable travel choices by working to support alternatives to car</p>

travel including promoting initiatives that utilise cycling and pedestrian improvements. Does the cabinet member agree with me that we need to look again at the Whitefriars crossing, develop a sensible scheme, ready for delivery once funding becomes available?

Response from the Cabinet Member for Highways, Infrastructure and Transport

The River Wensum Strategy outlines a range of projects aimed at enhancing the river corridor through improved access and attracting inward investment. Whilst the delivery plan for the strategy doesn't include any proposed improvements at Whitefriars bridge, officers would be happy to discuss with Cllr Price what improvements he feels are required at this location. The Local Member Fund presents an opportunity for a crossing assessment at this location to be funded. This would be carried by our network safety team, who would consider the potential usage and safety aspects such as the brow of the bridge possibly obscuring the crossing

Second question from Cllr Ben Price

At the February 2022 budget council, Greens proposed amendments that would have helped establish low-traffic neighborhoods, covered cycle parking, and parklets. Residents I've spoken to in Norwich overwhelmingly would like to see those in place now, helping us to transition away from polluting car dependency. Can the cabinet member confirm when these schemes will be coming forward, and will he work with me to help make Norwich a priority for their introduction

Response from the Cabinet Member for Highways, Infrastructure and Transport

Norwich was one of three Cities nationally shortlisted as a Zero Emission Transport City (ZETC) and we are currently awaiting further information from government on the next steps. However, some development funding was allocated to the County Council to enable initiatives aimed at reducing emissions and car dependency to be investigated and we are in the process of commissioning some initial scoping work around this. Funding to deliver such initiatives would need to be secured before we could say when they could come forwards.

7.3

Question from Cllr Paul Neale

Many residents have complained of poor customer service and higher costs since the Car Club transferred to Enterprise. Green councillors have repeatedly asked for details of the following in order to evaluate the service: Details of the contract with Enterprise, especially management of prices, and responsibility for contract management; Customer numbers and number of cars available since the transfer; Equalities assessment and environmental impact assessment of the transfer; Objectives for roll-out of EVs; Objectives for growing the service and how these will be monitored. Will the Cabinet Member agree to provide me with these details so that this vital service can be effectively monitored and managed?

Response from the Cabinet Member for Highways, Infrastructure and Transport

Detail has been previously shared on the rationale behind the transition to Enterprise and the impact of a significant rise in running costs including fuel prices, which coincided with the transfer of the service to Enterprise Car Club. The increase in car club membership costs is not unique to the service in Norwich and are reflected across the UK and is not limited to just Enterprise Car Club. Many of the details requested are commercially sensitive but I have asked officers to make contact with Cllr Neale to discuss the performance of the scheme.

Second question by Cllr Paul Neale

In January 2022, Cllr Proctor confirmed that the UK has very low levels of proven electoral fraud, as Cllr Osborn raised concerns about voter disenfranchisement under the introduction of Voter ID. Cllr Proctor called this a “difficult issue”. Has he expressed these concerns to the Government, and what is the council doing to ensure that voters are not disenfranchised by the introduction of voter ID?

Response from the Cabinet Member for Governance and Strategy

The District Councils conduct all NCC elections on our behalf with the next full council election taking place in 2025. The Democratic Services Team have a close working relationship with the election teams in each district and provide support, information and guidance as required. In relation to the introduction of voter ID, the election teams in the districts have been put in touch with NCC officers in Adult Social Services and with the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion team so they can work together to ensure that groups and communities in Norfolk are correctly signposted and receive the help and information they need. The need for voter ID has been and continues to be well publicised.

7.4

Question from Cllr Alexandra Kemp

When the Conservative Administration made a mistake in proposing to take away the Free School Meal Holiday Vouchers, from children on free School meals, last year, I successfully campaigned to bring this vital lifeline for needy families back. Now that food inflation is soaring at 16.7 per cent and the Government may raise the Energy Price cap in April allowing electricity prices to rise by 40 per cent, the School Meals Vouchers are needed more than ever. Will the Conservatives keep the Free School Meals Vouchers for the coming tax year.

Response from the Cabinet Member for Children’s Services

The government recently issued guidance around the next phase of the household support fund which will run from 1st April 2023 to 31st March 2024. Funding has been confirmed at the same level as previous rounds, meaning we have £13.4 million to support Norfolk Households facing hardship over the next 12 months. Last April the Council re-affirmed our commitment to support families eligible for free school meals, with the provision of monthly vouchers. This approach recognises that hardship is not limited to the school holidays. We provided vouchers to value of £15 per child, per month with an additional £30 at Christmas, when costs are higher. We are currently finalising our package of support for the next financial year but there is a firm commitment from the Council to continue cost of living support for free school meals eligible families during the forthcoming period.

Second question from Cllr Alexandra Kemp

Government awarded £24m for the King's Lynn STARS Project for Sustainable Transport and Regeneration, an evolving project to increase sustainable transport and routes into King's Lynn around Southgates.

Can some funding be used to repair the West Lynn Riverbank footpath to increase Active Travel into King's Lynn South and competent persons be despatched to inspect and repair the damaged treads of the West Lynn Ferry Landing Stage and slippery concrete slope. I took advice from the Health and Safety Executive and safety is an issue for enforcement from Environmental Health. It is appalling that this Conservative-run Council does not take safety of residents of the Borough of King's Lynn seriously

Response from the Cabinet Member for Highways, Infrastructure and Transport

The £24m funding referenced is for a specific scheme as detailed in the funding submission. It is unlikely this funding could be used on other projects, however, the Local Member Fund could be used for the repairs highlighted. Please contact your local Highways Engineer to discuss these proposals if you are willing to fund these from your allocation.

The County Council are also jointly working in partnership with the Borough Council to investigate the feasibility of making improvements to the access points leading to the West Lynn Ferry. The study, which is in its early stages, is intended to help clarify ownership of the component structures and will identify how any improvements could be funded.

Given the safety concerns highlighted above, an urgent joint County / Borough inspection of the access points for the ferry has been arranged.

7.5 **Question from Cllr Steffan Aquarone**

What can this Council do in order to move Norfolk up from the bottom band of nursery hourly pay rates, in order to ensure the availability of day-long, two year plus settings in the towns and villages on which our rural communities rely?

Response from the Cabinet Member for Children's Services

What can this Council do in order to move Norfolk up from the bottom band of nursery hourly pay rates ...

Funding for Early Years is received from central government using a National Funding Formula, which was introduced in 2017 following a national consultation and gives Norfolk the lowest possible rate - see [Early years funding: 2023 to 2024 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/news/early-years-funding-2023-to-2024). We are in full agreement with Early Years Providers that increases to rates of funding are insufficient to cover the rising staffing and utility costs which are directly or indirectly met.

All funding is directly linked to children's attendance, and we have been in a period of significant decline in numbers of children in the county for several years which would have resulted in some changes to the childcare market even if funding increases had met rising costs. We have also seen a change in the way parents are choosing childcare. The rising costs for families and more flexible working options have had an impact on the demand for childcare. The percentage taking up their funded offer has increased, but many providers report that fewer parents choose to top up their EY funded sessions.

We already have regular meetings with regional DfE colleagues to discuss the challenges facing the early years sector in Norfolk and we raise our concerns about the impact of the low level of funding that Norfolk receives. We also attend the DfE/LA working group for funding, which enables us to pose questions in relation to early education funding.

... to ensure the availability of day-long, two year plus settings in the towns and villages on which our rural communities rely?

The formula for distributing the received early years funding locally is set by Norfolk County Council on the basis of recommendations from Schools Forum, following a sector consultation and in discussion with the EY reference group. The formula was discussed on the 27th of January under item 4c [Norfolk Schools Forum agendas and](#)

[papers - Schools](#). The maintained nursery school representative, Early Years representative and many others who have Early Years provision as part of their school or trust took full part in this discussion. The responses to the consultation have been agreed by the consultative group and Schools Forum, results have been shared with providers.

The locally agreed formula for 3 and 4 year old children does include a supplement for flexibility, which increases by 10p per hour the funding for providers who open for extended hours and 10p per hour for quality where staff meet a higher qualification standard. The formula does not include a sparsity/rurality supplement. The clear steer from providers in recent years has been that any increase in funding be used to fund an increase in the base rate, to benefit all providers equally.

Norfolk county council does provide additional sustainability funding of up to £10,000 to provide financial help a provider overcome a short-term financial issue. For small rural providers this has helped to keep some providers open when numbers fluctuated within a fundamentally viable business. [Other funding for early years providers - Schools \(norfolk.gov.uk\)](#).

The highest level of demand for Early ears childcare is during school hours in term time for funded children, outside of these hours demand is much lower and sporadic, and therefore expensive to provide - which makes it challenging for group providers to find a business model that works in rural towns or villages. Typically, in these areas there will be group provision within school hours, often run by or on a school site, with any additional hours being provided through childminders who operate with significantly lower overheads. There has been a decline in the number of childminders in the county and we do have an active recruitment campaign which we target in areas of the county where we need additional provision. We have enhanced the support we provide to enable new childminders to meet Ofsted's registration requirements, and this includes fully funded support and training from the point that someone registers their interest in becoming a childminder, and then support and heavily subsidised training remains available throughout their career as a registered childminder. We have recently also enhanced the process through which we support existing childminders, including at least termly 1-1 contact with a member of the early years team, to support them to provide high quality, sustainable provision. We have recently created a childminder consultative group to allow us to have debate about the challenges and issues that childminders face specifically.

7.6

Question from Cllr David Sayers

What is the Cabinet Member for Children's Services perspective on students protesting for access to unlocked toilet facilities during lessons if necessary, and does the Member believe that schools should be provided with guidance on when students should be permitted to use toilet facilities?

Response from the Cabinet Member for Children's Services

All but one secondary schools in Norfolk are academies and part of multi-academy trusts (MATs), governed by a board of trustees. Academies are directly funded by the Department for Education and independent of local authority control. The trustees set and oversee the implementation of all policies and procedures for their academies. For the one local authority maintained secondary school, the local governing body sets and oversee the implementation of all policies and procedures. It is not a role of the local authority to scrutinise policies or procedures for schools or academies. If we have

concerns about the policies and procedures of a local authority-maintained school there are powers of intervention we can use.

It would not be unusual for a school to want to discourage students from using toilets during lesson time, as this is a disruption to learning and potentially a risk to pupil safety. However, all schools would have the welfare of the individual pupil at the forefront of their planning. All schools should also ensure that their policies and procedures do not unfairly discriminate against any group, for example female students or students with disabilities.

Where there are specific individual concerns for a child or family, all schools, including academies, are required to publish a complaints procedure on their website, and this route should be followed first where there are concerns about an academies policies or procedures. It is important that this is followed in all cases, as the design and implementation of specific policy and procedures need to be adapted to each individual school. For example, in this case, it is possible that toilets are readily available very close to classrooms in one school but are in a separate block in another – clearly those two schools cannot adopt the identical approach. It is also important that the rationale behind the policy is understood – there may be very good reasons why a school has adopted a particular policy that parents and students may not be aware of.

Regarding student protests, all schools and academies will have behaviour and other policies which would need to be applied to decide how a school responded to any protest by students that involved them breaking school rules or not attending lessons. Students have every right to express their opinion about school policies but must follow the schools' rules when doing so. Most schools will also have some sort of school council type system which is a mechanism for students to have their say.

The Department for Education produces guidance on complaints, including what to do if you are dissatisfied having followed the school's complaints procedure.

Second question from Cllr David Sayers

Has Norfolk County Council utilised private brokers to locate care homes for NHS patients and if so, what was the expense in previous fiscal year and the current fiscal year to date, given that there have been reports in the media that private brokers are earning millions for such a service?

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

Thank you for your question. Norfolk County Council does not use private brokers. We have an internal Brokerage Service that supports our sourcing of care and contracting arrangements and works alongside our practitioners, home first hubs and commissioners.

7.7

Question from Cllr Brenda Jones

As more and more Norfolk care providers are forced to leave the care market can the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, Public Health and Prevention give a commitment that no contracts will be agreed with providers who are rated as inadequate?

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

Thank you for your question.

The Council wants all people who receive care services to receive a good service, and where a provider is providing an inadequate level of service we will take steps to intervene. We do not place new work with inadequate providers, and where a provider with an existing contract with NCC receives an inadequate judgement, we will cease further placements.

Our Integrated Quality Service (IQS) reviews the quality of the care we commission and works with providers to identify quality improvement actions to support compliance. The IQS works closely with CQC. In some circumstances, where we are satisfied through our quality assessment process (PAMMS), we may reach a view that quality has improved but CQC have not yet reassessed their rating, and will recommence further placements, with further monitoring.

Our new contract awards process considers both quality and value for money as the criteria for award. If a provider is inadequate in CQC rating they will not be awarded a new contract.

Over the last twelve months we have seen three more residential and nursing care providers and four more home support providers, but a reduction of five providers supporting working-age adults. Although there will always be some closures as well as new care provision, it has been a challenging period for some care providers, with some providers choosing to close or sell their business.

Where a provider is persistently poor quality, we will seek to remove them from contracting with us in providing care.

7.8

Question from Cllr Maxine Webb

Referring to page 521 of the Cabinet agenda papers, could the Cabinet Member for Childrens Services elaborate on the “concerns about the imbalance in the market” that have been raised to the DfE by officers, and explain what engagement the Council has undertaken to address them with the local providers themselves?

Response from the Cabinet Member for Children’s Services

We have been clear, for a number of years now, that we have historically had an over reliance on the independent sector for special school placements. The SEND & AP Transformation programme and related £120 million of capital investment by the council was established, in 2019, to start the process of addressing this. With three new special school completed in the past 18 months we are now starting to benefit from a greater balance between independent and state-funded specialist provision. Within the next phase of our SEND strategic improvement programme – Local First Inclusion – we will continue to create more state-funded special schools and specialist resource bases, alongside a focus on local mainstream school inclusion, to ensure that we have sufficient specialist provision; judged to be Good and Outstanding by Ofsted in line with the current judgements of the all but one of the current Norfolk special schools. We are continuously engaged with our state funded special school leaders who contribute to our strategic planning and more recently we have engaged with the network of independent special schools specifically regarding our plans within the Local First Inclusion programme. We anticipate Secretary of State decision making regarding a

	<p>proposal for joint investment between the DfE and NCC during March and will be able to brief Members further when we have achieved certainty regarding next steps</p>
7.9	<p>Question from Cllr Emma Corlett March sees the beginning of Spring, however weather forecasts show snow and cold weather could still hit Norfolk over the coming weeks. Can the Cabinet Member for Highways, Infrastructure and Transport confirm the exact date when work to install bus shelters along St Stephens Street in Norwich will begin?</p> <p>Response from the Cabinet Member for Highways, Transport and Infrastructure Delivery discussions with the shelter manufacturer (Clear Channel) are ongoing. At the current time, installations are expected to start mid-April, although this is still to be confirmed by the manufacturer. Full information will be made available closer to the confirmed date.</p>
7.10	<p>Question from Cllr Terry Jermy Can the Cabinet Member for Environment and Waste explain why Norfolk Conservatives are breaking their manifesto pledge to keep all Norfolk recycling centres open?</p> <p>Response from the Cabinet Member for Environment and Waste The County Council is committed to increasing recycling and developing and delivering improved recycling centre services for Norfolk and to support this commitment has provided around £15m in recent years to deliver new and improved recycling centres across Norfolk to help manage more recycling and increase reuse.</p> <p>For example, the County Council opened the new Norwich North and Norwich South Recycling Centres in 2021 and 2022 and has recently submitted a planning application for a new recycling centre at Sheringham, with funding also provided by the County Council for new recycling centres in the Wymondham, Long Stratton and North Walsham areas. As the County Council delivers these new, much improved recycling centres, the ones they replace are closed and consideration is also given to whether other sites in the same area are still required or whether operations can be moved to a new site that provides an improved service.</p> <p>Supplementary Question from Cllr Terry Jermy Which other Norfolk recycling centres are being considered for closure in the future?</p> <p>Response from the Cabinet Member for Environment and Waste Currently none, however the County Council is committed to delivering a wide programme of continuing upgrades and replacement sites for the recycling centre service, with new sites planned for the Sheringham, Wymondham, Long Stratton and North Walsham areas which would provide an improved service and replace existing sites in those areas.</p>
7.11	<p>Question from Cllr Matt Reilly The building of the unused car park and refurbishment of the Council chamber at County Hall cost in the region of the £4.25m, the amount received by the Council for the sale of Holt Hall.</p> <p>The closure and sale of Holt Hall with the associated loss of outdoor education facilities</p>

was clearly against the public will and damaging to young people.

Does the Leader think the work at County Hall is of greater value than the work done at Holt Hall to better the future for young people in Norfolk?

Response from the Cabinet Member for Governance and Strategy

The rationale for the closure of Holt Hall was discussed extensively at the time. I would refer the Councillor to the original decision. As the Councillor will be aware Capital Receipts go to fund the Council's Capital Programme and reduce borrowing costs – so for example helping to support the delivery of £125m SEND School programme or supporting the Council's Extra Care programme.

Second question from Cllr Matt Reilly

Since Cllr Corlett raised the issues facing the UEA at Council on 24th January, the situation has worsened with clear mismanagement at the University and a predicted shortfall of £45 million. This year, university managers will make staff pay with their jobs and students with their courses. The situation is an emergency. Will the Leader urgently ask Government to provide bridging funding to avert this crisis which will have an impact on the whole county?

Response from the Cabinet Member for Governance and Strategy

University funding is not under the remit of Norfolk County Council; our responsibility to education centres on schooling to the age of 18. In that respect I'm sure the Councillor welcomes our substantial funding towards SEND School building and the recent OFSTED report which highlighted "exemplary" and "exceptional" areas of practice within Children's Services.

7.12 **Question from Cllr Mike Smith-Clare**

Can the Cabinet Member for Children's Services clarify the reasons why there are lower than anticipated foster care placements available, as set out in paragraph 2.9 on page 515 of the Cabinet Agenda?

Response from the Cabinet Member for Children's Services

As set out in detail in the National Children's Social Care Review, there is a national shortage of foster carers throughout the UK and a key recommendation around a nationwide campaign to drive recruitment. Whilst the New Deal for foster carers has had a positive impact on the number of beds available via in-house fostering, Norfolk is experiencing the same challenges as every other LA, with approvals matching terminations rather than exceeding as we would hope. That said, in 2022/23 we have increased the number of new fostering households (that is fostering households where they have not previously fostered for another agency, rather than transfers) by 30%, and we have increased utilisation of our in-house foster beds by 14%. We have also seen an increase in the number of approved beds available in households, with a number of foster carers coming forward to seek approval to increase their offer. Further to this, we have a number of ambitious plans in train to continue to improve the number of applicants to Norfolk Fostering Service in the coming year.

Supplementary question from Cllr Mike Smith-Clare

Has the six-month delay to re-register for foster carers who have left Norfolk County Council and returned within the last twelve months contributed to this issue and if so, how many placements have been lost as a result?

	<p>Response from the Cabinet Member for Children’s Services Those seeking to return to the Norfolk Fostering Service will be ‘fast tracked’ back into the service so the process will be significantly expedited. Very few fostering households chose to leave NCC (2%) and their placements were not lost as those with children already placed with them continued to care for them after transfer.</p>
7.13	<p>Question from Cllr Julie Brociek-Coulton Will the Cabinet member for Adult Social Care, Public Health and Prevention join with the overwhelming number of people in the Norwich area in calling for the Walk In centre on Rouen Road to remain open?</p> <p>Response from the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, Public Health and Prevention Thank you for your question</p> <p>The provision of this service is the responsibility of the Norfolk and Waveney Integrated Care System. As you may be aware they are consulting on its plans to transform how general practice services are delivered in the Norwich area. This consultation will be open between 24 January – 26 March 2023. This consultation is happening because the current contract that covers the Norwich Walk-in Centre, GP Practice on Rouen Road, will be expiring in Spring 2024. They want to consult with the public early on how services are provided after that time. They would welcome your feedback to help them understand what the impact would be on patients using the Norwich Walk-in Centre and GP Practice on Rouen Road. I would encourage you to respond to the consultation which you can access via this link Consultation on general practice services in Norwich (improvinglivesnw.org.uk)</p>
7.14	<p>Question from Cllr Colleen Walker On 14 April 2019 Council agreed a motion moved by the Leader with just two abstentions asking the Leader to write to the Secretary Of State For Work and Pensions asking for fair and transitional state pension arrangements for the 45,000 Norfolk women born in the 1950’s, who have unfairly borne the burden of the increase to the State Pension Age with lack of appropriate notification.</p> <p>The Secretary of State clearly ignored him, so what steps does he now propose to support WASPI women including assistance to help with their ongoing legal action?</p> <p>Response from the Cabinet Member for Governance and Strategy Thank you for your question. As you point out we wrote to Government outlining our position, which is supportive of the WASPI group and well known. This is now down to National government to take action rather than local government.</p>
7.15	<p>Question from Cllr Mike Sands Will the Cabinet member for Highways, Infrastructure and Transport use the delay in the NWL to develop a plan B to relieve the communities blighted by rat running and identify sources of revenue and actions to mitigate against the risk the scheme does not go ahead, in order to reassure Norfolk that should the decision not to proceed become permanent the consequences have been properly considered?</p> <p>Response from the Cabinet Member for Highways, Infrastructure and Transport Work on the Norwich Western Link is very much ongoing to ensure that the project is in</p>

	<p>the best possible position to move forward when we receive a decision on the Outline Business Case. We have submitted a strong business case, which clearly sets out the benefits the project will create, and we remain confident of hearing positive news soon.</p> <p>As mentioned in a previous response, risk is closely monitored as part of the governance arrangements in place for our major infrastructure projects. The NWL project's risk register is reviewed and updated on a monthly basis and reported to the Project Board and Member Group, and the point related to revenue funding should the scheme not proceed is considered within the council's corporate risk register.</p>
7.16	<p>Question from Cllr Chrissie Rumsby</p> <p>The proposal to replace Frederick Nicholls school was advised to parents three days before it was made public, is not an additional school, represents just 52 additional places and will be disruptive for many families. Having found an additional site and with the money that has been earmarked since 2018 why has the Cabinet Member for Childrens Services not used the opportunity to add a new school and invest in the existing Frederick Nicholls site to help meet demand that this proposal goes nowhere near addressing?</p> <p>Response from the Cabinet Member for Children's Services</p> <p>Originally Fred Nicholson Complex Needs School was identified within the SEND Transformation Programme for expansion of provision on the existing site. Along with the other Complex Needs Schools, it has a good or better Ofsted rating, and the ability to increase high quality places is part of the strategy. When the proposal was looked at in more detail, it was found that the site could not support an expansion of the school.</p> <p>The school has increased in numbers from around 99 pupils in 2008 on this site to now around 175 pupils, along with the additional staff to meet their needs. This has been as a result of pressure for special school places and without any significant capital investment. As a result, the buildings and site are no longer sufficient to support the number of pupils and staff. They require considerable investment to address ongoing condition and not fit for purpose for current demands.</p> <p>The capital project to relocate and expand the school will take some time to complete and this means families will have an opportunity to understand whether it will impact their child. For some they will have left by the time it moves or can plan for when it does move. The intended new site is a 20-minute drive from the current site. A lot of children attending Fred Nicholson are not local to the area - special schools do not have a catchment or local school, although we need to ensure they do not travel for unnecessarily long periods of time.</p> <p>This project is part of our overall approach of expanding our existing good special schools wherever we can – examples of this are projects completed at John Grant and Sheringham Woodfields and we are also looking at opportunities with the other special schools. There are plans to build a fourth and fifth new special school currently for which we have made a further submission to the Department for Education</p>
7.17	<p>Question from Cllr Alison Birmingham</p> <p>Of the more than 500 posts that have been vacant for more than six months within Norfolk County Council, how many has the Cabinet Member for Finance reviewed with a view to deleting, and how much has been saved as a result?</p>

Response from the Cabinet Member for Finance

Thank you for your question. We assume you are referencing information provided to the Chair of Scrutiny who had asked a question about vacant posts for six months or longer. The measure data provided in response to that enquiry was about requisitions, which in essence relates to live vacancies being actively filled. Therefore, the figure of “more than 500 posts” (510) represents the number of live requisitions (posts being recruited to) created between 01/08/2022 and 31/01/2023 which had not had an offer made in that same period. These are not therefore posts which have been vacant for more than six months. This data will include (for example) posts on our skills shortage list, posts temporarily being covered by agency / temporary arrangements as recruitment goes forward, or where recruitment activity remains underway. It relates to roles in a variety of job families, for example Social Care (i.e. Social Workers, Reablement Support Workers, Residential Children’s Practitioners etc), Highways, Norfolk Fire and Rescue Service, nplaw and Public Health.

The fact that the post has not yet been recruited to, does not necessarily mean that it is not required and could therefore be removed from the establishment. The Council as a whole keeps vacant posts under review both as part of the budget-setting process and through wider HR processes to seek to ensure that vacancies are not carried unnecessarily. As an example, the staff consultation currently being undertaken as part of the Strategic Review includes the proposed deletion of 64 vacant posts.

7.18

Question from Cllr Steve Morphew

Will Cabinet Members join me in supporting the action by BBC staff fighting to protect local radio that reflects the unique character of Norfolk and news broadcasts relevant to our communities and county?

Response from the Cabinet Member for Governance and Strategy

As a council, we are always supportive of a strong local media and would always wish to see BBC Radio Norfolk thrive as it is an institution in our county and long may it continue to be. Over the years, we have worked with them on many major community initiatives to help promote Norfolk and for many years, joined together at the Royal Norfolk Show to celebrate and promote all things Norfolk. We have responded to the BBC consultation saying how we want to see local radio being continued to be just that – local.