

# Scrutiny Committee

Date: **Wednesday 18 November 2020**  
Time: **10am**  
Venue: **Virtual Meeting**

**Pursuant to The Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority Police and Crime Panel Meetings) (England and Wales) Regulations 2020, this meeting will be held using video conferencing.**

**The Scrutiny meeting will be broadcast live via this link**

**<https://youtu.be/Hor98nSb0NI>**

**Scrutiny Members and other attendees: DO NOT follow this link, you will be sent a separate link to join the meeting.**

Membership:

Cllr Steve Morpew (Chair)  
Cllr Alison Thomas (Vice-Chair)

Cllr Roy Brame  
Cllr Emma Corlett  
Cllr Phillip Duigan  
Cllr Ron Hanton  
Cllr Chris Jones

Cllr Joe Mooney  
Cllr Judy Oliver  
Cllr Richard Price  
Cllr Dan Roper  
Cllr Steffan Aquarone  
Cllr Haydn Thirtle

Parent Governor Representatives

Mr Giles Hankinson  
Vacancy

Church Representatives

Mrs Julie O'Connor  
Mr Paul Dunning

# A g e n d a

## 1 To receive apologies and details of any substitute members attending

## 2. Minutes

(Page 5 )

To confirm the minutes from the Meetings held on 21 October 2020

## 3. Members to Declare any Interests

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## 4 To receive any items of business which the Chair decides should be considered as a matter of urgency

## 5 Public Question Time

Fifteen minutes for questions from members of the public of which due notice has been given. Please note that all questions must be received by the Committee Team ([committees@norfolk.gov.uk](mailto:committees@norfolk.gov.uk)) by **5pm on Friday 13 November 2020**. For guidance on submitting a

public question, please visit <https://www.norfolk.gov.uk/what-we-do-and-how-we-work/councillors-meetings-decisions-and-elections/committees-agendas-and-recent-decisions/ask-a-question-to-a-committee>

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

Fifteen minutes for local member to raise issues of concern of which due notice has been given. Please note that all questions must be received by the Committee Team ([committees@norfolk.gov.uk](mailto:committees@norfolk.gov.uk)) by **5pm on Friday 13 November 2020**

## **7 The deadline for calling-in matters for consideration at this meeting of the Scrutiny Committee from the Cabinet meeting held on Monday 2 November 2020 was 4pm on Monday 9 November 2020**

**8 COVID 19 – Norfolk economy and support for businesses** 10.05 – (Page 15)  
10.45  
**Report by Executive Director of Community and Environmental Services**

**9 NCC response to Covid-19 – initial lessons learned – progress update** 10.45 - (Page 33)  
11.40  
**Report by Head of Paid Service**

**Break 11.40 – 11.50**

**10 Strategic and Financial Planning 2021-22** 11.50 – (Page 51 )  
12:40  
**Report by Executive Director of Finance and Commercial Services**

**11 Outdoor Learning: A change of service, based at Holt Hall** 12:40 – (Page 100)  
12.55  
**Report by Executive Director of Children’s Services**

**12 Scrutiny Committee Forward Work Plan** 12.55 - (Page108)  
13:05  
**Report by Executive Director of Strategy and Governance**

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

Date Agenda Published: 10 November 2020



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## Scrutiny Committee

Minutes of the Meeting Held on 21 October 2020  
at 10:00 as a virtual teams meeting

### Present:

Cllr Steve Morpew (Chair)  
Cllr Alison Thomas (Vice-Chair)

Cllr Steffan Aquarone  
Cllr Emma Corlett  
Cllr Phillip Duigan  
Cllr Ron Hanton

Cllr Joe Mooney  
Cllr Judy Oliver  
Cllr Richard Price  
Cllr Haydn Thirtle

### Substitute Members present:

Cllr Terry Jermy for Cllr Chris Jones  
Cllr Brian Watkins for Cllr Dan Roper

### Parent Governor Representative

Mr Giles Hankinson

### Also present (who took a part in the meeting):

Cllr Bill Borrett	Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, Public Health and Prevention
Cllr John Fisher	Cabinet Member for Children's Services
Cllr Andrew Jamieson	Cabinet Member for Finance
Tom McCabe	Head of Paid Service
Sara Tough	Executive Director, Children's Services
Fiona McDiarmid	Executive Director of Strategy and Governance
Simon George	Executive Director of Finance and Commercial Services
Keith Bates	Chair of headteacher Association for Special Schools – Head of Eaton Hall Special School
Sarah Shirras	Joint Chair of Primary HT Association – Head of St Williams Primary School
Jess Balado	Joint Chair of Primary HT Association – Head of St Mary's Community Primary
Chris Snudden	Director of Learning and Inclusion, Children's Services
Seb Gasse	Assistant Director Education Strategy and Infrastructure
John Crowley	Assistant Director, Learning and Achievement.
Debbie Bartlett	Director - Strategy & Transformation Adult Social Care
Craig Chalmers	Director of Community Social Work
Nick Clinch	Assistant Director Social Care & Health Partnership Commissioning

Dawn Filtness  
Caroline Clarke  
Karen Haywood  
Tim Shaw

Finance Business Partner (Children's Services)  
Head of Governance and Regulatory Services  
Democratic Support and Scrutiny Manager  
Committee Officer

## **1. Apologies for Absence**

- 1.1 Apologies were received from Cllr Roy Brame, Cllr Chris Jones ( Cllr Terry Jermy substituting), Cllr Dan Roper( Cllr Brain Watkins substituting), Ms Helen Bates (Church Representative) and Mr Paul Dunning (Church Representative).

## **2 Minutes**

- 2.1 The minutes of the meetings held on 23 September 2020 were confirmed as an accurate record and signed by the Chair.

## **3. Declarations of Interest**

- 3.1 Cllr Emma Corlett declared an “other interest” because she was a Governor of a school in her area.
- 3.2 Cllr Ron Hanton declared an “other interest” because his daughter in law was a teacher.

## **4 Urgent Business**

- 4.1 No urgent business was discussed

## **5. Public Question Time**

- 5.1 There were no public questions.

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

- 6.1 There was one local member question and supplementary question from Cllr Sandra Squire which together with the answer can be found on the Committee pages website and also viewed at the end of these minutes.

## **7. Call in**

- 7.1 The Committee noted that there were no call-in items.

## **8 COVID 19 – Return to School Report**

- 8.1 The Committee received a report and a presentation from the Executive Director of Children’s Services that focussed on the steps taken to support schools to prepare to re-open to all children in September 2020. The Committee heard from the Director for Learning and Inclusion and Headteacher representatives from Headteacher Associations (mentioned in the list of those who were present for this meeting) who answered questions from their own perspectives. A copy of the presentation can be found on the committee pages website. The Committee also

heard from John Fisher, the Cabinet Member for Children's Services, who introduced this item.

## 8.2 During discussion the following key issues were raised:

- In September 2020 over 80% of young people had returned to school. This figure had recently risen to 93% (with variations by school and area).
- There were currently approximately 5 % of teachers who were absent from school. This figure (which varied between schools) was being monitored at the individual school level. It was also being monitored for LEA schools by the County Council's HR.
- Delays in obtaining test results was a significant reason for teacher absence but there was less of a delay now than at the start of term. There were HR systems in place to provide support to teachers and to support school staff generally. As schools had returned to full capacity in September the fragility of the school support systems had increased.
- Schools had had to become more creative in how they went about staffing arrangements and supporting both teaching and non-teaching staff. Covid-19 had led to significantly more challenges in terms of how schools and other educational establishments went about maintaining a safe and secure environment.
- There were currently some 70 Norfolk education settings that were having to manage Covid-19 issues.
- Approximately 1,500 pupils (around 1% of the Norfolk pupil population) had been asked at some stage to isolate as a result of Covid-19. This figure was expected to increase as the year progressed. Secondary schools were most affected.
- Councillors expressed concern at the effect that the pandemic was having on the mental wellbeing of young people, particularly those from poor family backgrounds and on their ability to access support services. In reply it was pointed out that additional mental health support was being provided by the County Council particularly to help those with SEN needs. The guest head teachers said that they considered the LEA had listened to their feedback in daily/ weekly meetings on SEN issues and had responded in partnership with them to help support a "whole school" system. The pandemic had led to a piloting of work on the redesign of mental health services for young people which would lead to improvements in service delivery.
- Councillors praised the head teachers on their work in supporting vulnerable children and commented on how it was important to apply a system wide approach.
- Councillors were pleased to hear that there was significant reduction in the number of school exclusions (when compared to this same time last year) and that excluded children were receiving an education. The guests said that there had, however, been a large increase in the number of telephone calls to an advice line (led by an ex-head teacher) about exclusions and the steps that schools were taking to tackle the pandemic.
- Councillors were concerned about the impact that Covid-19 was having on school budgets. It was too early to provide a cross school picture of the implications for school budgets of additional supply teaching costs and additional cleaning and sanitation costs and although the Schools Forum was pursuing this matter.

- For SEN children school inclusion issues were broader than those of having a good digital internet connection and access to appropriate laptops and more about the support that was available from adults who were able to support young people to use digital technology.
- Schools had worked hard to communicate with parent groups about the reasons for their anxieties about the welfare of young people. Where parents raised concerns with the LEA issues with followed up with the schools concerned.
- The Virtual School continued to work daily with the most vulnerable young people.
- Attendance of looked after children was carefully monitored.
- Some 18 schools had more than 5 teachers who were off school.
- The pandemic had led to a more “whole school” approach to education issues.
- How schools dealt with the impact of the pandemic on non-teaching staff (including cleaners and caretakers) was fundamental to keeping schools open. Cleaners and caretakers had a very important role in keeping schools open. The absence of support staff was higher than that for teachers partly because of the financial circumstances of support staff in having to support other family members.
- At 96% the numbers of teaching assistants who were absent from school was slightly higher than teachers and varied by individual schools and highest for complex needs schools.
- There was regular engagement with the Youth Advisory Board. Details regarding how the Board was taking on comments from young people would be brought to the Children’s Services Scrutiny Sub-Committee.
- The Chair asked what evidence there was to show that young people had caught up on their education and to measure on a comparative basis where school performance needed to improve. In reply it was pointed out that the mechanisms used at the national level to record how schools assessed pupil performance had come to an end before the start of the pandemic. The Government had encouraged schools to develop their own assessment targets and their own school curriculums. This meant that LEAs were no longer collecting meaningful comparative data from schools and it was difficult to provide benchmarks. It would take more time for individual schools to understand where there were gaps in the education that they provided for young people. When young people had completed their phonics tests the answers would help provide some evidence as to the progress that was being made but these tests could not be done any earlier than was planned.

### 8.3 RESOLVED

1. That Scrutiny Committee note the report and the presentation and place on record thanks to the headteachers who attended today’s meeting for their help and support in answering Councillors questions.
2. That the Scrutiny Committee ask that its thanks be passed on to all school teaching and support staff for the excellent work that they are doing in working together at this time.
3. That the Children’s Services Scrutiny Sub-Committee be asked to examine the following issues from today’s meeting:



- **Evidence from schools about the level of additional young peoples needs as a result of Covid-19 and how these additional needs impacted on pupil learning.**
- **The impact on learning of digital exclusion (including pupil confidence and their ability to use new technology).**
- **Details regarding the additional funding that would be made available to schools for the autumn term.**
- **A summary of comments that young people were making themselves about the impact of Covid-19 through the work of the Youth Advisory Board.**

## 9 **COVID 19 – Support for Vulnerable People in our Communities**

9.1 The annexed report (9) by the Executive Director of Adult Social Services (and the presentation that formed an appendix to the report) set out the winter challenges facing Adult Social Services, the lessons learnt from last winter and the ways in which Adult Social Services was closely engaged in system-wide planning for winter and associated COVID-19 recovery. Cllr Bill Borrett, Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, Public Health and Prevention and officers from Adult Social Services were present in the meeting to answer Councillors questions.

9.2 During discussion the following key issues were raised:

- Adult Social Services (ASS) winter planning in 2020/21 looked significantly different to usual planning processes.
- As we entered winter during a pandemic supporting Norfolk's care market would be a clear focus for ASS.
- An analysis of the last six months had strengthened ASS planning arrangements.
- The degree of integration of ASS with community hospital teams was much stronger now than last year.
- Councillors spoke about how those with learning difficulties living in the community were a vulnerable group who required additional support to cope with Covid-19. In reply to questions it was pointed out that contact had been maintained through over 12,000 calls to individual service users, their families and day care providers.
- Officers explained some of the imaginative ways used to maintain contact with those with learning and mental health difficulties.
- The sustainability and financial resilience of providers was a significant challenge as ASS managed going into winter.
- In reply to questions, Officers said that specific information about how the care market had made use of inspection control money (in terms of sick pay etc) was available on request at the end of the meeting. There was a good take up of inspection control money in Norfolk. The Cabinet Member added that the County Council regarded forwarding this money to care providers as quickly as possible a high priority.
- Councillors spoke about the importance of supporting vulnerable people with advocacy issues.
- The work of ASS with care home providers on encouraging different ways of providing distant support and encouraging businesses to interpret the guidelines in imaginative ways was explained to the Committee.

- Councillors spoke about how the supported housing environment was an area where the County Council should have a bigger role particularly where there were two or more people shielding in one home which presented care providers with difficulties.
- The use of IT and getting people together in non-vulnerable environments was an important issue.
- It was pointed out that furloughed day centres drivers employed by NORSE were missed in terms of their interaction with the people they assisted.
- The impact on independence and wellbeing of not being picked up to do shopping and related tasks could have a long-term impact on welfare and mental health. Only so much could be done by way of telephone calls.
- The fragility of the work force whether they worked for the County Council or for other provider organisations was an issue that needed to be carefully monitored. The pandemic meant that huge pressures were building in the system, care providers were working flat out and everything that could be done needed to be done to support them.
- The Council had access to over 900 volunteers who were willing to help assist the vulnerable. The Council was looking at new and innovative ways to make use of this resource.
- A report on support for Vulnerable People in our Communities was due to be presented to Cabinet. The Chair suggested that the Committee should wait to see what was contained in that report before deciding how to take this matter further.

### 9.3 **RESOLVED**

- 1. That Scrutiny Committee note the report.**
- 2. That Scrutiny Committee note Cabinet planned to receive a report on winter resilience planning at its October meeting that picked up on Adult Social Services issues. The Scrutiny Committee would wait to see what was contained in that report before deciding how it wished to take the issue of support for vulnerable people in our communities further.**

## 10 **Strategic and Financial Planning 2021-22**

- 10.1 The Committee received a report by the Executive Director of Finance and Commercial Services and the Executive Director of Strategy and Governance about the development of the 2021-22 Budget. The report supported the Committee's scrutiny of the Council's process for developing the 2021-22 Budget, and in particular represented an opportunity for the Committee to consider the new budget proposals identified to date, the approach to public consultation, and the further actions required to deliver a balanced budget for the year.
- 10.2 Cllr Andrew Jamieson (Cabinet Member for Finance) in introducing the report said that saving proposals to aid in closing the budget gap would be presented to Cabinet in December 2020.
- 10.3 The issues that were discussed included the following:
- There was currently a £15 m budget gap.

- The scale of the budget gap to be closed remained subject to considerable uncertainty and Covid-19 related costs this year would have long term implications.
- A further round of budget challenge would be undertaken in December 2020 to bring budget proposals to Cabinet in February 2021.
- The budget setting timetable was set out on page 79 of the agenda.
- Table 12 on ages 68 and 69 set out the council tax assumptions which were subject to the government settlement in December 2020.
- The Executive Director said that the Council's budget planning was robust and reserves were adequate to meet any shortfall.
- Table 2 of the report set out changes to existing planned savings and gave an indication of the deliverability of the existing savings proposals.
- The Administration was using savings from technology to transform the way in which the council met its savings targets.
- The chair said that he would have liked to have seen the Council explain more clearly the means by which it would meet its budget targets as a result of Covid-19.
- It was pointed out that the way in which the Council met its savings targets was being accelerated by Covid-19 and the use of IT which was also accelerating savings from travel costs across the Council as a whole.
- The Council was seeking a steer from the government as to what specific Covid-19 related costs it would continue to fund.
- The Council was consolidating its estate and reviewing its asset management strategy.
- Consultation proposals would be published shortly with an easy read version and include two specific proposals (a reduction in opening hours at recycling centres and a reduction in grass cutting ).
- If any proposals that were part of budget stage 3 required specific consultation this would be done at the appropriate time.
- It was noted that the County Council awaited a Government announcement about the White Paper on Adult Social Care.
- The full year savings in Childrens Services from the "Wrong Door" initiative with support from North Yorkshire were not yet fully quantifiable.
- The equality impact assessment had yet to be published because it related to the results of the consultation process. It was not possible to publish a "rolling" equality impact assessment.
- Councillors asked for details regarding staffing implications of the savings proposals to be brought to the Committee,

#### 10.4 **RESOLVED**

##### **That the Committee:**

- 1. Note the Strategic and Financial Planning report to 5 October 2020 Cabinet (Appendix 1 to the report) including: a. the savings proposals developed to date to support the setting of a balanced budget for 2021-22; b. the planned next steps in the budget process for 2021-22 including the approach to public consultation and the development of further saving proposals; and c. the key areas of risk and uncertainty relating to the 2021-22 Budget.**
- 2. Ask for a further report setting out the implications for Department**

**budgets to be brought to the next meeting (for which there was not sufficient time to consider at this meeting) and for that report to consider staffing implications. It was suggested that to aid the discussion and allow the Cabinet Member to have early sight of any areas for scrutiny that early questions be sought of Councillors in advance of the next meeting.**

**11. Scrutiny Committee Forward Work Programme**

11.1 The Committee received a draft of the forward work programme.

**11.2 RESOLVED**

**That the Scrutiny Committee agree the forward work programme as set out in a report by the Executive Director of Strategy and Governance subject to the Chair and Vice-Chair agreeing on how they wished to see Covid-19 related issues brought forward at future meetings and a report to the next meeting on the affects of Covid-19 on public transport and an update on developments regarding the Repton property company.**

The meeting concluded at 14:20

**Chair**

Further to item 6

**Local member question for Scrutiny Committee on 21 October 2020 from Cllr S Squire**

***Given that tourism contributes such a large amount to Norfolk's economy, and that Covid cases in Norfolk are generally a lot lower than elsewhere in the Country, would it therefore be wise for the Council to advise those with second homes or thinking of travelling to Norfolk during half term from outside the County, to postpone their visit to help protect Norfolk and our high number of vulnerable residents at this time, while encouraging local people to stay within Norfolk and to support our local businesses through this difficult time.***

**Answer by the Executive Director for Community and Environmental Services:**

As part of our ongoing strategy for tourism, all Norfolk partners continue to work closely to avoid differing approaches or messaging for different parts of the county. At a meeting with all Norfolk Destination Management Organisations (DMOs) last week, partners agreed to pause Stage 2 of the *Undiscovered England* Campaign until after half term and only resume if and when partners agree it is appropriate to do so. Visit East of England, Visit Norfolk and Visit Suffolk are all actively promoting the message that if you are in a Tier Three area, please do NOT come to the region. For potential visitors from Tier Two, partners are neither encouraging or discouraging visits as, under current Government legislation, visitors are legally allowed to travel at this time. However, tourism partners including NCC continue to stress that any

visitors, both from within Norfolk or beyond, must abide by all restrictions and use consideration and common sense at all times. Overall, and following the significant investment made during the summer, our primary message continues to be that health and safety for all is the paramount concern. We are also encouraging Norfolk residents to enjoy days out on their doorstep rather than travel large distances.

With significant support from the Norfolk Strategic Fund, Norfolk County Council has been working closely with District Councils, Visit East of England and local Destination Management Organisations (DMOs) to ensure that Norfolk is as safe a place as possible to visit for tourists from beyond the County, as well as for Norfolk residents. Work over the summer and early autumn has focused on increased levels of hygiene in key public locations, safety measures to assist with social distancing, and providing clear information to visitors both before they set off on their visit and once they arrive. This work has supported the VisitBritain Know Before You Go campaign which contains essential advice around planning a break and helps consumers find businesses who have secured the We're Good to Go industry standard and consumer mark, designed to demonstrate that they are adhering to the respective Government and public health guidance, have carried out a Covid-19 risk assessment, and have the required processes in place. In this work, Norfolk County Council has been following Government guidance around tourism, and is continuing to work closely with key partners, including DCMS and VisitBritain/VisitEngland.

Supplementary Question:

***There seems to be such a wide variance between hospitality premises across the county of what covid measures they have put in place to keep customers safe and whether they enforce them, with some districts visiting premises to check and some not. What measures should districts be taking to ensure safety at premises and how can people report any issues they have come across.***

**Answer by the Executive Director for Community and Environmental Services:**

This is a matter for our district council colleagues rather than the county council.

For information, each hospitality premises is required to undertake a covid-19 secure risk assessment in line with government guidance. As with other health and safety requirements, each risk assessment will take account of the business' own physical layout and working practices and therefore businesses may adopt varying practices to achieve the same aim of keeping customers and staff safe.

The police, seven local authorities and the county council Trading Standards Service have a Norfolk enforcement protocol on coronavirus restrictions and regularly share intelligence and best practice on enforcement approaches. If people have concerns about the practices adopted in a particular venue, they can familiarise themselves with the guidance provided at [www.gov.uk/guidance/working-safely-during-coronavirus-covid-19](http://www.gov.uk/guidance/working-safely-during-coronavirus-covid-19) and, if appropriate, they can refer the matter to the district council in whose area the venue is located or they can report their concerns to Trading Standards via the Citizens Advice Consumer Helpline via [www.citizensadvice.org.uk/consumer/get-more-help/if-you-need-more-help-about-a-consumer-issue/](http://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/consumer/get-more-help/if-you-need-more-help-about-a-consumer-issue/) or 0808 223 1133.



<b>Decision making report title:</b>	<b>Norfolk’s Economic Recovery – joint work by the County Council and Local Enterprise Partnership to support businesses</b>
<b>Date of meeting:</b>	<b>18 November 2020</b>
<b>Responsible Cabinet Member:</b>	<b>Cllr Graham Plant (Cabinet Member for Growing the Economy)</b>
<b>Responsible Director:</b>	<b>Tom McCabe, Executive Director Community and Environmental Services</b>

## Introduction

Scrutiny Committee occasionally reviews the work the Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) undertakes, in collaboration with the County Council. The Committee has asked to explore our joint response to the pandemic, with the CEO of the LEP and the Council’s Director of Growth and Development in attendance at the meeting. The Committee wished to explore five areas:

- a) The impact of Covid19 on the Norfolk economy over the last six months
- b) What support there has been for local jobs and the local economy
- c) Transport issues
- d) What lessons have been learnt
- e) What plans are in place for the Norfolk economy

Infrastructure and Development Committee will consider a detailed report on the impact of the pandemic and steps being taken to address it at their meeting on 11 November - an extract from that report is attached. This report therefore focuses on points c), d) and e).

## Executive Summary

**Transport Issues:** At the start of lockdown passenger numbers on public transport fell sharply; local bus operators responded by scaling back services to about 20% of pre-COVID levels. Public transport services are now running at 90-100% of pre-COVID service levels, but passenger numbers remain at about 45-55% of previous levels. Financial support from the government’s COVID-19 Bus Services Support Grant has so far protected bus companies from the full financial impact, but there remain concerns that the support will end while passenger numbers remain low.

**Lessons learned:** While the pandemic has had a number of negative impacts, it has also had some positive ones. Meetings involving time and cost to travel now happen by video-conferencing, increasing staff effectiveness and engagement with busy businesses. The pandemic has caused both businesses and individuals to reconsider expensive urban office locations, presenting an opportunity to attract businesses and highly skilled staff to Norfolk and Suffolk. A further benefit has been the strengthened working with district and LEP colleagues, particularly in light of the outbreaks in local meat processing factories, with virtual meetings convened with companies, recruitment agencies and Public Health to address the risks and provide support.

**Plans in place:** the umbrella framework is the [Restart Plan](#) for Norfolk and Suffolk, endorsed by the Council at 6 July Cabinet, along with the County Council’s [Delivery Plan](#), which outlines our contribution to it. Sectoral and thematic recovery plans also exist or are being developed for key sectors such as Tourism and Energy and the Workforce. Support

for businesses is also evolving in line with their new needs, including webinars to highlight the support available and explore technology solutions to help do more business online.

The Chief Executive of the Local Enterprise Partnership will attend the meeting and Members may wish to pose questions to him, along with the Cabinet Member and officers, based on the content of this report.

## **Recommendation**

### **1. To consider and comment on the information and update set out in the report.**

## **1. Background and Purpose**

**1.1.** Since March this year, the Norfolk economy – as with the rest of the country – has been impacted hard by Covid-19. Scrutiny Committee has requested this report on the joint work of the Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) and the County Council, covering five areas:

- a) The impact of Covid19 on the Norfolk economy over the last six months
- b) What support there has been for local jobs and the local economy
- c) Transport Issues
- d) What lessons have been learnt
- e) What plans are in place for the Norfolk economy

Infrastructure and Development Committee considered a detailed update on the Norfolk economy at their 11 November 2020 meeting. An extract from this report is attached at Appendix A and covers off scrutiny areas a) and b).

This report therefore focuses on responses to scrutiny areas c), d) and e).

## **2. Responses to scrutiny questions**

### **2.1. Transport Issues (scrutiny area c)**

**2.1.1** At the start of lockdown passenger numbers on public transport fell sharply; local bus operators responded by scaling back services to about 20% of pre-COVID levels in a move to save costs.

Services for key workers were prioritised. Those services that operated kept passengers distanced by 2m, meaning that buses could only carry up to 25% of the normal passenger load. This did not impact most services as so few people were travelling, but the low passenger numbers did mean significant income loss for operators.

As lockdown restrictions eased operators increased their services to about 50% of pre-COVID levels, matching increasing passenger demand and affording them access to government relief funding. The revised 1m+ distancing rule, together with mandatory face coverings for public transport, allowed those services running to do so at just under 50% of normal capacity.

Public transport services are now running at 90-100% of pre-COVID service levels, but passenger numbers remain at about 45-55% of pre-COVID levels. This is because people are not travelling as much, with many people working



from home, others are still nervous about using public transport and also the 1m+ social distance requirements in place.

Due to the decrease in passenger numbers and therefore loss of revenue, operators can continue to claim for COVID-19 Bus Services Support Grant ('CBSSG') from central government.

As well as accessing bus companies accessing CBSSG relief finding direct from the government, Norfolk County Council has also been able to claim local authority CBSSG for those services that we contract in and support financially. So far, we have been able to distribute £1.1m to bus operators for the period April to August 2020 and have are set to distribute a further £0.7m to operators for the 8-week period between 4 August to 28 September 2020. A further £0.7m has been requested for the period from 28 September to 23 November and the Department for Transport (DfT) have indicated that we are likely to get this. In addition to the financial support, NCC have run a media campaign to encourage people to use public transport, highlighting the measures that operators have put in place to ensure it is COVID-safe.

With the CBSSG financial support that DfT have committed to so far, bus operators have reported that they can continue to run their services for the time being. The biggest concern is when the financial support stops: if people are still working from home and still nervous about travelling, there are likely to still be fewer passengers travelling and a consequential revenue shortfall, even if capacity restrictions are relaxed. It will be at this point that operators will need to review their services and could start to withdraw, leaving gaps for NCC to fill, which will not be possible without additional funding.

## **2.2. Lessons learned (scrutiny area d)**

2.2.1. The pandemic has brought out both the worst, but also the best in communities, with panic-buying and stockpiling of long-life supplies depriving busy key workers of products on supermarket shelves, but also armies of community volunteers mobilising to help their communities, sourcing and delivering food and medicines to those who were shielding. This is a network that could be mobilised again if the need arises.

The County Council and LEP were heavily involved in those early efforts and all Council services are reviewing their winter plans, in case staff need to be again diverted to support our communities. Enhancing support for the voluntary and community sector is a key element of the Restart Plan.

2.2.2. Our private sector has also shown responsiveness, agility and creative thinking, with, for example, gin businesses turning their production lines to hand sanitiser in the early days of the pandemic and manufacturing SMEs producing PPE visors for the health and social care sector. We were encouraged to see many innovations from the business base during this period, which will boost productivity. The pandemic has also made stronger the links between the LEP, local authorities and our businesses. A good example of this was seen with the PPE portal on the LEP website connecting supply and demand.

Business intelligence returns have been submitted weekly from New Anglia LEP and Growth Hub to local authorities, central government, and local MPs

throughout the crisis. A trends timeline is also pulled together, which shows the week-on-week business trends and needs of business, as we move through the crisis. It additionally includes information on when government support was introduced, and the number of Covid-19 enquiries New Anglia Growth Hub received throughout, so providing insights around the impact of the support and when businesses have sought advice.

A key learning from the anecdotal intelligence has been around access to finance. Many businesses have highlighted their struggles in accessing financial support from their banks and access to specific support packages, eg company directors, local zoos, etc. Additional intelligence has suggested that some start-ups and entrepreneurs are struggling to set up a new business bank account, in light of the increased demand banks have seen for new business bank accounts to access funds such as the Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme, given these have broadly been given to customers of participating banks.

- 2.2.3. Despite only accounting for a proportion of jobs that can be carried out working from home, remote-working has accelerated the pace of changes that were already under way. Staff can work remotely, taking calls on their laptops and dialling into meetings, via Zoom and Teams, rather than spending excess time and money travelling to meetings. We anticipate a shift towards more flexible and home working, but that will be very different from the conditions we are currently working with. It is expected that a large number of meetings will remain remote, even once the pandemic is under control, as removing the need to physically travel to all meetings has increased flexibility and given staff additional time in their day for other work.
- 2.2.4. The anecdotal intelligence received informs us that people and businesses are rethinking their need for expensive inner city residential and business locations, now that many staff are able to work from anywhere. This presents an opportunity to attract more businesses and highly skilled people to Norfolk and Suffolk and we are working with the LEP and Norfolk Chamber to develop a Norfolk Knowledge Hub, a digital platform to aggregate Norfolk's offer and attract what we need. This is supported by a 'Norfolk Plc' member working group, which includes the Chamber Chief Executive and New Anglia Head of Inward Investment.
- 2.2.5. Not surprisingly, growing online working has increased the focus on, and need for, robust digital connectivity, with broadband now widely regarded as the 'fourth utility'. We are working with our ICT colleagues to identify remaining 'not spots' and how to tackle them, as well as how to boost the uptake of fibre broadband among businesses.
- 2.2.6. While traffic volumes have increased again after the initial lockdown period, which saw many more people walking and cycling, we need to keep up the emphasis on this modal shift, not least to help meet local and national CO<sup>2</sup> reduction strategies. Increased remote working will also mitigate against the rise in emissions, as workers travel less.
- 2.2.7. We have also learned a lot in a short space of time about how the virus spreads in environments like the meat processing industry. Responding to specific outbreaks of varying sizes at sites in the county and on the Suffolk border (at Banham Poultry, Bernard Matthews and Cranswick), the County Council, District Councils, LEP, Public Health England, Food Standards Agency and DEFRA have worked jointly with local food producers and the

major recruitment agencies to make clear their public health responsibilities, but also learn from their experience and share best practice. For example, several agencies require staff to complete a questionnaire before engagement, with key information about their household, countries recently visited etc. Examples of these forms are being shared. If rolled out to all agencies, this will be an important tool in local track and trace activity.

There has been a great deal of work done by Council staff around prevention and outbreak control. Through the Business and Public Venues workstream, which New Anglia LEP attends, the focus has been on getting a business toolkit and specific communications messaging to businesses, to increase their resilience and business confidence during the pandemic, whilst also providing key information on who they need to contact in the event of an outbreak. This work is ever- evolving, as we learn the lessons of specific businesses, sectors and outbreaks locally and nationally.

## **2.3. Plans in place for the local economy (scrutiny area e)**

- 2.3.1. The New Anglia Recovery [Restart Plan](#), is the umbrella framework for the recovery in Norfolk and Suffolk and was co-produced, at pace, with local authorities. This is now being reviewed for longer term interventions and will evolve into a longer term 'Renew' Plan, co-produced with Government.

The alliance of partners, from local authorities and the New Anglia Growth Hub, to business representative organisations and trade bodies, have made significant progress on the actions set out in the Restart plan. A progress report will be published at the end of November.

- 2.3.2. Sectoral and thematic recovery delivery plans have also been produced (eg Tourism) or will shortly be completed (eg Energy, Clean Growth, Inward Investment).

The Inward Investment Delivery Plan is key to the recovery, not just due to the pandemic, but also the implications of Brexit for the local economy. The Plan will be reviewed by the LEP Board on 25 November.

- 2.3.3. New Anglia LEP and Growth Hub are working in partnership with local authorities to support businesses across Norfolk with their preparations for the end of the EU exit transition period. The LEP has pulled together a business script, similar to the one produced on Covid-19, for local partners engaging with businesses, to ensure they have the latest information from government on a wide range of business issues.

A 'no deal' exit is likely to exacerbate the effect of Covid-19 on the local and national economy. Even if there is a deal, the UK will no longer be a member of the Single Market or Customs Union, so businesses from all sectors will need to implement new changes to adapt. It is likely to have a sectoral and regional impact, with sectors such as agriculture, hospitality and tourism hit, given both the effect of the UK's exit from the EU and the Covid-19 impact.

Following the end of the transition period, there will be a vital role for local partners to play around boosting our share of global exports. There will be new opportunities for businesses and there will be a role to support businesses through this as they get used to new systems, eg customs declarations, and understand which markets may best fit their products/services.

Additionally, the pandemic has offered new ways of doing business globally. We have already seen the energy sector conduct a virtual trade mission with the Virginia Beach region in the US and we can expect to see more of this type of activity moving forward – building on exciting opportunities for our key sectors around the world.

### **3. Financial Implications**

- 3.1. No financial implications as a direct result of this report. Appendices A and B include details of the funds secured and distributed to tackle the pandemic.

### **4. Resource Implications**

#### **4.1. Staff:**

None as a direct result of this report. As mentioned above, staff from local authorities and the LEP have aligned in regular meetings tacking specific aspects of the recovery, to maximise the impact and pace of interventions. This has meant prioritising the pandemic response over some business as usual activity.

#### **4.2. Property:**

None as a direct result of this report.

#### **4.3. IT:**

None as a direct result of this report.

### **5. Other Implications**

#### **5.1. Legal Implications**

None as a direct result of this report.

#### **5.2. Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) (this must be included)**

None as a direct result of this report. Individual projects and programmes targeting the recovery each consider the needs of groups with protected characteristics when targeting their interventions.

### **6. Risk Implications/Assessment**

- 6.1. The risks posed by the pandemic to the Norfolk economy are considerable. The report outcomes some of the activity taken, at pace, to mitigate those risks, such as the:

- the supply of personal protective equipment
- the creation of a vacancy portal on the LEP website
- the establishment of a strategic fund to address businesses immediate recovery needs

Both the Council and LEP have risk registers in place, which include the risks to the local economy of the pandemic.

### **7. Recommendation**

- 7.1. **1. To consider and comment on the information and update set out in the report.**

## 8. Background Papers

- 8.1. The New Anglia Restart Plan and Norfolk County Council Covid19 Delivery Plan can be found at:

<https://www.norfolk.gov.uk/care-support-and-health/health-and-wellbeing/adults-health/coronavirus/business-support/support-for-businesses/norfolk-delivery-plan>

### Officer Contact

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

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

## Appendix A: extract from 11 November 2020 Infrastructure and Development Committee report on the current position of the Norfolk economy

This extract covers off:

- Scrutiny area a): impact of Covid-19 on the Norfolk economy, in section A1
- Scrutiny area b): what support there has been for local jobs and the local economy, in section A2.

### A1. National and Local Economic Snapshot – scrutiny area a): impact of Covid-19 on the Norfolk economy

#### a) Economic Contraction

The economy contracted sharply from March to May 2020, with some recovery since June.

The national economy contracted by 20.4% in Q2 2020 (April to June). The economy had already contracted by 2.2% in Q1 (January to March) 2020.

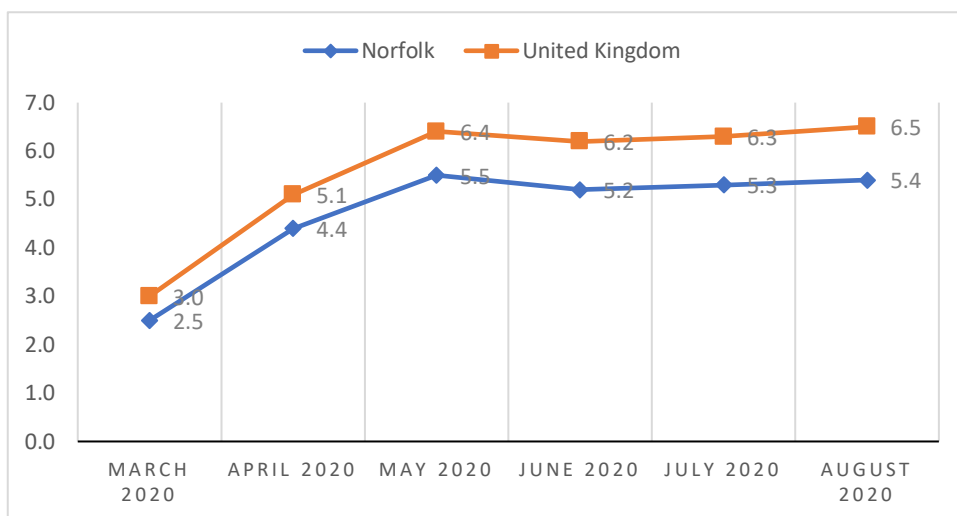
Activity did begin to recover in June, with the economy growing by 8.7% in June, but this was not enough to recover the output lost in April and May. The economy grew 6.6% in July 2020 (source: Office of National Statistics, 'ONS'), the latest data available at the time of writing.

Equivalent statistics at county or regional level are not yet available, however there is every indication that Norfolk's GDP has followed the national trend.

#### b) Norfolk Job Figures and Claimant Counts

Claimant count rates in Norfolk climbed significantly in April and May and stabilised in June, following the national trend (Figure 1). However, the rates did begin to climb again in July and August, showing that the impact of COVID-19 and the national lockdown is a long-term challenge and not a just a short-term shock to the economy.

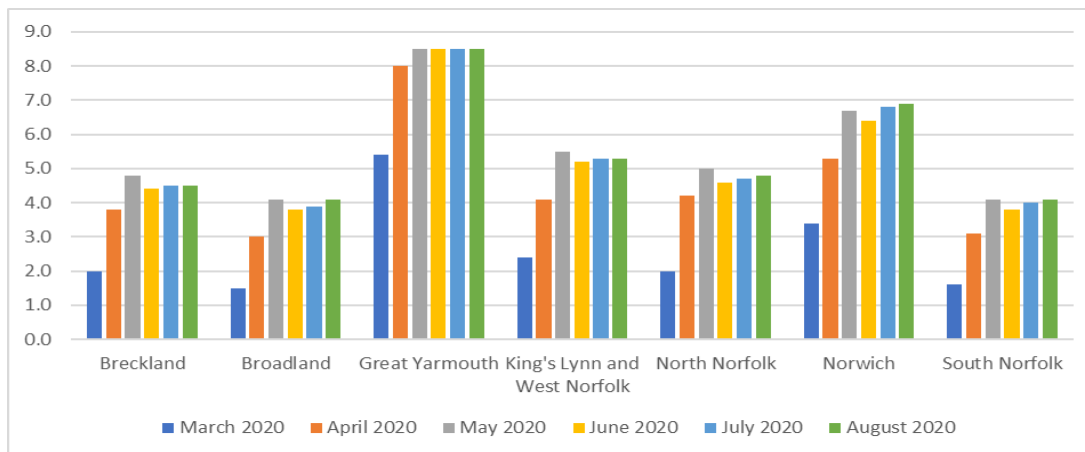
**Figure 1: Claimant Count Rates in Norfolk and the UK: March to August 2020**



Source: ONS

The growth in the number of job seekers was seen in every district in Norfolk, especially in April and May. March is shown as the baseline in Figure 2.

**Figure 2: Claimant Count Rates by District: March to August 2020 (%)**



Source: ONS

### c) Furloughing

The government announced the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (CJRS) on 20 March 2020. CJRS supported employers through the COVID-19 period and ended on the 31 October 2020. Employers were able to claim CJRS support for employees furloughed with financial support of up to 80% of their employees' salary. This support was capped at £2,500 per month per employee.

The proportion of employees furloughed in each sector during the lifetime of programme gives an indication of which sectors were under the most pressure at any time.

As of October 2020, the latest furloughing figures available are national figures for August 2020 (ONS). This data showed three sectors still had double-digit furloughing rates in August, namely:

- Arts, Entertainment and Recreation (41%)
- Accommodation/ hospitality (29%)
- Transportation and Storage (16%)

These sectors can be understood to still have been very fragile in August and not to have been able to recover as well as others. The closing of the full furloughing programme at the end of October may put additional stress on these sectors and the jobs that rely on them.

These figures illustrate how the pandemic has had a particularly major economic and structural impact across the whole of Norfolk's arts and cultural sector with most venues closed since March, revenue streams and incomes frozen, freelance contracts cancelled and postponed, festivals and public programmes cancelled, ability to fundraise greatly curtailed, large numbers of staff furloughed and at growing risk of redundancy and ongoing uncertainty about the ability to develop financially viable operational plans and public programmes in the context of ongoing social distancing measures.

Additionally, it is possible that many venues may only be able to operate at around 30% capacity when they are able to fully re-open. The restoration of public confidence in returning to cultural venues and events in the context of the ongoing pandemic is also an ongoing issue.

**Regional** ONS furloughing statistics for July 2020 give a good indication of which sectors contracted the most this year (Table 1) in our region. The sectors hit hardest in the region during July:

- accommodation & food services, with 76% furloughed
- arts and culture – 69%
- construction – 58%
- retail – 40% and
- manufacturing 38%

While construction, retail and manufacturing have since reduced their furloughing rates to single digits, accommodation & food services and arts and culture retain double-digit furloughing rates and so are still particularly fragile.

#### d) Apprenticeships

By April 2020, apprenticeship starts had already begun to fall in England and Norfolk. By July, starts were over 47% down in England (figures for Norfolk not yet known).

**Table 1: Apprentice Start in Norfolk and England**

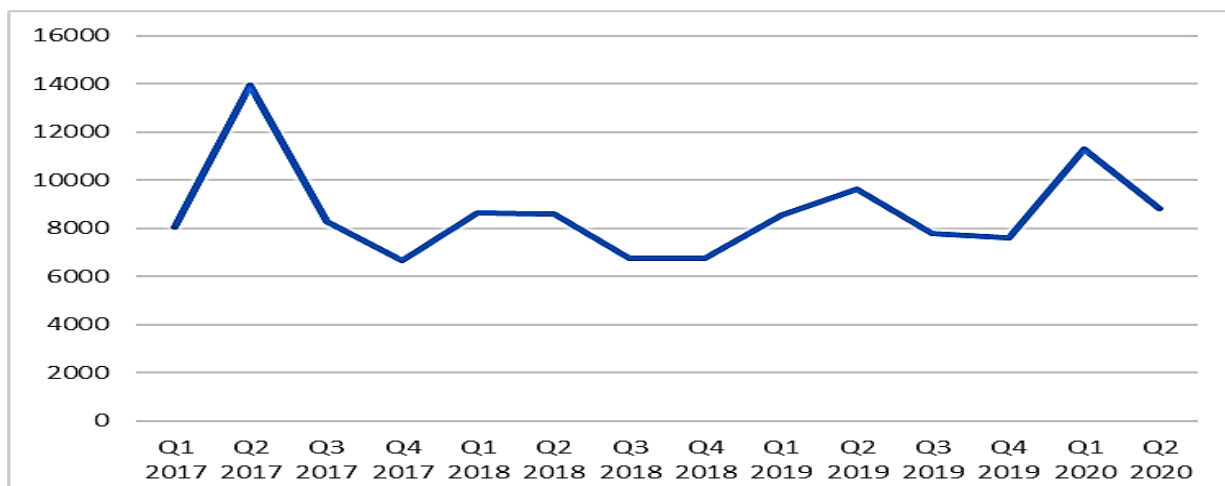
All starts	2019-20 Q3 Cumulative Starts	2018-19 Q3 Cumulative Starts	Difference	Percentage Change
Norfolk	4210	4740	-530	-11.18%
England	271890	311170	-39280	-12.62%

Our response to this particular challenge is summarised in section A2.

#### e) Business Data

The number of business closures, or ‘deaths’, in the East of England in Quarter 2 (Apr to June) 2020 was, unexpectantly, lower than the average in Quarter 2 of the past three years (Figure 3). From this data at least, business closures do not appear to have yet increased as a result of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic; this is likely because of the time it takes for a business to close, delays in the reporting process and, particularly, government support for businesses.

**Figure 3: Business deaths: East of England**



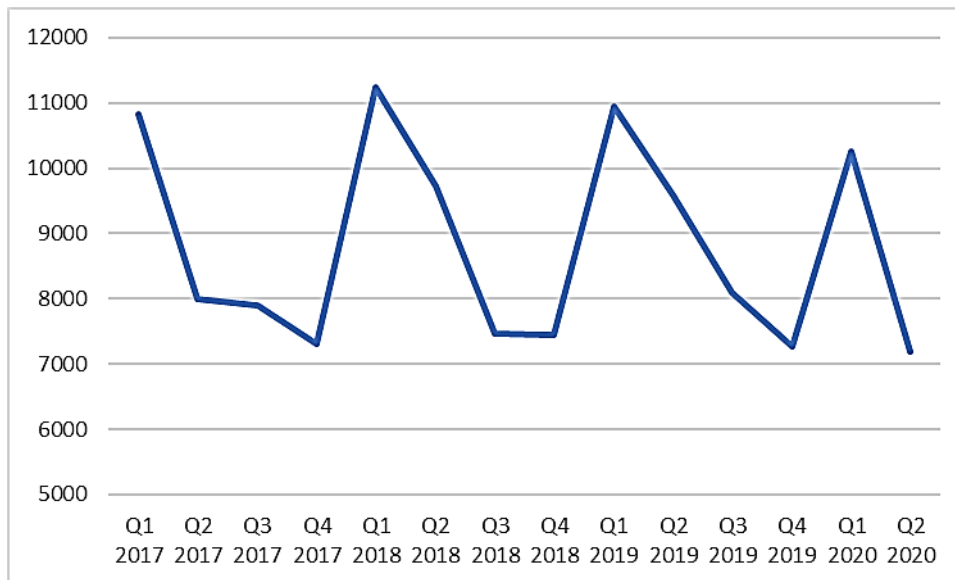
Source: Business Demography, Quarterly Experimental Statistics, ONS



The number of new businesses, or 'births', in the East of England in Quarter 2 2020 was lower than in Quarter 2 of the past three years.

Business creations tend to experience shorter lags than business closures, so the slowdown in Quarter 2 2020 relative to previous years is more likely to be a result of the coronavirus pandemic as well (the ONS also reports a slowdown in the processing of new businesses).

**Figure 4: Business births, breakdown by region, counts: East of England**



In Norfolk, it is possible then that we may see business closures increase and 'catch up' with other indicators. Business starts in the region are already known to be fallen; it is too early to say whether they will bounce back or remain subdued for some time yet.

**A2. County Council Recovery Work in conjunction with New Anglia – scrutiny area b): what support there has been for local jobs and the local economy**

The County Council has worked closely with New Anglia Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) and district colleagues from the outset of the pandemic response.

From the beginning of the 'lockdown' period, the County Council worked with New Anglia LEP to help local businesses source PPE (personal protective equipment). This evolved into a PPE portal on the LEP website, to match businesses offering equipment to those that need it and soon hosted over 900 products on it. Officers helped with food and medicine distribution and eight Growth and Development staff were seconded to the County Council's customer service centre to coordinate assistance to vulnerable people.

As the emphasis moved to recovery, we produced a **Norfolk Delivery Plan** at pace, which is our contribution to [the Norfolk and Suffolk Covid-19 Economic Recovery Restart Plan](#), which were instrumental in writing. The Norfolk Delivery Plan adopted by the Council on 06 July. Our [Norfolk Delivery Plan](#) to:

- Help as many businesses as possible to survive, and as many people as possible to stay in work or secure alternative work or training, with a strong focus on social inclusion
- Promote the county as place that is open for business and safe to live, work and visit.
- Focus on local markets and supply chains
- Drive the identification, development and promotion of clean growth opportunities

- Retain and build on the environmental benefits arising from the pandemic
- Creation of a Norfolk Strategic Fund to accelerate delivery

With this Plan as our framework, Norfolk County Council has been quick to respond to the challenges posed by the pandemic and active in bringing forward projects, funds and initiatives to kickstart the recovery, equip our people and shape our places for the post-COVID economy. An overview of the projects progressing and the means by which we have been able to progress them so quickly is given here. Our response is presented here under the three themes: Business, People and Infrastructure.

## **a) Business**

### **Tourism Sector Support Package**

Tourism is a vital sector for Norfolk, worth an estimated £3.37bn a year (Source: Destination Research) and this is reflected in the objectives of our Norfolk Delivery Plan. As such, helping businesses reopen and adapt to the circumstances and reassuring people that might wish to visit has been of paramount importance to our response.

On 17 July, Norfolk Leaders agreed to allocate £2.225m from the Norfolk Strategic Fund to the Tourism Sector Support Package.

Each district council has their own allocations of the fund and are busy distributing their grants to businesses in bespoke small grants programmes. For example, Breckland has received 28 application for business adaption grants, North Norfolk is planning a scheme to fund experiences that will extend the autumn/winter seasons and King's Lynn and West Norfolk has been providing more outdoor tables and chairs, as well as cycle facilities. Our tourism areas are reporting increased numbers of visitors at this time of year, as people take delayed holidays and seek out less crowded destinations. The Chancellor also announced that the reduced rate VAT period has been extended to 31 March 2021 (the initial announcement covered a six-month period to 12 January 2021).

Visit East of England (VEE) bid successfully to the Cabinet Office for Unexplored England, securing a £350k collaborative project to extend the tourism season through the rest of 2020 and to build demand for 2021 through a coalition of every district in Norfolk and Suffolk and, for the first time ever, a merging of Visit Suffolk and Visit Norfolk marketing budgets.

The package supports the ongoing work being undertaken at a regional and national level with VisitBritain and Visit England in seeking to become a Tourism Zone and to develop a sustainable, year-round visitor offer. Immediate activity includes improving the presentation, cleanliness and hygiene of key locations and communication with visitors in advance and, for example through marshalling.

### **Getting Building Fund**

It is more important than ever to progress large projects, which contribute to restoring business confidence as directed in the Norfolk Delivery Plan. At short notice, capital projects with combined value of over £41m were submitted to the Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government (MHCLG) following the announcement of a Getting Building Fund in June. The fund was open to projects that could be delivered within 18 months and included both new and projects brought forward.

New Anglia Local Enterprise Partnership allocated £16.988m, of the £32m awarded to Norfolk and Suffolk by MHCLG, to seven projects in Norfolk, as shown in the table below:

**Table 2: Norfolk Projects in receipt of the Getting Building Fund**

Project	Lead Authority	Total GBF Contribution
Great Yarmouth Operations & Maintenance Campus	Great Yarmouth	£6m
Resilience and Recovery Fund (Norfolk share)	New Anglia LEP	£3.624m
Food Innovation Centre	Broadland District Council	£2.7m
Great Yarmouth Strategic Seafront Regeneration: water and leisure visitor attraction	Great Yarmouth Borough Council	£2.5m
Local Full Fibre Networks	Norfolk County Council	£2.056m
North Walsham Town Centre Revitalisation	North Norfolk DC	£1.17m
Enterprise Zone Accelerator Fund	Norfolk	£0.75m

### **New Anglia Business Resilience and Recovery Scheme**

With a successful bid to the Getting Building Fund in June, the Business Resilience and Recovery Scheme was established to support businesses during the COVID-19 pandemic and recovery. It provides grants to support short-term business resilience projects and longer-term recovery and diversification projects.

The programme has a total of £6.124m of available funding and awarded: £2.890m has been awarded to date to 75 projects, with the majority going to Norfolk firms: 45 Norfolk projects have been approved; £1,689,001 grant funding awarded to Norfolk businesses, of which £857,543 of grant funding has already been claimed.

### **Recovery Programmes Underway**

The Council's Growth and Development team has also launched a number of initiatives to directly aid the recovery, focussing on business development:

**Table 3: Summary of Business Development Projects**

Supply chain - Agri-Food Research Project	Research into the Agri-food sector to provide greater understanding and evidence of areas of specialism, gaps or weak points, relationships and opportunities. The final version of the report will be available in October.
Innovation Grant Mentoring Project	Support for businesses to bid for innovation funding.
GO Digital East	A programme of business support to help businesses to do more with digital and improve productivity. Scheduled to launch in the Autumn.
Supply chain development	Workshops supporting digital creative companies to engage with offshore energy companies.  A workshop and business diagnostic tool to assist local SMEs in accessing the NCC and wider public sector supply chains is being planned and scheduled to launch in November.

Call4Fish regional support project	Practical post-COVID19 support to fishing, connecting customers with suppliers and rebuilding supply chain
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## Helping Businesses to Digitise

The RISE food and drink conference was held on 23 September to encourage take up of digital technologies by food producers, to improve business productivity and resilience during Covid-19. Over 75 registered attendees and we had a high-quality line up of speakers and was hosted by Norfolk County Council and hosted in partnership with Tech East, New Anglia LEP, Local Flavours and Norfolk Chamber of Commerce.

A **Tech and Tourism webinar** was held in June and shared best practice with tourism businesses adopting the latest tech to help with marketing, sales, footfall and social distancing and improving the visitor experience. This was followed up with a 'deep dive' into search engine optimisation. The webinar attracted 150 attendees with very positive feedback received.

New Anglia LEP's **Restart Festival** saw two days of free and informative sessions delivered to businesses to kickstart and consolidate their recovery from the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic.

## b) People

### Kickstart

The government has introduced a new Kickstart Scheme, a £2bn fund to create high-quality 6-month work placements aimed at those aged 16 to 24 who are on Universal Credit and are deemed to be at risk of long term unemployment.

Funding is available for 100% of the relevant National Minimum Wage for 25 hours a week, plus employer National Insurance contributions and pension contributions. There is also £1,500 per job placement available for setup costs, support and training. Employers will need to be able to offer a minimum of 30 job placements to register directly.

Employers creating fewer than 30 job placements will need to partner with an intermediary organisation who will bring together a partnership arrangement, managing the finances and governance, intermediaries will be able to claim £300 per placement to support this work. The intermediary will need to have

- details of the job placements proposed by the group of employers
- details of their business
- information about the support they plan to offer the young people

The County Council is working alongside New Anglia LEP, the Department for Work and Pensions and other stakeholders to explore how this might best operate strategically across the region, encouraging and supporting employers create a range of opportunities for young people.

### Apprenticeships

**Recruit, Retain, Reward:** This is a grant scheme to drive SME engagement and recruitment of apprentices. The Apprenticeships Norfolk initiative is helping to boost support for non-apprenticeship levy businesses in Norfolk, providing additional funding on top of Govt incentives to recruit apprentices aged 16-24. The programmes will support a minimum of 437 businesses throughout the 18 month project. To date we have 62 successful applications. The

biggest uptake has been in South Norfolk & Broadland and North Norfolk so far. We are also active in other ways to boost apprenticeship numbers:

- Vacancies: we are using our social media channels to help get vacancies filled
- Events: we are supporting a variety of virtual Apprenticeship events aimed at young people to help promote Apprenticeships as a pathway
- Promotion: we are developing a new website to help provide a trusted ‘one stop’ place for our stakeholder to engage with our impartial service; this is due to launch in November 2020 and will be more interactive and have more information than our previous site; aligned with our fresh new branding too, supporting our upcoming campaign #MadeInNorfolk.

### Recovery Programmes Underway

The Council’s Growth and Development team has also launched a number of other initiatives to directly aid the recovery, focussing on people:

**Table 4: Skills Projects**

Project	Summary of Activity
Employer Incentive Training Programme	A delegated grant scheme designed to help businesses to upskill and retain their staff following the pandemic lockdown
Developing Skills Provision – Agri-Food Tech Sector	Intensive engagement with 300 employers and providers, designed to address workforce development needs and better equip the sector with the skills needed for growth
Youth Pledge	Developing opportunities for young people to engage in work-based experience, structured employment activities and sector related learning
Supply Chain Skills Development Fund (Awaiting Approval)	A delegated grant scheme to enhance both the development and delivery of training available to employers to build capacity of key local supply chains.
CHANCES	A locally integrated health and employment service delivering personalised support to 2602 unemployed and inactive people across Norfolk.
Employer Engagement Project	A programme of intensive engagement with 150 smaller employers across the ICT Digital Sector in Norfolk
Gearing up to Grow	Developing transferable, scalable and sustainable offshore wind supply chain model to build the skills and capability of SMEs in the region.

### c) Infrastructure

#### Emergency Active Travel Fund

One of our objectives in the Norfolk Delivery Plan is to retain and build on the environmental benefits arising from the pandemic.

We bid into the Government’s Emergency Active Travel Fund to secure investment and deliver further significant walking and cycling infrastructure: £300k funding from Phase 1 facilitated social distancing measures to help pedestrians and businesses reopen safely. The £2.2m

Phase 2 bid was submitted in August, mainly for cycling improvements – locking in the green opportunities such as reduced car use.

### **Transforming Cities Fund**

Norfolk County Council has received formal confirmation from the Department of Transport (DfT) that a joint bid with the city council and district authorities of Broadland and South Norfolk has been accepted, triggering a combined investment in local infrastructure totalling £59m.

DfT have confirmed Norfolk County Council will receive £32 million from the Transforming Cities Fund.

The funding will deliver vital infrastructure improvements to improve travel times for bus passengers on the most popular transit routes, giving city bus operator, First Eastern Counties, confidence to invest a further £18m in its fleet and local services.

All projects will be delivered through the Transport for Norwich partnership, with an additional £9m being allocated from local council and private contributions.

As part of an earlier phase of the Transforming Cities programme, work has already started on the £2.5m scheme in Tombland (Norwich) to create more pedestrian- and cycle-friendly routes in the area.

### **d) Government Support Measures in Response to COVID-19**

The government introduced a number of measures in response to the Coronavirus to help businesses from March 2020 onwards:

- **Statutory sick pay (SSP) relief package** for SMEs
  - cover up to 2 weeks' SSP per eligible employee who has been off work because of COVID-19 for small and medium businesses (SMEs)
  
- **Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme**
  - All UK employers able to access support to continue paying part of their employees' salary for those that would otherwise have been laid off during this crisis ('furloughing').
  - Originally due to end on 31 October 2020, the scheme has been extended to 31 March 2021.
  
- **Deferring VAT and Income Tax** payments
  - a **12-month business rates holiday** for all retail, hospitality and leisure businesses in England
  - **Small business grant** funding of £10,000 for all business in receipt of small business rate relief or rural rate relief
  - **Grant funding of £25,000 for retail, hospitality and leisure businesses** with property with a rateable value between £15,000 and £51,000
  - The **Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme (CBILS)** offering loans of up to £5 million for SMEs through the British Business Bank, a new lending facility from the Bank of England to help support liquidity among larger firms, helping them bridge coronavirus disruption to their cash flows through loans
  
- **Bounce Back Loan Scheme (BBLS)**

- BBLs is available through a range of British Business Bank accredited lenders and partners. A lender can provide a six-year term loan from £2,000 up to 25% of a business' turnover.
- **Kickstart Scheme**
  - £2 billion fund to create hundreds of thousands of high-quality 6-month work placements, aimed at those aged 16 to 24 who are on Universal Credit and are deemed to be at risk of long-term unemployment.
  - Further details above

## Appendix B: Funds secured and distributed by New Anglia LEP to support businesses between March and September 2020

New Anglia LEP Live Grant Programmes (as at 14/10/20)						
New Anglia LEP grant scheme	Amount & purpose	Grant %	Since		Total	
					Grant value awarded	No. of projects
<b>Growing Business Fund</b>	£25,000 - £500,000 grants	up to 30%	since 2013	<i>Total</i>	<b>1,554,192</b>	<b>11</b>
	Support growth & expansion, new jobs			<i>Norfolk</i>	1,289,301	7
<b>Small Grant Scheme/ERDF</b>	£1,000 - £25,000 grants	up to 30%	since 2016	<i>Total</i>	<b>311,070</b>	<b>33</b>
	Support growth & expansion, new jobs			<i>Norfolk</i>	132,851	17
<b>Growth Through Innovation Fund</b>	£1,000 - £25,000 grants	up to 50%	since 01/04/2020	<i>Total</i>	<b>325,351</b>	<b>20</b>
	Support R&D, Innovation			<i>Norfolk</i>	178,241	12
<b>Business Resilience &amp; Recovery Fund</b>	£25,000 - £50,000 grants	up to 40%	since 27/04/2020	<i>Total</i>	<b>2,977,408</b>	<b>80</b>
	Support recovery during/post Covid			<i>Norfolk</i>	1,776,858	48
<b>BR&amp;R Consultancy</b>	up to ~4,000	100%	since 01/09/2020	<i>Total</i>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
	Support recovery during/post Covid. For consultancy services (1-3 days)			<i>Norfolk</i>	0	0
<b>Visitor Economy Grant Scheme</b>	£1,000 - £3,000 grants	100%	since 01/09/2020	<i>Total</i>	<b>41,919</b>	<b>18</b>
	Support recovery during/post Covid			<i>Norfolk</i>	15,782	8
<b>Wider Economy Grant Scheme</b>	£1,000 - £3,000 grants	100%	since 01/09/2020	<i>Total</i>	<b>56,911</b>	<b>22</b>
	Support recovery during/post Covid			<i>Norfolk</i>	30,773	12
				<b>Norfolk total</b>	<b>3,423,806</b>	<b>104</b>
				<b>Total</b>	<b>5,266,883</b>	<b>184</b>



## Report to Scrutiny Committee

<b>Report title:</b>	<b>NCC response to Covid-19 – initial lessons learned and progress update</b>
<b>Date of meeting:</b>	<b>18 November 2020</b>
<b>Responsible Cabinet Member:</b>	<b>Cllr Andrew Proctor (Leader and Cabinet Member for Governance and Strategy)</b>
<b>Responsible Director:</b>	<b>Head of Paid Service</b>
<b>Is this a key decision?</b>	<b>N/A</b>
<p><b>Actions required</b></p> <p>The Scrutiny Committee is asked to consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the attached Cabinet report and presentation in the meeting updating them on progress to date.</li> <li>whether there are any issues for further scrutiny at a future meeting, focusing on any new and significant lessons learnt that could be fed into any current emergency planning and issues for longer term recovery planning.</li> </ul>	

### 1. Background and Purpose

- 1.1. Since 27 May 2020 Scrutiny Committee has been considering a programme of scrutiny regarding the County Council's response to COVID 19. At its meeting on 2 November Cabinet received a report updating them on progress made against the lessons learnt plan agreed in August 2020.
- 1.2. As part of the Scrutiny Committee's ongoing programme of scrutiny the Chair and Vice Chair have agreed to consider this update report (attached at Appendix A) to support them in their consideration of future work around the County Council's response to COVID 19.
- 1.3. The situation regarding COVID is ever changing and since Cabinet considered the attached report the Country has entered a second period of restrictions. The Chair and Vice Chair have therefore agreed that in order that the Committee can receive the most up to date information that Officers will provide a presentation within the meeting. The presentation will cover:
  - Update on most recent data
  - Food processing outbreaks including responsibilities for outbreak management of key infra-structure industry – local and national including Secretary of State

Members will have the opportunity to ask questions and can review available local data

## **2. Proposals**

- 2.1. Scrutiny Committee is asked to consider the attached background report and update presentation in the meeting and consider whether there are any issues for further scrutiny at a future meeting, focusing on lessons learnt that could be fed into any current emergency planning and issues for longer term recovery planning

## **3. Resource Implications**

### **3.1. Staff:**

The County Council is still in the middle of this crisis and the main focus for Officers will be in dealing with the crisis. Some Officers may be redeployed from their current roles elsewhere to support ongoing work during the pandemic and the Committee may need to be mindful of focusing requests on essential information at this time.

### **3.2. Property:**

None

### **3.3. IT:**

None

## **4. Other Implications**

### **4.1. Legal Implications:**

The Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority and Police and Crime Panel Meetings) (England and Wales) Regulations 2020 ("the Regulations") sets out the framework for Councils to hold Council meetings remotely.

### **4.2. Human Rights implications**

None

### **4.3. Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) (this must be included)**

None

### **4.4. Health and Safety implications (where appropriate)**

None

### **4.5. Sustainability implications (where appropriate)**

None

### **4.6. Any other implications**

None

## **5. Risk Implications/Assessment**

- 5.1. None

## **6. Select Committee comments**

- 6.1. N/A

## **7. Recommendation**

- 7.1. The Scrutiny Committee is asked to consider:

- the attached reports and presentations in the meeting.
- whether there are any issues for further scrutiny at future meeting, focusing on any new and significant ongoing lessons learnt that could be fed into any current emergency planning and issues for longer term recovery planning.

## 8. Background Papers

8.1. [Scrutiny Committee meeting: 27 May 2020](#)

[Cabinet meeting 2 November 2020](#)

### Officer Contact

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

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

## for Cabinet

<b>Decision making report title:</b>	<b>NCC response to Covid-19 – initial lessons learned – progress update</b>
<b>Date of meeting:</b>	<b>2 November 2020</b>
<b>Responsible Cabinet Member:</b>	<b>Cllr Andrew Proctor (Leader and Cabinet Member for Governance and Strategy)</b>
<b>Responsible Director:</b>	<b>Tom McCabe (Head of Paid Service)</b>
<b>Is this a key decision?</b>	<b>Yes</b>

### **Introduction from Cabinet Member**

The response to the Covid-19 crisis across Norfolk continues to be remarkable, with Norfolk’s communities, businesses and public services working closely together. Although infection rates in Norfolk have been rising, thankfully they are lower than elsewhere in the country.

Working better together has been exemplified by how everyone has helped to contain, and reduce, the recent rise in cases in Great Yarmouth and also in Norwich. The action and communication plans were commended by the Department of Health and can be adapted and used across the county.

At the time of writing this report we know that England has the new three tiers of Covid 19 restrictions and Norfolk is in the lowest (medium) tier. But this can change rapidly and it clearly shows that we cannot afford to be complacent as there is still much to do and we all need to continue to play our part to keep Norfolk safe.

Revitalising the economy is essential and working with the New Anglia Local Enterprise Partnership and district councils, we are continuing to support Norfolk’s businesses to survive, and help as many people as possible to stay in work or secure alternative work. The whole of the £6.75m Norfolk Strategic Fund has either been spent or allocated including a tourism sector support package. Norfolk had over half of the £32m government grant to the LEP for “shovel ready” infrastructure projects. Nearly £2m has also been granted to Norfolk’s businesses through the LEP’s Business Resilience & Recovery Fund. Norfolk was also awarded £32m from the Transforming Cities Fund.

Our detailed planning for winter is well underway so that we can continue to provide the best possible services and support we can for Norfolk, as these challenging times continue.

In the meantime, it is important that we all continue to follow the advice and guidelines set out to keep us safe and well – hands, face and space.

## **Executive Summary**

This report provides an update on progress against the initial lessons learned action plan agreed by Cabinet in August 2020.

### **Recommendation**

- 1. To review and endorse progress against the initial lessons learned action plan set out in Appendix A.**

## **1. Background**

- 1.1. As reported to Cabinet in August, a first de-brief process has taken place to capture initial learning points from key officers who have been involved in the council's response to Covid-19. An action plan was developed to ensure the learning can be progressed, and this action plan was agreed by Cabinet in August.

## **2. Proposal**

- 2.1. Progress against the initial learning action plan agreed by Cabinet in August is set out in Appendix A for Cabinet to review and consider.
- 2.2. In delivering any activity, whether in response to an incident or as part of day to day working, there will be issues and problems that arise, and officers will continue to seek to address these as they arise. For example, as previously reported, changes have been made to work processes to enable activity to continue within the Government restrictions; screening volunteers virtually rather than face to face interviews is one example. The initial de-brief did not seek to capture details of these types of learning points from operational activity, nor details of any other learning points that have already been actioned and addressed, but only sought to identify those where further action would be useful.
- 2.3. The initial de-brief did not attempt to provide a narrative of how the incident unfolded, the actions taken to respond or the impact the incident has had on communities, businesses and services. This is something that can be considered as part of the formal de-brief process, at the right time.

## **3. Further learning and planning activity**

- 3.1. There is a dynamic approach to learning and planning for further response activities in what is a complex and rapidly changing environment. In particular, specific learning exercises are carried out to review and adjust (if needed) new response activities, as they arise. The most notable is an exercise to capture operational learning from the recent response to the Covid-19 local outbreak centred around Banham Poultry, and learning identified is being actioned.

Scrutiny Committee also considered a detailed report on the Banham Poultry outbreak in September.

- 3.2. The Fire and Rescue Service are participating in the review by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) of how fire and rescue services are responding to the pandemic. The HMICFRS have been commissioned by the Home Secretary to carry out the review and the findings are expected to be published in January 2021.
- 3.3. Work is also underway within service departments and the Norfolk Resilience Forum to help ensure appropriate planning and preparedness arrangements for the winter period and any further Covid peaks. A summary of the overall approach being taken in service departments in terms of winter preparedness, in the context of a second peak, is set out below.

3.4. **Adult Social Services**

Cabinet considered a detailed report on Adult Social Services winter resilience planning at its October meeting. A detailed plan that sets out intentions for service delivery and design during the 2020/21 winter period is being developed. The purpose of the plan will be to prepare the organisation to maintain high quality and safe service provision during winter and supporting system partners to deliver effective flow between providers. The developing framework, which aims to address the current risks as well as take into account learning from last winter, has the following four themes:-

- **Meeting people's needs** – ensuring there is appropriate capacity to support people at home and, if needed, in residential care; supporting carers and supporting vulnerable people. The analysis of the last six months had strengthened our planning arrangements. A critical factor is the need to maintain flow in and out of hospitals, and through step down facilities in the community to help people home safely.

We have, with the CCG, undertaken engagement and research to try to understand the impact of COVID on people who use our services and their families. We need to continue to engage and promote a dialogue with people and adapt and design our ways of working so they act on what people tell us.

- **Supporting the provider market** – providers are still dealing with the impact of COVID-19 and there remains a high degree of uncertainty. Whilst huge strides have been made in engaging, supporting and advising the care market, the sustainability and financial resilience of providers is a significant challenge we are managing going into winter. The winter planning seeks to build on good engagement, providing support, education and training and strengthening resilience.
- **Reducing pressures on the NHS** - the health and social care system has seen effective collaboration to ensure good flow through acute and community hospitals. Winter planning will build on this approach. In response to modelling information, and to help support the flow of people out of acute hospitals, commissioners have secured:

- Additional capacity in care homes and in the community
- A new step-down facility established at Cawston Lodge - a former care home (requiring buildings and facilities management, the sourcing of equipment, recruitment and re-deployment of staff and appropriate social work leadership and oversight)
- A community response team established 7-days a week

Commissioning will continue to work with the market to secure capacity needed, whether this is bed or community based.

- **Supporting a resilient and functioning system** – this includes ensuring the right governance structures are in place to take swift and timely decisions; financial stability; support for the workforce

### 3.5.

**Children’s Services** - As part of our COVID recovery and surge planning process, Norfolk’s Children’s Services have been preparing for any potential surge in demand and related challenges over the coming winter months and have worked with our partners to see what this might look like for them and how we can work together to plan for it.

Our preparations to address any increases, change in demand or other challenges include;

- Managing a potential surge in demand in children’s social care – a system has been established to closely monitor demand to help inform the triggering of contingency plans, to draw in additional identified resources at any given point
- Supporting schools and settings to stay open and manage capacity challenges including:
  - Implementing significant Health and Safety risk assessments for accommodating children and young people back into school, safely.
  - Managing symptoms, prospective and actual cases of COVID, and following local and national expectations.
- Supporting children and school through the return to education process – noting the rise in referrals to the inclusion line and that this transition is proving bumpy for many children and families including:
  - Creating a positive and safe environment for children and young people, which builds the confidence of parents and carers to return children to school
  - Managing the introduction of a modified, recovery curriculum
  - Assessing and identifying children’s needs following the absence from school, including social and emotional health, as well as learning.
  - Creating catch up provision to meet needs and identifying further support needed
  - Managing tired and sometimes anxious children and young people, families, and staff is probably one of the greatest challenges

- Supporting our teams – with a particular focus on teams facing increased workloads and where the lack of access to buildings and lack of access to each other makes doing the job much harder than usual – especially social care and trying to strike the right balance between allowing teams to work in the way they need to manage risk vs public health concerns about any social interactions

### 3.6. **Community and Environmental Services**

CES carries out a wide range of services, including local and community-based work to provide an effective response to Covid-19 and also continue to provide essential Norfolk services. Work is focused around four key areas.

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

There are a number of winter planning activities underway (or completed), including:-

- Additional resource has been secured to manage and deliver Norfolk’s Local Outbreak Control Plan, working with multi-agency partners.
- Putting in place the highways winter maintenance plan to ensure we can keep Norfolk’s roads safe, and to ensure essential maintenance works can continue.
- Supporting local public transport networks through the Bus Services Support Grant, with £1.1m additional funding provided to local bus operators.
- Fire and Rescue - created a recovery cell to enable us to ensure that planning is aligned with emerging national and regional recovery planning and to adapt/implement for Norfolk. The service continues to work with emergency service partners.
- Customer Services is now delivering Tier 2 local contact tracing on behalf of public health and continue to be the main point of contact for public support related to Covid
- The Communities Delivery group are playing a key role in outbreak management and working with district council colleagues to engage with communities and target interventions
- Working with the voluntary sector - arrangements are in place to ensure essential food supplies can continue to be sourced and delivered to those who need them. We have also worked with Voluntary Norfolk to ensure those who have volunteered to support response activities can be accessed quickly, when needed.
- Trading Standards staff continue to be out and about supporting businesses to safely operate throughout Covid-19. Significant work has been carried out to assess the range of new powers and requirements placed on the Trading Standards service and they continue to work with other enforcement organisations in a joined up way.



- Work continues to enable communities to access and engage with services digitally, including additional online courses and ways for people to engage with physical and cultural activities.
- Significant work continues to directly support the Norfolk Resilience Forum, including working with multi-agency partners to review countywide plans

### 3.7. **Finance and Commercial Services and Strategy and Governance**

The focus continues to be on providing crucial support to enable front-line services and ensuring that the organisation can continue to operate in a safe, well-governed and legal way during winter and beyond. This includes supporting employees through a continued period of radical change, developing and delivering effective internal and external communications to support public health messages, ensuring safe use of our property and assets, and supporting services to ensure they can access the resources they need to deliver services to Norfolk communities.

Significant work in the Data and Analytics team to collect, assess and forecast from a wide range of data continues, working with Public Health and multi-agency partners. This is crucial to ensure that we have an accurate picture of the current position and can best organise ourselves to respond. Work also continues to ensure that we can access critical PPE supplies.

### 3.8. **Key activities**

In addition to the above, a number of key support and enabling arrangements have been put in place to support our staff and managers, including:-

- Staff continue to be supported to work at home where possible. Arrangements are in place for staff to access buildings where there is a business need to do so, or to address wellbeing issues, but the majority of staff continue to work at home. Additional training has been provided to support staff to use the digital technology available to them, and additional support for managers has also been provided.
- A significant exercise has been carried out to engage with all staff across the organisation to understand the benefits and barriers to home working, with around 500 engagement sessions carried out. The findings of these are being collated.
- Many of our staff continue to provide face to face services; many have continued to provide critical face to face services for the duration of the pandemic, and others have returned as we have re-opened services following the easing of lockdown restrictions. For all staff carrying out face to face roles, robust risk assessments have been carried out and appropriate PPE provided, where necessary.
- Additional resource has been (or is being) secured for crucial areas of service to introduce additional resilience and capacity. In particular, resource is being secured for Public Health (including Local Outbreak

Control Plan), Resilience, Contact tracing, Communications and Norfolk Resilience Forum.

- External and internal communications plans continue to be developed and implemented. The importance of targeted communications has been brought into focus recently in Great Yarmouth where some swift targeted communications, along with the efforts of local communities, has enabled the rise in infections to be stemmed, and we have seen rates decrease as a result.
- A programme of internal communications for staff continues, with a weekly all staff message from the Head of Paid Service and three weekly updates for managers, in addition to the arrangements that were already in place before Covid-19.
- Work to transform ways of working to adopt smarter working principles continues, with some elements of the programme accelerated to support staff to work effectively in the current context. In particular, there has been significant work on switching training to digital rather than face to face, digitisation of records and incoming/outgoing mail, and increased use of technology to support staff to work successfully from home. There has been a similar focus on transformation of some service delivery to communities, including switching many of our Adult Education courses to be delivered virtually and supporting families to access cultural and wellbeing support from home. The programme of smarter working continues with a focus on being more flexible about when and where we work, and how we creatively use space and technology to find new and more effective ways of doing things in a modern and business-like way. The HR and Finance Transformation programme which will fundamentally reshape how HR, Finance and Procurement activities are delivered across the organisation also continues.

#### **4. Governance and oversight**

- 4.1. Governance and structures to support the response activities are in place, in line with the requirements of the Civil Contingencies Act.
- 4.2. The County Council is a core member of the Local Resilience Forum, a multi-agency partnership focussed on emergency planning and response arrangements. The NRF established a Strategic Co-ordination Group at an early stage in the emergence of the Pandemic (in January 2020) and it continues to meet regularly, chaired by Tom McCabe, Executive Director of CES. A number of operational groups have also been in place for some months to ensure critical activities can continue to be planned and delivered.
- 4.3. The NRF enables a wide range of public sector organisations to jointly consider and respond to current and emerging issues in Norfolk relating to any emergency; Covid-19 as well as any other emergency e.g. flooding, adverse weather etc.

- 4.4. A key element of support to the NRF is the provision of robust data and analytics to ensure the current, emerging and forecasted position can be clearly understood. This is delivered by Norfolk Office of Data Analytics (NODA), led by Norfolk County Council and working with and drawing on information and intelligence from across public services. This capability has proved invaluable.
- 4.5. In line with Government advice, additional arrangements were also put in place in the last few months to specifically support the Local Outbreak Control Plan, including a Health Protection Board and other groups focussed on health related response and planning. The work has been overseen by a Covid-19 Engagement Board made up of local council Leaders and senior officers from other key response organisations, including the Police and NHS.
- 4.6. Some work has been carried out to review the governance arrangements, particularly as the Local Outbreak Control Plan arrangements were a new model. This has included consideration of the findings of the report by Dame Mary Ney DBE titled “Rapid Stocktake of Lessons Learnt and Good Practice in the Management of Local Covid-19 Outbreaks” which included some useful learning and best practice on structures, including political oversight. As a result, some changes are being made to the arrangements.
- 4.7. The Covid-19 Engagement Board will be realigned to the NRF, enabling political oversight of the full range of activities. In addition, the Health Protection Board will be merged with the NRF Strategic Co-ordination Group so that there is a single group co-ordinating all activity. In practice, both groups had similar attendees and there was much cross-over in terms of issues and risks, and bringing arrangements together removes potential for duplication and ensures we can use our collective resources efficiently.

## **5. Impact of the Proposal**

- 5.1. Capturing and progressing learning points now means that they can be factored into ongoing activity to help us to provide the best possible response for Norfolk communities.

## **6. Evidence and Reasons for Decision**

- 6.1. It is usual practice to capture learning at the end of an incident both to ensure the process does not distract those focussed on responding to the incident and so that learning can be considered and captured with knowledge of the full facts. Given the length of the Covid-19 emergency, it will likely be some time before we can undertake a full and formal de-brief process. Therefore, capturing and progressing initial learning points now is crucial to enable us to provide the best possible response to Norfolk communities.

## **7. Alternative Options**

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

## **8. Financial Implications**

- 8.1. There are no direct financial implications arising from this report. As has been reported elsewhere, there have been considerable additional costs for the County Council associated with Covid-19 and we will continue to manage this pressure.

## **9. Resource Implications**

- 9.1. **Staff:** None. The action plan can be delivered within existing resources and lead senior officers for each action have been identified.

- 9.2. **Property:** None.

- 9.3. **IT:** None.

## **10. Other Implications**

- 10.1. **Legal Implications:** The County Council is a Category 1 Responder as defined by the Civil Contingencies Act 2004 and has a responsibility to prepare and plan for emergencies, including assessing local risks and putting emergency plans in place.

- 10.2. **Human Rights implications:** N/A

- 10.3. **Equality Impact Assessment:** COVID-19 has impacted on every individual and family across Norfolk, particularly on people with protected characteristics. New evidence is emerging daily about the nature and extent of this impact. In view of this, the Council is maintaining a dynamic equality impact assessment. An update on the impact of COVID-19 on equality, diversity and inclusion is included in the "Progress on the Council's Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Objectives 2020-2023" report included separately on the agenda for this meeting.

- 10.4. **Sustainability implications:** N/A

- 10.5. **Any other implications:** None identified.

## **11. Risk Implications/Assessment**

- 11.1. Risks associated with Covid-19 have been documented in a Covid-19 Risk Register.

- 11.2. If initial learning points are not addressed it is possible that they could impact on the Council's ability to provide an appropriate response to keep Norfolk communities safe and well.

## **12. Select Committee comments**



## NCC Covid-19 initial de-brief action plan

Learning point	Action	Lead	Indicative timescale*	Progress update
1. Harness the pace and style of activity that a Gold/Silver structure enables for other suitable areas	Consider how we can harness the pace of activity that a Gold/Silver structures enables in other areas and put arrangements in place, with appropriate review methods to ensure it is working as anticipated	Fiona McDiarmid – Executive Director Strategy and Governance	Already actioned for NCC internal recovery planning. Will be considered for other areas as opportunities arise	Complete. Will continue to be considered for other areas as opportunities arise
2. Extend the Gold preparedness model to the Silver Group	Agree an appropriate group of senior managers to Chair Silver on a rota basis	Sarah Rhoden – Assistant Director Performance and Governance (CES)	By end August 2020	Complete – a senior manager from each department (five in total) are now on a rota and meeting regularly in the short term to ensure readiness in the event the Silver group is 'stood up'
	Prepare and issue Handbook to help guide Silver Chairs	Richard Cook – Head of Resilience	By end October 2020	Complete
	Identify and arrange appropriate training for Silver Chairs	Richard Cook – Head of Resilience	By end December 2020	In discussion with Silver Chairs to identify needs.
3. Re-refresh the standing Silver Group membership and terms of reference to enable a focussed group that can make evidence-based planning decisions	Working with Silver Chairs (see action 2), agree refreshed terms of reference and membership	Tom McCabe – Head of Paid Service	By end August 2020	Complete
	Identify appropriate forum for Resilience Representatives to discuss and cascade information	Sarah Rhoden – Assistant Director Performance and Governance (CES)	By end August 2020	Complete. Resilience Representatives continue to receive updates for cascade,

Learning point	Action	Lead	Indicative timescale*	Progress update
				with support of the relevant Silver Chair.
4. Continue to work with the VCSE sector and ensure that we harness goodwill by utilising volunteers for continuing community efforts.	Continue to work with and support the VCSE sector.	Ceri Sumner – Director of Community, Information and Learning	Ongoing	Proactive contact of volunteers who supported first wave to understand willingness and capacity to support as we move forward. Capacity planning and engagement with community groups at a district level
5. Increase the use and awareness of NODA as a single reliable source of data and analytics to NCC and Norfolk Resilience Forum partners	Data dashboard developed specifically for Covid-19 to be made available to a wider group of NCC staff and partners	Andrew Stewart – Director of Insight and Analytics/Head of NODA	Complete	Complete
	Discuss development of NODA concept with Norfolk Resilience Forum Partners	Andrew Stewart – Director of Insight and Analytics/Head of NODA	Ongoing	Complete. NODA is supporting NRF partners to develop sustainable strategic objectives and associated metrics on an ongoing basis. In addition, governance structures are being amended to enable strategic direction for NODA from the Public Sector Leaders Board.
6. Refine the business continuity planning process to include consideration of potential redeployment of	Review business continuity planning process and templates	Sarah Rhoden – Assistant Director	Autumn 2020	Work not yet started in terms of the formal business continuity

<b>Learning point</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Lead</b>	<b>Indicative timescale*</b>	<b>Progress update</b>
staff to other activities in the event of an emergency	and agree amendments/updates with standing Silver Group	Performance and Governance (CES)		process. However, service departments (including through the Recovery Group) are actively considering potential redeployment of staff and areas of potential risk in terms of resource for response and critical service delivery, including consideration of critical project priorities.
7. Incorporate consideration of key enabling resource requirements and major project priorities at an early stage in the incident process	Amend Gold handbook to reflect this, and incorporate into Silver handbook	Richard Cook – Head of Resilience	By end October 2020	As 6 above.
8. Incorporate information on metrics and data available into the business continuity planning process	As 6 above.	As 6 above.	As 6 above.	As 6 above.
9. Working with partners, consider how to maintain the richer picture of vulnerability across Norfolk to use to support decision making and strategy development	Work with partners to retain current data access permissions beyond the current Covid-19 data sharing agreement which has expired on 30 September 2020.	Andrew Stewart – Director of Insight and Analytics/Head of NODA	By 30 September 2020	Complete. The shielding patient list (SPL) has moved to be accessed via the NHS Digital Portal rather than the Government Digital Service. The dataset has also been enhanced and will continue to be



Learning point	Action	Lead	Indicative timescale*	Progress update
				available for us to access the latest information.
10. Continue to support and develop leaders and managers to continue to effectively lead and manage our teams remotely and support a high performing and motivated workforce within an increasingly digital environment	Develop and implement plan for leadership development and support through the normalisation phase	Sarah Shirtcliff – Director for People	Already underway	Launched a refreshed management development offer. 750 staff participating in managers and leaders TEAMS forum. Almost 500 engagement sessions and 400 managers trained to deliver workshops on future ways of working. Winter working package to be launched late October including leadership skills, well-being support, working at home tools. Significant programme of digital development.
11. Develop a plan which ensures we have the right level of health and safety capability as a central resource and management capability	Identify the skills and resource model for health and safety expertise to support through normalisation and recovery	Sarah Shirtcliff – Director for People	By end December 2020	We have started our second and national campaign to increase our capability.
12. Train and upskill more staff in import-export procedures and increase the pool of staff with	Identify appropriate staff and training, and put in plans in place to deliver	Al Collier – Director of Procurement	By end December 2020	Completed. Sufficient resource is in place for the short-medium term. Further consideration will

<b>Learning point</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Lead</b>	<b>Indicative timescale*</b>	<b>Progress update</b>
knowledge of international procurement				be given to training for additional staff for the longer term.
13. Work with key partners to put multi-agency communication methods in place which support improved engagement in discussions	Work with key partners to identify a way forward	Geoff Connell – Director of IMT and Chief Digital Officer	By end December 2020	Positive progress has been made in ensuring NHS & District colleagues are strategically aligned in relation to Microsoft Teams & Office365 as an enabler for effective joint working.

\*Note timescales are indicative. This is because it is important that progressing any actions does not impact or destabilise response, normalisation and recovery activity for Covid-19.

## Scrutiny Committee Item 10

<b>Decision making report title:</b>	<b>Strategic and Financial Planning 2021-22</b>
<b>Date of meeting:</b>	<b>18 November 2020</b>
<b>Responsible Cabinet Member:</b>	<b>Cllr Andrew Jamieson (Cabinet Member for Finance)</b>
<b>Responsible Director:</b>	<b>Simon George, Executive Director of Finance and Commercial Services</b>

**Note:** At its meeting of 21 October 2020, Scrutiny Committee considered details of the Council's Strategic and Financial Planning 2021-22. The committee agreed to continue the consideration of this at its meeting 18 November 2020. The report and appendix originally provided for the 21 October meeting are reproduced here to support the Scrutiny Committee's discussions, with one amendment to section 7.6 of this report to provide additional clarification.

### **Introduction**

Saving proposals identified as part of the process to address the Council's overall gap position as forecast in the Medium Term Financial Strategy agreed by Full Council in February 2020 were considered by Cabinet at its meeting 5 October 2020. Ultimately these proposals will support the preparation of a balanced and robust Budget for 2021-22, but further savings will be required to bridge the remaining gap as discussed in the appended 5 October Cabinet report. The appended report represents a key milestone within the budget planning process for 2021-22 and includes details of the approach to public consultation on the budget.

### **Executive Summary**

This report supports the Committee's scrutiny of the Council's process for developing the 2021-22 Budget, and in particular represents an opportunity for the Committee to consider the new budget proposals identified to date, the approach to public consultation, and the further actions required to deliver a balanced budget for the year.

### **Recommendations**

- 1. To consider and comment on the Strategic and Financial Planning report to 5 October Cabinet (Appendix 1) including:**
  - a. the savings proposals developed to date to support the setting of a balanced budget for 2021-22;**
  - b. the planned next steps in the budget process for 2021-22 including the approach to public consultation and the development of further saving proposals; and**
  - c. the key areas of risk and uncertainty relating to the 2021-22 Budget.**

## **1. Background and Purpose**

1.1. At its meeting 23 September 2020, Scrutiny Committee considered the latest information about key issues for the Council's 2021-22 budget setting and the broad areas proposed for savings development. This report now provides an opportunity to further review:

- The latest assumptions about the significant uncertainties facing local government finances as a result of COVID-19 and other issues.
- The proposals brought forward by each Department to contribute to closing the forecast budget gap.
- The latest MTFs position for 2021-22 onwards, which will be updated further through the remainder of the budget setting process.
- The context for public consultation on 2021-22 Budget proposals.
- Some of the remaining key issues and risks facing services in relation to their financial strategy.

## **2. Proposals**

2.1. The appended report to the October Cabinet meeting provides the latest overview of:

- the overarching timetable for 2021-22 budget setting;
- the key issues being identified in relation to 2021-22 budget setting;
- the approaches and themes for the development of savings, and the latest proposed savings by each service department;
- the impact of the Covid-19 response on services; and
- the next steps which will contribute to the Council setting a balanced budget for 2021-22.

2.2. In considering the progress of budget setting for 2021-22, the Committee may wish to consider (1) key issues for 2021-22 budget setting and (2) the level of savings proposed for 2021-22 including the changes to existing planned savings, in order to comment on budget development for 2021-22, and the identification of key pressures and priorities for the 2021-22 Budget.

2.3. Committee members may in particular wish to refer to the following sections of the appended October Cabinet report:

- Section 4 – saving proposals for 2021-22 including proposals brought forward and changes to existing planned savings.
- Services' financial strategies and approaches to developing 2021-22 Budget proposals:
  - Section 5 – Adult Social Services
  - Section 6 – Children's Services
  - Section 7 – Community and Environmental Services
  - Section 8 – Strategy and Governance
  - Section 9 – Finance and Commercial Services / Finance General

- Section 10 – the latest MTFS position as set out in table 11, including budget assumptions (10.1), risks and pressures (10.2-10.4), and the need for further savings (10.6).
- Section 11 – the Executive Director of Finance and Commercial Service’s latest comments in relation to the robustness of the budget and key risks.
- Section 12 – Council tax and adult social care precept assumptions.
- Section 13 – Approach to public consultation activity.

### **3. Impact of the Proposal**

3.1. Highlighted in appended report.

### **4. Evidence and Reasons for Decision**

4.1. Highlighted in appended report.

### **5. Financial Implications**

5.1. As previously reported to Scrutiny Committee, the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic, along with continued unprecedented levels of uncertainty about future year pressures and funding, represent a very significant challenge for Norfolk County Council in developing budget plans for 2021-22. The scale of the budget gap to be closed remains subject to considerable uncertainty and there are a number of issues which could have a material impact on the level of resources available to the Council to deliver services in the future. As part of responding to these challenges, services will need to bring forward balanced, sustainable budget proposals which enable the Council to continue to deliver essential services to Norfolk’s people, businesses and visitors.

Full financial implications are highlighted in the appended report.

### **6. Resource Implications**

6.1. **Staff:**

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

6.2. **Property:**

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

6.3. **IT:**

There are no direct IT implications arising from this report although existing saving plans include activities linked to IMT budgets. In addition, activities

planned within Business Transformation will include further work to deliver savings through activity related to digital and IT initiatives.

## **7. Other Implications**

### **7.1. Legal Implications**

Highlighted in appended report.

### **7.2. Human Rights implications**

No specific human rights implications have been identified.

### **7.3. Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) (this must be included)**

Highlighted in appended report. EQIAs will be undertaken later in the budget process. The dynamic EQIA in respect of the Council's response to COVID-19 can be found [here](#).

### **7.4. Health and Safety implications (where appropriate)**

None identified.

### **7.5. Sustainability implications (where appropriate)**

None identified.

### **7.6. Any other implications**

The Chair of Scrutiny asked for additional information pertaining to the "Budget Challenge Process" that has led to the savings presented in the attached Cabinet report. The Executive Director of Finance and Commercial Services considers that these meetings are policy development meetings (and very clearly not decision making meetings) and as such is of the view that said information is not appropriate for a Scrutiny report.

For the avoidance of doubt, the Chair of Scrutiny asked for the below:

#### **1. Challenge mechanism:**

- What was and wasn't considered in the process
- Evidence of robust challenge
- Evidence of methodology used and substance
- How Executive Directors responded to the challenge
- Notes from Corporate Board

The Chair of Scrutiny also asked for the below, which the Executive Director of Finance and Commercial Services considers can be provided by a combination of the existing cabinet report (attached) and questioning of senior officers and Cabinet members.

#### **2. Savings:**

- Breakdown of what the savings mean
- What will the impact be

- Commentary of each of the proposals and details of what each of them mean

No other implications have been identified, beyond those highlighted in appended report.

## **8. Risk Implications/Assessment**

8.1. Highlighted in appended report.

## **9. Select Committee comments**

9.1. The Council's three Select Committees considered the broad approach to developing budget proposals for the services within their remit at meetings held in September. Select Committees considered the key issues for 2021-22 budget setting in order to provide input to the October Cabinet meeting and inform the saving proposals put forward. Specific comments are detailed in the appended report.

## **10. Recommendations**

- 10.1. **1. To consider and comment on the Strategic and Financial Planning report to 5 October Cabinet (Appendix 1) including:**
- a) the savings proposals developed to date to support the setting of a balanced budget for 2021-22;**
  - b) the planned next steps in the budget process for 2021-22 including the approach to public consultation and the development of further saving proposals; and**
  - c) the key areas of risk and uncertainty relating to the 2021-22 Budget.**

## **11. Background Papers**

11.1. Norfolk County Council Revenue and Capital Budget 2020-21 to 2023-24, County Council 17/02/2020, agenda item 5 ([here](#))  
 Briefing on Strategic and Financial Planning, Scrutiny Committee 23/09/2020, agenda item 9 ([here](#))  
 Strategic and Financial Planning 2021-22, Cabinet 05/10/2020, agenda item 11 ([here](#))

### **Officer Contact**

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

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**Item No: 10 appendix**

<b>Decision making report title:</b>	<b>Strategic and Financial Planning 2021-22</b>
<b>Date of meeting:</b>	<b>5 October 2020</b>
<b>Responsible Cabinet Member:</b>	<b>Cllr Andrew Jamieson (Cabinet Member for Finance)</b>
<b>Responsible Director:</b>	<b>Simon George, Executive Director of Finance and Commercial Services</b> <b>Fiona McDiarmid, Executive Director of Strategy and Governance</b>
<b>Is this a key decision?</b>	<b>Yes</b>

**Introduction from Cabinet Member**

The 2021-22 Budget is being developed in a climate of almost unprecedented risk and uncertainty. Not only are settlement funding allocations beyond the current year (2020-21) unknown, key reforms to local government funding including the Fair Funding Review, Business Rates localisation, and reform of Adult Social Care funding have all been repeatedly delayed. The Council therefore awaits the outcome of the Comprehensive Spending Review and any accompanying national financial announcements, expected later in the year, with considerable interest.

Compounding these wider uncertainties, the Council faces a potential double impact of the COVID-19 pandemic in terms of significant risks to both the underlying cost base and demand side pressures within the Budget, alongside an anticipated shock to key local sources of income (council tax and business rates), which remains difficult to forecast at this stage with any degree of confidence.

It is in this context that the Council continues to work to deliver a balanced position for 2020-21, as discussed within the Financial Monitoring report, while simultaneously proposals for the 2021-22 Budget are being developed. The demands of responding to the pandemic have inevitably resulted in more limited organisational capacity to fully develop savings for next year than would normally be the case. Taking this into account, alongside the wider uncertainty, the potential scale of the remaining Budget gap to be addressed, and a number of other issues which could have a material impact on the level of resources available to Norfolk County Council to deliver services in the future, it is only prudent that this report also considers the next steps in the process of developing a robust and balanced Budget for 2021-22. It remains the case that it will be critical to bring forward balanced, sustainable budget proposals which will enable the Council to continue to deliver the essential services which are relied on by all Norfolk's people, businesses and visitors.

This report therefore represents a key milestone in the development of the 2021-22 Budget and provides an opportunity for Members to consider saving proposals prior to wider consultation.

## **Executive Summary**

As in previous months, the latest estimates of the financial impact of the COVID-19 pandemic are set out in the Financial Monitoring report. Many of the additional costs, lost income and undeliverable savings in the current year will have an extended impact on the 2021-22 Budget. This report, and the Financial Monitoring paper, together provide an overview of the anticipated financial implications of COVID-19, for both the current year and for the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy as originally agreed in February 2020. This reflects the profound impact on the organisation's ability to achieve planned budget savings and income for 2020-21, as well as on the capacity to develop and deliver new budget proposals for 2021-22, and on the wider budget position, which, as a result, is the subject of extremely high levels of uncertainty.

This report forms a key part of the budget planning process for 2021-22, providing an overview of the saving proposals which have been identified as part of the process to address the Council's overall gap position as forecast in the Medium Term Financial Strategy agreed by Full Council in February 2020. It summarises the proposed approach to public consultation on the 2021-22 Budget and sets out details of the emerging service budget pressures which have been identified to date, a summary of the budget strategy for each service, and key areas of risk and uncertainty.

Recognising the fundamental uncertainty around the planning position for 2021-22, the report also addresses the next steps required in the process leading to budget-setting in February 2021, which has been designed to recognise that there remains a need for ongoing flexibility to respond to changing circumstances. In this context, the report provides the latest summary of key areas of wider risk and uncertainty for Cabinet to consider. The MTFs position will continue to be updated in light of future government announcements and as the scale of the impact on the Council becomes clear. This will be reported to Cabinet and to Scrutiny Committee as the budget setting process progresses.

Cabinet decisions based on this information will ultimately help to support the development of a robust, balanced 2021-22 Budget for the Council.

## **Recommendations**

- 1. To note the County Council strategy as set out in section 2 and how the Budget process is aligned to the overall policy and financial framework;**
- 2. To consider and agree for planning purposes:**
  - the latest assessment of significant areas of risk and uncertainty around emerging budget pressures for the 2021-22 Budget and Medium Term Financial Strategy, which remain to be resolved and which may have a material impact on budget planning (section 10);**
  - the uncertainty about national funding announcements (section 3);**
  - the assumptions about the level of council tax and Adult Social Care precept for 2021-22 (section 12); and**

- that subject to the above, and the proposed savings in recommendation 3, a budget gap in the order of £15.062m remains to be closed for 2021-22 (paragraph 10.5 and table 11).
- 3. To consider and agree the proposed savings as set out in sections 5-9 (tables 5-10) to be taken forward in budget planning for 2021-22, subject to final decisions about the overall Budget in February 2021, noting the level of savings already included from the 2020-21 Budget process, and the anticipated changes to those existing savings (including the replacement of Business Transformation savings with service proposals) (paragraph 4.3 and table 2);
- 4. To agree that public consultation be undertaken on the 2021-22 Budget and saving proposals, and the level of council tax and Adult Social Care precept for 2021-22, as set out in section 13;
- 5. To note the responsibilities of the Executive Director of Finance and Commercial Services under section 114 of the Local Government Act 1988 and section 25 of the Local Government Act 2003 to comment on the robustness of budget estimates as set out in section 11;
- 6. To agree the proposed next steps in the Budget planning process for 2021-22, including the actions in paragraph 10.6 required to develop further saving proposals in light of the significant uncertainty about the overall financial position, and the remaining Budget planning timetable (Appendix 1); and
- 7. To note and thank Select Committees for their input, and agree to seek to provide earlier opportunities for Select Committees to support the Budget development process for 2022-23 (section 21).

## **1. Background and Purpose**

- 1.1. The County Council agreed the 2020-21 Budget and Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) to 2022-23 at its meeting 17 February 2020, prior to the significant escalation in the COVID-19 pandemic. Inevitably, the 2020-21 Budget agreed in February could not foresee the adjustments which would be needed to respond to COVID-19, but since the Budget was set, Cabinet has considered reports on the overall budget position (in June and September) and has also received regular updates on the anticipated financial implications of the COVID-19 pandemic. This report represents a continuation of these, providing an update on the developing 2021-22 Budget and associated MTFS. To inform discussion of the budget position it also:
- Summarises the latest position in relation to some of the significant uncertainties facing local government finances as a result of COVID-19 and other issues.
  - Sets out the latest view of the MTFS position for 2021-22 onwards, updating the position considered in September 2020. This position will continue to be kept under review and updated throughout the remainder of the Budget process.

- Provides an overview of some of the key issues facing services in relation to their financial strategy, pressures, risks and uncertainties and details the saving proposals identified by each Service in order to contribute to meeting the targets agreed by Cabinet in July.
- 1.2. This report represents the next stage in the Council's 2021-22 Budget setting process and brings together a range of information, to enable Cabinet to consider the emerging saving proposals and to agree the approach to public consultation for 2021-22. Ultimately, it is intended to support the Council in developing the 2021-22 Budget and considering savings proposals which will assist in delivering a balanced budget for the year.
  - 1.3. The content of the report is based on circumstances that are changing frequently and therefore some areas may become superseded by new information on an ongoing basis.

## **2. County Council strategy**

### **2.1. Impact of COVID-19**

The COVID-19 pandemic and the public health measures taken to contain it have delivered one of the largest shocks to the UK economy and public finances in recent history. Data from the ONS shows that while the summer saw the UK economy move towards recovery, it still has to make up nearly half of the GDP lost since the start of the pandemic.<sup>1</sup> The Office for Budget Responsibility has predicted that the UK's deficit is likely to be between £263bn to £391bn this year, significantly higher the £55bn predicted at the budget in March.<sup>2</sup>

- 2.2. In responding to this public health crisis, the Council has taken action to maintain the delivery of vital services across all areas of its operations, support the NHS and health system through enhanced hospital discharge processes to free up capacity, protect vulnerable people, support businesses, and ensure the safety of all staff delivering this vital work.
- 2.3. As we move into a difficult winter, the ongoing impact of COVID-19, along with continued uncertainty about future funding, represent a significant challenge for public finances.
- 2.4. This report sets out an approach for the budget process that takes account of this and the requirement to identify savings options that fit within the overall policy and financial framework, aligning resources to the Council's key strategic objectives set out in 'Together, For Norfolk'.
- 2.5. **County Council Strategy and Transformation**  
 'Together, for Norfolk' sets out three overriding ambitions which drive the Council's priorities: A growing economy, thriving people, and strong communities. Our Plan also

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.ons.gov.uk/economy/grossdomesticproductgdp/bulletins/gdpmonthlyestimateuk/july2020>

<sup>2</sup> <http://obr.uk/coronavirus-analysis/>

underpins and contributes to the delivery of the New Anglia Local Enterprise Partnership Norfolk and Suffolk Economic Strategy.

- 2.6. The plan provides a whole-Council view of significant activities, including, service change or redesign, infrastructure, assets and technology, including capital programmes or projects, strategy or policy development. Our services support our ambition by ensuring children and young people have the best start in life, protecting vulnerable people, developing strong infrastructure and helping improve the economy. This will be aligned to our COVID-19 recovery plans.
- 2.7. The Council's transformation programme is core to the Council's objectives and ambitions. In all that we do, we continue to be guided by four core principles that frame our recovery and transformation work:
  - Offering our help early to prevent and reduce demand for specialist services;
  - Joining up work so that similar activities and services are easily accessible, done once and done well;
  - Being business-like and making best use of digital technology to ensure value for money; and
  - Using evidence and data to target our work where it can make the most difference.

### 3. National financial context

- 3.1. As described in the introduction, the Council continues to face very significant uncertainty about national funding announcements and allocations. The Chancellor of the Exchequer, Rishi Sunak, announced the launch of the **2020 Comprehensive Spending Review (CSR)** on 21 July 2020<sup>3</sup>. The Council submitted its representation on the CSR to HM Treasury on 24 September 2020, which addressed the points endorsed by the September meeting of Cabinet. The CSR is due to conclude in the autumn and was originally expected to set out the Government's spending plans for the parliament, covering a three-year period for resource budgets (2021-22 to 2023-24) and a four-year period for capital budgets (2021-22 to 2024-25). As previously reported to Cabinet, reflecting wider economic uncertainty, the Chancellor did not set a "*spending envelope*" for the CSR but confirmed that departmental spending "*will grow in real terms across the CSR period*". At the same time, the Chancellor also stated that "*there will need be tough choices in other areas of spending at the review. As part of their preparations for the CSR departments have been asked to identify opportunities to reprioritise and deliver savings.*"
- 3.2. However, recent announcements, including the commissioning of the Office for Budget Responsibility to "*prepare an economic and fiscal forecast to be published in mid to late November*"<sup>4</sup> without setting a date for the Budget, indicated that the Chancellor was retaining the option to delay the Autumn Budget – and on 23 September the Treasury confirmed that there "will be no Budget this autumn"<sup>5</sup>. The Chancellor instead

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<sup>3</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/chancellor-launches-comprehensive-spending-review>

<sup>4</sup> <https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2020-09-11/debates/20091126000006/OfficeForBudgetResponsibilityEconomicAndFiscalForecast>

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/business-54267795>

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outlined details of a winter economy plan<sup>6</sup> on 24 September 2020, which was focussed on protecting jobs and supporting businesses through the remainder of the financial year. There are also emerging suggestions that the CSR announcement may cover one year only. Ultimately it remains the case that **the Council is unlikely to receive detailed information about funding allocations for 2021-22 and beyond until December 2020 at the earliest**. At this stage 2021-22 Budget planning assumes a further rollover settlement maintaining funding at the same level as 2020-21. Any changes to these levels of funding could have a material impact on the planning position.

- 3.3. The introduction to this report highlights that critical reforms to local government funding remain outstanding. These include the Fair Funding Review, Business Rates localisation, and reform of Adult Social Care. It now appears that the plans for social care may be further delayed following the recent statement made by the Department of Health and Social Care's innovation minister Lord Bethell "*I cannot commit to a social care plan before the end of the year. It will require a huge amount of political collaboration and I suspect it will take longer than the next few months.*"<sup>7</sup> The continued and repeated delays and lack of clarity surrounding all of these long overdue reforms, alongside the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and the absence of a long term funding settlement for local government (or even any outline indications of funding for the next financial year), combine to establish an almost unprecedented climate of uncertainty for 2021-22 Budget setting.

#### 4. Saving proposals for the 2021-22 Budget

- 4.1. The 2020-24 MTFs agreed in February 2020 included planned savings of £63.786m as shown by Department in the table below. Savings to close the forecast 2021-22 gap need to be identified in addition to the existing savings of £20.747m for that year. However, as set out in the Financial Monitoring report elsewhere on the agenda, the response to the COVID-19 pandemic is having an impact on the delivery of savings in the current year. This report considers the implications of this, and the impact on existing planned savings for 2021-22 and beyond, in the context of the new proposals being brought forward as part of this year's budget process.

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<sup>6</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/chancellor-outlines-winter-economy-plan>

<sup>7</sup> <https://hansard.parliament.uk/Lords/2020-09-15/debates/A97D2379-244A-477F-8510-62F078C97ED2/Covid-19NHSLong-TermPlan>

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**Table 1: Existing savings in MTFs 2020-21 to 2023-24**

Department	2020-21 £m	2021-22 £m	2022-23 £m	2023-24 £m	Total £m
Adult Social Services	-22.897	-7.344	-0.235	0.000	<b>-30.476</b>
Children's Services	-9.250	-6.400	-2.000	0.000	<b>-17.650</b>
Community and Environmental Services	-5.013	-2.765	1.264	0.000	<b>-6.514</b>
Strategy and Governance Department	0.613	0.000	0.000	0.000	<b>0.613</b>
Finance and Commercial Services	-1.290	-0.650	0.000	0.000	<b>-1.940</b>
Finance General	-1.647	0.800	0.000	0.000	<b>-0.847</b>
Business Transformation	-0.760	-4.388	-1.412	-0.412	<b>-6.972</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>-40.244</b>	<b>-20.747</b>	<b>-2.383</b>	<b>-0.412</b>	<b>-63.786</b>

4.2. A detailed review of the existing savings planned for 2020-21 and 2021-22 has at this stage identified that adjustments are required to reflect the impact of COVID-19 and other decisions on saving implementation as set out in the table below. The status of savings delivery will continue to be kept under review in the context of the in-year financial monitoring position up until final 2021-22 Budget setting in February 2021.

**Table 2: Changes to existing planned savings**

Service	Saving	2021-22 £m	2022-23 £m	2023-24 £m	2024-25 £m	Total £m
Adult Social Services	<b>Remove</b> non-deliverable element of existing 2021-22 savings plans - ASC036: Maximising potential through digital solutions.	1.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	<b>1.000</b>
Adult Social Services	<b>Remove</b> non-deliverable element of existing 2021-22 savings plans - ASS001: Expanding home based reablement.	0.750	0.000	0.000	0.000	<b>0.750</b>
Adult Social Services	<b>Remove</b> non-deliverable element of existing 2021-22 savings plans - ASS001: Expanding accommodation based reablement.	0.250	0.000	0.000	0.000	<b>0.250</b>
Adult Social Services	<b>Remove</b> non-deliverable element of existing 2020-21 savings plans - ASC038: Procurement of current capacity through NorseCare at market value.	1.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	<b>1.000</b>
Adult Social Services	<b>Defer implementation</b> of existing 2020-21 and 2022-23 savings plans - ASC046: Revise the NCC charging policy for working age adults to apply	3.000	0.235	0.000	0.000	<b>3.235</b>

Service	Saving	2021-22 £m	2022-23 £m	2023-24 £m	2024-25 £m	Total £m
	the government's minimum income guarantee amounts.					
Children's Services	<b>Delay</b> budgeted delivery of existing 2020-21 and 2021-22 savings plans by six months to reflect impact of COVID-19 on implementation plans - CHS001: Prevention, early intervention and effective social care.	0.500	-0.500	0.000	0.000	<b>0.000</b>
Children's Services	<b>Delay</b> budgeted delivery of existing 2020-21 and 2021-22 savings plans by six months to reflect impact of COVID-19 on implementation plans - CHS003: Transforming the care market and creating the capacity that we need.	1.900	-1.900	0.000	0.000	<b>0.000</b>
CES	<b>Delay</b> budgeted delivery of existing 2020-21 savings plans by twelve months to reflect impact of COVID-19 on implementation plans - CES001: Increasing the income we get from Adult Learning.	0.240	-0.240	0.000	0.000	<b>0.000</b>
CES	<b>Delay</b> budgeted delivery of existing 2020-21 savings plans by twelve months to reflect impact of COVID-19 on implementation plans - CES017: Reviewing the operation of Museum catering facilities to make them more commercial.	0.035	-0.035	0.000	0.000	<b>0.000</b>
Finance General	<b>Remove</b> existing 2021-22 to 2023-24 savings plans which will be delivered within new service proposals - BTP001-5: Business Transformation savings.	4.388	1.412	0.412	0.000	<b>6.212</b>
	<b>Total changes to existing savings</b>	<b>13.063</b>	<b>-1.028</b>	<b>0.412</b>	<b>0.000</b>	<b>12.447</b>

4.3. It should be noted that the MTFs agreed in February assumed £4.388m of savings from business transformation in 2021-22. As set out in the table above, it is now proposed that this centrally held saving target be removed from budget planning, to recognise that it has been replaced with a number of detailed service proposals totalling £4.860m in respect of 2021-22 and delivering business transformation and smarter working principles included within the total proposals in tables 5-10. A report on the progress of business transformation was considered by the September meeting of the Corporate Select Committee and a further report is due to be presented in January 2021.



4.4. The savings targets for 2021-22 by Department as originally agreed by Cabinet in July are set out in the table below. The proposals developed in response to these targets are set out in the following sections.

**Table 3: Allocation of saving targets 2021-22 to 2024-25**

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

4.5. Since July, Services have been working to identify proposals to meet these targets. The new proposals identified go some way to meeting the targets, as shown in the table below. The broad strategic approaches being adopted to underpin the development of savings were set out in the September report to Cabinet. The following sections of the report (sections 5-9) provide the detailed proposals by Department, along with further information about the individual plans and any significant considerations associated with them.

**Table 4: Summary of proposed new savings 2021-22 to 2024-25**

Department	2021-22 £m	2022-23 £m	2023-24 £m	2024-25 £m	2021-25 £m
<b>Gross new proposals 2021-22</b>					
Adult Social Services	-24.014*	3.275	2.000	0.000	<b>-18.739</b>
Children's Services	-7.400	-3.600	-3.500	-2.000	<b>-16.500</b>
Community and Environmental Services	-6.858	1.587	0.000	0.000	<b>-5.271</b>
Strategy and Governance Department	-0.959	0.075	0.000	0.000	<b>-0.884</b>
Finance and Commercial Services	-1.578	-0.145	-0.100	0.000	<b>-1.823</b>
Finance General	-2.620	1.000	1.500	0.000	<b>-0.120</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>-43.429</b>	<b>2.192</b>	<b>-0.100</b>	<b>-2.000</b>	<b>-43.337</b>
<b>Less service removals (per Table 2)</b>					
Adult Social Services	6.000	0.235	0.000	0.000	<b>6.235</b>
Children's Services	2.400	-2.400	0.000	0.000	<b>0.000</b>
CES	0.275	-0.275	0.000	0.000	<b>0.000</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>8.675</b>	<b>-2.440</b>	<b>0.000</b>	<b>0.000</b>	<b>6.235</b>
<b>Net new proposals 2021-22</b>					
Adult Social Services	-18.014*	3.510	2.000	0.000	<b>-12.504</b>
Children's Services	-5.000	-6.000	-3.500	-2.000	<b>-16.500</b>
Community and Environmental Services	-6.583	1.312	0.000	0.000	<b>-5.271</b>
Strategy and Governance Department	-0.959	0.075	0.000	0.000	<b>-0.884</b>
Finance and Commercial Services	-1.578	-0.145	-0.100	0.000	<b>-1.823</b>
Finance General	-2.620	1.000	1.500	0.000	<b>-0.120</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>-34.754</b>	<b>-0.248</b>	<b>-0.100</b>	<b>-2.000</b>	<b>-37.102</b>

\*Note: The Adult Social Services proposals include a recommendation to increase the Adult Social Care precept by 2%. This is subject to the Government confirming that local authorities will have the flexibility to increase the precept for 2021-22. This announcement is expected alongside the Local Government Settlement, which is currently anticipated in December 2020.

## **5. 2021-22 Budget proposals – Adult Social Services**

### **5.1. Financial Strategy**

At a time of such uncertainty, the service remains committed to our clear vision – to support people to be independent, resilient and well. Our strategy to achieve this is Promoting Independence – which is shaped by the Care Act with its call to action across public services to prevent, reduce and delay the demand for social care.

In pursuit of delivering our Promoting Independence strategy, we are focussed on six priorities:

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

More so than ever, our continued embedding of our Living Well ethos enhances our desire to work alongside our partners in supporting thriving local communities and within micro economies. Alongside the Council's other departments, and Norfolk's other Councils, we work towards the infrastructure that enables and promotes jobs, education, housing, health and wellbeing. Our integrated arrangements with our Health colleagues allow us to jointly pursue models of health and care that build upon a person's strengths, abilities and support networks (current or potential). With our joint 'home first' culture, we continue to recognise the importance, and stability, of a person's home, whether it's a person's ability to stay there, or return there, should they require the support of Norfolk's Health and Social Care system.

We are very proud of how Norfolk's care market has responded to the recent challenges we have all faced. During the last six months we have worked closely with the care market, and its care association, to ensure a consistency of safe and quality provision of care. We have invested both funding and time in supporting the stabilisation of income levels, but also advice and guidance for providers at this most difficult time. As we look towards 2021-22, it remains one of our key priorities to support the sustainability of Norfolk's care market, ensuring carers are paid fairly for the excellent work they do.

To give us the best possible chance of delivering our ambitions we have created our Promoting Independence programme. With a programme and project management approach, we seek to give our priorities the focus they deserve and deliver real change at pace. Our change programme is now providing us with the internal infrastructure to realign our resources to enhance the quality and value for money of the services we provide. We can take some comfort in our previous ability to deliver meaningful change, and when the environment is right, again begin to accelerate progress wherever possible.

Over time we have measured the success of promoting independence with a range of indicators that tell us how effective our 'front door' is, the proportion of people receiving reablement who remain independent, the effectiveness of processes around social care practice, and through the rate of people who need formal long term care services. Whilst recent months may have impacted Adult Social Care performance, we have still seen longer term change associated with:

- Reablement services – which over time have a good record of accepting growing numbers of referrals and achieving high numbers of people 're-abled'

- Our holding list – where people are waiting for a form of social care assessment or intervention – has significantly reduced in the last 12 months.
- The proportion of people receiving a review within timescale has grown positively and consistently during recent months.
- Reductions in people permanently admitted to residential and nursing care. We measure this for 18-64 and 65+ age groups, and efforts through Promoting Independence have seen both figures drop consistently and significantly in recent years. We do always need to review these alongside short term care home usage, which has seen a rise. As a result, this is a specific area of focus for our future savings proposals.

Overall, current performance data shows a return to more ‘normal’ levels, and to addressing familiar challenges around supporting people during crises, maximising independence through timely social work and reablement, and through improving outcomes for people that go on to require longer term care. However, significant changes to hospital discharge arrangements, along with the risk of a second wave of COVID-19, mean we are reviewing performance and other data more regularly.

We believe the time is right to embrace technology. This means we not only fully consider its application within our day to day work, but also challenge ourselves to seek innovation. We believe with the right support, we can live in a digitally enabled society that can thrive by unlocking its potential. Our Adult Social Care Technology Programme (ASTEC) allows us to give focus to this key area of development

Finally, we remain committed to listening. Listening to those who access or have accessed our services. Listening to those who may one day need our services. Listening to those who help us provide our services.

## 5.2. COVID-19 Impact and Context

As we set our budget for 2021-22, we continue to manage the unprecedented impacts of COVID-19. Within each year, the Adult Social Care budget faces financial pressures driven by a combination of the economic factors of supply (price) and demand. Whilst we rightfully celebrate our ability to continue to live longer with complex conditions, we do see the associated social care needs increasing and therefore **demand for Adult Social Care continues to rise**. Whilst demand rises, we need to ensure we have the right type, quality and quantity of services available to meet this need. For us to have stability, and a required market equilibrium, we must continue to pay fair prices that attract care providers and their associated workforce. Whilst care work remains relatively low paid, **unit prices for care rise** as Central Government increase wage costs through the continued upward movement in the National Living Wage (NLW).

COVID-19 has caused a seismic and immediate refocus of services, process and planning. The financial consequences of this continue to emerge, but it is having a material impact on the **ability to deliver our transformation** and therefore the full level of **planned savings** in both 2020-21 and 2021-22. Currently, advice remains to avoid all but emergency visits to care homes and public health advice to avoid transferring people, both mean that much of the previously successful demand management work as part of the Promoting Independence strategy has temporarily

stopped. Adult Social Services is working to assess original plans, evolve them where appropriate, and restart areas of change governance where feasibly possible. As a result, alongside the longer term delivery of Promoting Independence, the immediate priority and context for Adult Social Services' financial planning in 2021-22 is the post-pandemic recovery – with services facing unprecedented challenges this year (2020-21) and continued uncertainty – particularly relating to demand, funding and the wider market.

The COVID-19 pandemic has inevitably had a major impact on the provision of support and services to vulnerable adults in Norfolk. The Council continues to support the care market, while recognising that the demand and supply of care services will change in the short, medium and longer term. For some services where future demand is less clear, the **long term sustainability of the care market** will be a key issue, and there may also be cost implications for the Council from this. For services such as residential care, it may well be that non-council related demand changes and has a destabilising impact on the market. For other services, such as day opportunities and transport, it may well be the ability and **capacity of providers to supply COVID secure services** that presents us with a risk. In addition to any capacity constraints, the cost of providing services in a safe way may well increase provider costs. During June-September Central Government has provided £12m of funding in Norfolk to support infection control. Despite this we continue to see a likely **COVID related rise in the average fees we secure care from the market** for as some of our key care markets evolve. We therefore need to look at the likely longer term costs for some providers and ensure that fees are appropriate.

For some vulnerable adults, the pandemic has created an **escalation in social care needs**. Supporting these people, and their families, will continue to be a priority for the Council, and has increased some costs, at least in the short term.

The COVID-19 response has given rise to some opportunities as well through some closer links with health and joint responses around discharge from hospital. However, as part of the recently published phase three plans for the overall health service, the revision to the hospital discharge arrangements only cover the remainder of the financial year. As part of the revised guidance we will have the continuation of the hospital discharge services requirements for the remainder of this year, but with only up to the first six weeks of care to be funded by NHS England and NHS Improvement (NHSEI) from 1 September. In addition, there is an expectation that from 1 September any previous hospital discharge placements will begin to begin their journey back towards the funding pathway they would have taken pre-COVID. Our ability to manage this transition back to normality is **crucial for the Council not to be holding onto costs beyond the cessation of the NHSEI hospital discharge funding route**.

### 5.3. Savings proposals 2021-22

As well as improving outcomes for people, our approach to service delivery has helped the department to deliver the significant financial savings needed to continue to meet the increasing demands for social care across Norfolk. In order to truly provide the strong foundation Adult Social Care needs to thrive, we strongly believe that there is an imperative for Central Government to deliver meaningful reform of the social care

funding system, which needs to work alongside the development of a long term plan for Adult Social Care.

Within the overall strategy for Promoting Independence our financial strategy for delivering against the financial challenges we face are underpinned by the following principles:

- We should recognise the power of excellent social work in helping people regain and retain independence by doing more of it.
- We must continue to invest in early intervention and targeted prevention where there is strong evidence to its ability to keep people independent for longer.
- We must work in partnership with others to reduce system demand and improve outcomes.
- We should commission services which enable and re-able people so they achieve and maintain as much independence as they can.
- We should know that a stable and sustainable market for social care reduces inefficiency and improves value for money.
- We must get the full value for what we pay for by strengthening the contract management of our commissioned contracts.
- We should not be afraid to use of technology, and pursue innovation, to enable more people to live independently for longer.
- We must charge people appropriately for their care and provide welfare rights support.

Alongside our existing programme of work, our new savings proposals for 2021-24 seek to utilise our principles and can be grouped into five main themes:

- **Independence and enabling housing (new)**  
Adult Social Services is already working to develop more alternative types of accommodation to give people other choices and more independence. Proposals will look to extend this, focusing on making better use of existing accommodation, collaboration with health partners, and putting in place strategic funding arrangements for developing alternative accommodation.
- **Revising the short term out of hospital offer (new)**  
Adult social services has historically played a significant role in funding and delivering out of hospital care. New Discharge to Assess guidance, post-COVID, highlights the importance of this for the health and social care system as a whole. We want to review what our offer is – as part of a health and social care intermediate care offer. This will allow us to focus more resources on home first services, including greater therapy input, and moving away from reliance on short-term beds.
- **Our commissioned models of care (new)**  
We will seek savings from some commissioned services, particularly maximising block contracts and re-shaping those which are no longer value for money. Part of this will include looking at the cost of care, given the significant changes in the market as a result of COVID.

- **Self-direction, prevention and early help (new)**  
Our prevention and early help approach has enabled us to achieve significant savings in demand, by preventing, reducing and delaying the need for formal care. We will look to consolidate initiatives, strengthening those which are effective and ceasing some activities if there is duplication.
- **Digital efficiency, value for money (extension)**  
We are already delivering significant savings through exploiting digital technology. Proposals will look to extend this, taking up new opportunities to improve productivity and drive out costs.

**Table 5: Adult Social Services gross new saving proposals 2021-22 to 2024-25**

Saving proposal	2021-22 £m	2022-23 £m	2023-24 £m	2024-25 £m	Total £m
<b>21-22 ASS001: Supporting more people to move into independent housing</b> , reducing the reliance on residential care.	-0.500	0.000	0.000	0.000	<b>-0.500</b>
<b>21-22 ASS002: Strategic approach with health partners to manage joint funding of packages to support better use of resources across the health and social care system.</b>	-1.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	<b>-1.000</b>
<b>21-22 ASS003: Revising the short term out of hospital offer</b> - We want to review what our offer is – as part of a health and social care intermediate care offer. This will allow us to focus more resources on home first services, including greater therapy input, and moving away from a reliance on short-term beds.	-3.670	2.000	2.000	0.000	<b>0.330</b>
<b>21-22 ASS004: Efficiency targets for some core contracts</b> and ensuring that we maximise the usage of block contracts.	-0.500	0.000	0.000	0.000	<b>-0.500</b>
<b>21-22 ASS005: Introduce more individual service funds as an alternative to commissioned care for some people, to give them more control and choice over their care</b> - This gives people the opportunity to choose a provider and work with that provider to arrange services and support. Similar to a direct payment, but the individual does not have to manage the money as the provider does it for them.	-0.069	-0.200	0.000	0.000	<b>-0.269</b>
<b>21-22 ASS006: Working with our partners to reshape and refocus our approach to supporting people upon their initial contact with Adult Social Care.</b>	-0.500	0.000	0.000	0.000	<b>-0.500</b>
<b>21-22 ASS007: Reducing the amount we have set aside to cover potential bad debts.</b> (One-off benefit).	-1.000	1.000	0.000	0.000	<b>0.000</b>

Saving proposal	2021-22 £m	2022-23 £m	2023-24 £m	2024-25 £m	Total £m
<b>21-22 ASS008: Releasing amounts previously carried forward in one-off reserves.</b> (One-off benefit).	-0.475	0.475	0.000	0.000	<b>0.000</b>
<b>21-22 ASS009: Digital business transformation and staffing efficiencies</b> across Adult Social Care, embedding efficiencies from smarter working.	-0.800	0.000	0.000	0.000	<b>-0.800</b>
<b>21-22 ASS010: Capitalisation of Assistive Technology Equipment</b> - the use of capital funding as an alternative to revenue funding for our Assistive Technology equipment purchases.	-0.500	0.000	0.000	0.000	<b>-0.500</b>
<b>21-22 ASS011: Capitalisation of Adult Social Care Transformation programmes</b> - the use of capital receipts as permitted by Government to fund transformational activity which will deliver future savings.	-1.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	<b>-1.000</b>
<b>21-22 ASS012: Contract renegotiation</b> - Ensuring the requirements of commissioners are reflected in the Norsecare contract.	-3.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	<b>-3.000</b>
<b>21-22 ASS013: Working with NORCA (Norfolk Care Association) to develop a targeted approach to the annual price uplift for 2021-22 recognising the overall local authority budget pressure.</b>	-2.500	0.000	0.000	0.000	<b>-2.500</b>
<b>21-22 ASSN/a: Applying a 2% increase in the Adult Social Care Precept</b> , subject to Government making this option available in 2021-22.	-8.500	0.000	0.000	0.000	<b>-8.500</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>-24.014</b>	<b>3.275</b>	<b>2.000</b>	<b>0.000</b>	<b>-18.739</b>

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

### 6.1. Financial Strategy

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

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

The new savings proposals contained within this report have been developed in line with these existing themes and represent some continuation of existing programmes as well as some major new elements, such as the “No Wrong Door” model, which is



intended to achieve good outcomes at lower long-term cost for the children with the most complex need. We are continuing with this core strategy because it is working. At the time of preparing this report, the Council has approximately 180 fewer children looked after (excluding unaccompanied asylum seeking children whose needs are met through specific government funding) than at the peak in January 2019. On average it costs approximately £50k per annum for a child looked after placement, and so our success in keeping families together and reducing numbers in care will have delivered avoided cost pressure and savings of approximately £9m per annum delivered through the core strategy and transformation approach. The new proposals will build upon this success. However, whilst numbers of children in care have decreased, the average unit cost of placements has been rising and in particular the very high costs for the children and young people with the most complex needs have offset the financial gains. As such, we are bringing forward a number of schemes including the 'No Wrong Door' Model with a specific focus on meeting those high needs differently and at lower cost.

The core strategy and transformation approach is an ongoing programme of work for the department with work ongoing to enable the identification of further new initiatives that could deliver substantial transformation.

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

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

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

The department is also commencing a close internal review of staffing – especially in support and 'back office' teams. This review will look through a number of lenses such as whether we can automate processes, identify any areas of duplication and how we can build on the recent move to remote and flexible working to drive out cost savings – for instance from reduced travel cost claims. This work will take further time to complete and whilst the focus will be upon achieving efficiency without compromising quality and effectiveness of service, there is a risk that the quality and quantity of service that can be provided will reduce to enable the required savings to be delivered in the context of the Council's very challenging financial circumstances.

On 5 January 2020, the Government announced £165m of funding for 2020-21 to continue the Troubled Families programme for an additional year (originally set to run for 5 years from 2015 to 2020). The funding is made up of various elements including a payment by results amount that is driven by the number of families supported in the programme. Delivery of these results is through social care staff embedded in the

social care operating model as part of their core offer. No further funding announcements have been made at this time.

## 6.2. COVID-19 Impact and Context

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

The department is anticipating and has planned for a significant spike in demand in the autumn following the return of schools; in turn this may translate into higher demand for statutory services and children in care, although this remains highly uncertain.

In a best-case scenario, the number of children in care will continue to fall in line with the recent trend – more likely is, at least a temporary rise aligned to the surge in demand. Some authorities are projecting a significant rise over an extended period and so this will need to be closely monitored and an additional financial pressure could emerge which is not currently accounted for as the business planning cycle progresses. At the time of writing, the level of demand in social care has not yet significantly increased above normal levels but it is still very much 'too early to tell' in terms of the scale of the anticipated rise.

Due to the timing of the outbreak of the pandemic, COVID-19 has resulted in a significant delay to the introduction and embedding of the new social care operating model. Some elements had to be put on hold with the focus turned to meeting the immediate needs arising from the pandemic and ensuring resilience of service, utilising all available staff. The implementation of the new operating model has recommenced, alongside the re-starting of the whole transformation programme. The impact of the delay is being mitigated where possible, and it is as yet unclear how any surge may affect it further, but it could result in future medium-term cost pressures and will be kept under close review.

The service has identified a range of other, less obvious, impacts on demand – including hidden need, trauma, and economic factors. It is hard to know what the experiences of children will have been during lockdown and how that will play out in the medium to longer term. Some key external markets are also under major strain, for example transport, early years, the voluntary sector as well as care. This includes some specialist provision from external providers that has been reduced during the pandemic and, in some cases, on an ongoing basis, to ensure that they are 'COVID secure.' That, alongside lengthy absence from school-based educational provision, may result in additional demand that will need to be sourced.

As a result of COVID, the expectations upon the Council with respect to its leadership role within the whole education sector in Norfolk has significantly changed. This has led to staff being redeployed to support the significantly increased workload, many of whom previously provided traded services and / or support to improve achievement

and increased inclusion in schools. Therefore, there has been major disruption to the normal work of Learning and Inclusion staff, including the traded services model with schools, for which there is a review now underway. At this stage, it is not clear what the Government's expectations are of local authorities with respect to support and leadership to the education sector in the medium-to-long-term, and whether these will be deliverable within the current funding envelope available.

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

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

### 6.3. Savings proposals 2021-22

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

In total, new proposals shown below, combined with existing savings within the Medium Term Financial Strategy will result in Children's Service delivering £11.4m savings in 2021-22.

**Table 6: Children’s Services gross new saving proposals 2021-22 to 2024-25**

<b>Saving proposal</b>	<b>2021-22 £m</b>	<b>2022-23 £m</b>	<b>2023-24 £m</b>	<b>2024-25 £m</b>	<b>Total £m</b>
<p><b>21-22 CHL001: Expansion of 2019-20 CHS001: Prevention, early intervention and effective social care (Reduced Family Court Costs)</b> - Investing in an enhanced operating model which supports families to stay together and ensures fewer children need to come into care.</p> <p>As we aim for fewer children to be looked after as a result of changes to how we work, we anticipate a reduction in legal advice and associated fees.</p>	-0.200	0.000	0.000	0.000	<b>-0.200</b>
<p><b>21-22 CHL002: Expansion of 2019-20 CHS002: Alternatives to care (No Wrong Door)</b> - Investing in a range of new services which offer alternatives to care using enhanced therapeutic and care alternatives, combined with a focus on support networks from extended families keeping families safely together where possible and averting family crises.</p> <p>Conversion of two in-house residential homes to create spaces to provide services for children and young people that offer alternatives to long-term care. This will be delivered in partnership with North Yorkshire County Council, based on their successful No Wrong Door model with financial support provided by the Department for Education.</p>	-2.200	-5.100	-3.500	-2.000	<b>-12.800</b>
<p><b>21-22 CHL003: Expansion of 2019-20 CHS003: Transforming the care market and creating the capacity that we need</b> - Creating and commissioning new care models for children in care – achieving better outcomes and lower costs.</p> <p>Continuation of the transformation of the care market to keep children and young people who require placements close to home and based in Norfolk wherever possible and appropriate to do so. This includes the introduction of in-county solo/dual placements for young people with complex needs resulting in the reduction of expensive out of county placements and more effective use of our residential estate. Additionally, we will embed the transformation of cost-effective support arrangements and placements for unaccompanied asylum seekers, reducing reliance on external providers through in-house provision of young parent and baby semi-</p>	-1.000	-0.100	0.000	0.000	<b>-1.100</b>

<b>Saving proposal</b>	<b>2021-22 £m</b>	<b>2022-23 £m</b>	<b>2023-24 £m</b>	<b>2024-25 £m</b>	<b>Total £m</b>
independent accommodation, and ensuring cost-effective practice for special guardianship orders.					
<b>21-22 CHL004: NEW TRANSFORMATION PROGRAMME INITIATIVE: Inclusion (Home to School Transport)</b> - Through finding school places closer to home for children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Alternative Provision requirements, we will reduce the home to school transport costs associated with long journeys.	-0.500	0.000	0.000	0.000	<b>-0.500</b>
<b>21-22 CHL005: Smarter Working</b> - Efficiencies through increased use of automation and robotics, continued modernisation through shift to different ways of working (accelerated by COVID-19 and enabled through use of IT), departmental review of posts to ensure no duplication of activity, and promotion of flexible working arrangements advantageous to employees and the department.	-1.900	0.000	0.000	0.000	<b>-1.900</b>
<b>21-22 CHL006: Rationalisation and relocation of office accommodation</b> - It is proposed that office accommodation needs of the department are reviewed in light of smarter working (accelerated by the COVID-19 pandemic and enabled through use of IT) with the view to rationalising accommodation whilst still meeting ongoing service needs. (One-off capital receipt in range £1-2m).	-1.600	1.600	0.000	0.000	<b>0.000</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>-7.400</b>	<b>-3.600</b>	<b>-3.500</b>	<b>-2.000</b>	<b>-16.500</b>

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

### **7.1. Financial Strategy**

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

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

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

We will continue to prioritise delivery of savings from these approaches ahead of changes to front line services.

In previous years, the department has also had a focus on income generation. However, given the current pressures and risks associated with existing income generation targets (as set out in paragraph 7.2) it is not considered prudent for new income generation to be a key strand of the financial strategy for next year.

### **7.2. COVID-19 Impact and Context**

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

Some of the longer term impacts and potential future budget pressures for CES arising from COVID-19 include:

- Significant work will be needed to support delivery of the Norfolk and Suffolk Economic Recovery Restart Plan, working with New Anglia LEP. A number of projects and measures have been developed to support the Norfolk economy including through advice for businesses, support for the visitor economy, investment in infrastructure and support for individuals to reskill and upskill.
- The department is heavily reliant on generating external income, such as museums admissions income, Adult learning and Libraries. Given the extended period that services were not able to operate in their normal way, and new restrictions in the foreseeable future, this will have a significant impact on the income generating activities already built into the budget.

- Higher volumes of residual waste are anticipated due to residents being at home rather than places of work, therefore generating more waste through the kerbside collections.
- Whilst Government have provided support to transport operators, both directly and through the County Council, CES continues to work with operators to ensure there is resilience of the public transport network including home to school transport. Work is also underway with operators to ensure they have the ability to provide viable services under social distancing measures and through a period where there may be low public confidence in using public transport.
- Increased costs are also expected for the delivery of capital schemes to accommodate safe working practices.
- Some services in the department continue to carry out significant work specifically on COVID-19 response and recovery, in particular the Public Health, Growth and Development, Trading Standards and Resilience teams. It is anticipated that there will continue to be a need for significant support from these areas for some time.

### 7.3. Savings proposals 2021-22

The new savings proposals for 2021-22 are set out in the table below.

**Table 7: Community and Environmental Services gross new saving proposals 2021-22 to 2024-25**

Saving proposal	2021-22 £m	2022-23 £m	2023-24 £m	2024-25 £m	Total £m
<b>21-22 CES001: Back office savings across CES (non-staff budgets)</b> - Savings from reduction in travel and subsistence, printing, postage and telephone budgets.	-0.137	0.000	0.000	0.000	<b>-0.137</b>
<b>21-22 CES002: Back office savings in CES (staff budgets)</b> - Restructure and review the number of posts in a number of back office teams.	-0.356	0.000	0.000	0.000	<b>-0.356</b>
<b>21-22 CES003: One off use of reserves to fund projects budget</b> - Remove the remaining economic projects budget and fund from reserves in 2021-22 (one-off), with the revenue budget reinstated for 2022-23.	-0.174	0.174	0.000	0.000	<b>0.000</b>
<b>21-22 CES004: Back office savings in CES Growth and Development</b> - Savings from reduction in back office activities (travel budgets and other back office activities).	-0.047	0.000	0.000	0.000	<b>-0.047</b>
<b>21-22 CES005: Savings achieved through procurement of new contract</b> - Reductions in waste disposal costs delivered through procurement of new contract.	-1.800	0.000	0.000	0.000	<b>-1.800</b>

Saving proposal	2021-22 £m	2022-23 £m	2023-24 £m	2024-25 £m	Total £m
<b>21-22 CES006: Reduction of opening hours at Recycling Centres</b> - Reduce the opening hours at Recycling Centres to harmonise summer opening hours with current winter opening hours.	-0.070	0.000	0.000	0.000	<b>-0.070</b>
<b>21-22 CES007: Back office savings in CES Highways and Waste (non-staff budgets)</b> - Savings from reduction in travel and subsistence budgets.	-0.012	0.000	0.000	0.000	<b>-0.012</b>
<b>21-22 CES008: Culture and Heritage</b> - Service redesign and additional fee income	-0.330	0.000	0.000	0.000	<b>-0.330</b>
<b>21-22 CES009: Staff savings at the Norfolk Record Office (NRO)</b> - Savings through efficiencies in back office processes and service re-design.	-0.066	0.000	0.000	0.000	<b>-0.066</b>
<b>21-22 CES010: Reduce Norfolk Arts Service (NAS) budget</b> - Reduce the NAS budget via limited service redesign.	-0.037	0.000	0.000	0.000	<b>-0.037</b>
<b>21-22 CES011: Libraries</b> - Cease purchase of newspapers and periodicals for Norfolk libraries, except for local history purposes. Newspapers and periodicals will continue to be available to access for free via the Libraries app.	-0.050	0.000	0.000	0.000	<b>-0.050</b>
<b>21-22 CES012: Library service re-design (community library staff)</b> - Reduce the number of community librarians by 20%.	-0.118	0.000	0.000	0.000	<b>-0.118</b>
<b>21-22 CES013: Fire Service</b> - back office savings through reduction in fuel costs, printing and photocopying, and advertising expenses.	-0.101	0.000	0.000	0.000	<b>-0.101</b>
<b>21-22 CES014: Savings in Culture and Heritage including staffing savings</b> - Savings delivered through service redesign, back office savings and vacancy management.	-0.383	0.000	0.000	0.000	<b>-0.383</b>
<b>21-22 CES015: Fire and Rescue Service</b> - Review of managerial and functional posts including contract arrangements. Reviewing equipment purchases and staff training budget.	-0.261	0.000	0.000	0.000	<b>-0.261</b>
<b>21-22 CES016: One off use of reserves</b> - One off use of street lighting PFI reserve.	-1.383	1.383	0.000	0.000	<b>0.000</b>
<b>21-22 CES017: Further Street Lighting LED upgrade</b> - Upgrade 15,000 street lights on main roads, along with the CMS (central management system), to enable energy savings.	-0.900	0.000	0.000	0.000	<b>-0.900</b>
<b>21-22 CES018: Income Generation / recharging for services</b> - Additional income from charging for services / roundabout sponsorship and charging for activities on the highway.	-0.345	0.000	0.000	0.000	<b>-0.345</b>



Saving proposal	2021-22 £m	2022-23 £m	2023-24 £m	2024-25 £m	Total £m
<b>21-22 CES019: Reduction in grass cutting</b> - Saving delivered by reducing urban grass cutting from 5 cuts per year down to 4 cuts per year, and reducing rural grass cutting on C and U class roads from 2 cuts per year down to 1 cut per year.	-0.100	0.000	0.000	0.000	<b>-0.100</b>
<b>21-22 CES020: Back office savings in CES Highways and Waste</b> - Savings from reducing overtime budgets and deletion of vacant posts.	-0.106	0.000	0.000	0.000	<b>-0.106</b>
<b>21-22 CES021: Reduction in contract spend</b> - Savings from renegotiation of contract rates as part of a package to extend some current Highways contracts.	-0.082	0.030	0.000	0.000	<b>-0.052</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>-6.858</b>	<b>1.587</b>	<b>0.000</b>	<b>0.000</b>	<b>-5.271</b>

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

### 8.1. Financial Strategy

The Strategy and Governance department brings together a number of professional services which fulfil different functions, and need to be differentiated in the way they operate and the focus of their advice and support. These provide a continuum of services including strategic direction, and resource stewardship, as well as support to services, managers and staff. Strategy and Governance provides:

A **strategic focus** - to advise and support the political and managerial leadership of the Council in their strategic approach. At a time when resources are stretched, the organisation is expecting further COVID-19 pressures and there are so many “unknowns” in the financial and government policy space, it is essential to:

- have the capability to look to the future and anticipate change.
- provide analytical and problem-solving expertise to the executive team and the business units.
- offer **professional leadership** to the organisation and to Norfolk Resilience Forum (NRF) partners in key areas such as strategy, communications, intelligence and analytics to drive insights and actions.

A **support service** focus – to support and enable **transformational change** and seek to drive innovation, as well as operations at departmental and service level. Important to have capacity to:

- define transformational solutions to strategic problems.
- implement transformation initiatives.
- provide more responsive internal services to managers and staff, while achieving lower costs through greater use of technology, and simpler and more streamlined processes.

A **governance focus** – to ensure the organisation is **safe, compliant and governed effectively** and with strategic focus and purpose, with strong stewardship / control systems and processes, joining up across the local government system.

An **income generating focus** – to create value for NCC through maximising the opportunities provided through public service provision, for genuine fee earning activities which don't deviate from, but enhance, our statutory purpose and core offer. Strategy and Governance as a whole relies heavily on income, particularly Nplaw and Registrars, so proposals to review headcount need to take into account the potential for fee earning.

In the above context, budget proposals can have a significant impact on service departments. The proposals set out in section 8.3 have been developed in line with the department's strategic approach and are intended to:

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

## 8.2. COVID-19 Impact and Context

As set out in previous reports to Cabinet, services within the Strategy and Governance Department fulfil a key role in supporting the organisation to operate in a safe, well-governed and compliant way during the response to the pandemic. This has included:

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

## 8.3. Savings proposals 2021-22

The new savings proposals for 2021-22 are set out in the table below.

**Table 8: Strategy and Governance gross new saving proposals 2021-22 to 2024-25**

<b>Saving proposal</b>	<b>2021-22 £m</b>	<b>2022-23 £m</b>	<b>2023-24 £m</b>	<b>2024-25 £m</b>	<b>Total £m</b>
<b>21-22 SGD001: NPLaw Structural Review</b> - Savings from structural review linked to development of the partnership agreement.	-0.200	0.000	0.000	0.000	<b>-0.200</b>
<b>21-22 SGD002: Democratic Services Review</b> - Democratic Services savings linked to changes arising from the Peer Review and Association of Democratic Services Officers (ADSO) review.	-0.030	0.000	0.000	0.000	<b>-0.030</b>
<b>21-22 SGD003: Information Governance</b> - Streamlining of Information Governance processes to deliver efficiencies.	-0.020	0.000	0.000	0.000	<b>-0.020</b>
<b>21-22 SGD004: Your Norfolk Digitisation</b> - Stopping paper production and distribution of Your Norfolk and moving to a more frequent digital solution.	-0.100	0.000	0.000	0.000	<b>-0.100</b>
<b>21-22 SGD005: Strategy and Governance back office savings</b> - Reducing print, post, stationery and travel expenditure across the whole Department.	-0.100	0.000	0.000	0.000	<b>-0.100</b>
<b>21-22 SGD006: Professional Lead and Career Family Model</b> - Implementation of the Professional Lead and Career Family Model across the Insight and Analytics (I&A), Communications, and Strategy capability across the organisation.	-0.250	0.000	0.000	0.000	<b>-0.250</b>
<b>21-22 SGD007: Democratic Services (staff budgets)</b> - Review and realign existing structure to deliver new post COVID-19 ways of working.	-0.075	0.000	0.000	0.000	<b>-0.075</b>
<b>21-22 SGD008: Elections Funding underspend (one-off release of reserve)</b> - More active and focussed management of the election facilitation, with District Councils, to deliver an underspend against budgeted provision.	-0.075	0.075	0.000	0.000	<b>0.000</b>
<b>21-22 SGD009: Further savings to deliver a net 2.75% reduction in staffing budgets across Strategy and Governance teams</b> - Targeting vacancy management and natural turnover as a priority; savings will be linked to achieving efficiencies through the HR and Finance System replacement.	-0.109	0.000	0.000	0.000	<b>-0.109</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>-0.959</b>	<b>0.075</b>	<b>0.000</b>	<b>0.000</b>	<b>-0.884</b>

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

### 9.1. Financial Strategy

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

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

The savings proposals set out in this report for 2021-22 have been developed with reference to the above objectives and are intended to:

- Ensure critical functions and capability are maintained.
- Maximise any opportunities arising from changed expectations and working practices as a result of COVID-19.
- Protect the quality of service and level of support to front line services and colleagues across the Council.

**Finance General** is a corporate budget, which includes council wide expenditure such as corporate pension payments; grant payments; audit fees; member allowances; and capital financing costs. Income includes funding through the Business Rates Retention System; interest from investments; and depreciation on capital from services.

### 9.2. COVID-19 Impact and Context

As reported to Cabinet in September, Financial and Commercial Services continues to deliver essential and resilient support functions which have enabled the Council to continue operating effectively throughout the response to the COVID-19 emergency, and have played a key role in supporting the wider organisational response, including:

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

### 9.3. Savings proposals 2021-22

The new savings proposals for 2021-22 are set out in the table below.

**Table 9: Finance and Commercial Services gross new saving proposals 2021-22 to 2024-25**

Saving proposal	2021-22 £m	2022-23 £m	2023-24 £m	2024-25 £m	Total £m
<b>21-22 FCS001: Automation of IMT processes (staff budgets)</b> - Automation for simple repetitive tasks such as provision of access rights to file shares. Staffing reductions to be delivered by targeting vacancy management and natural turnover, although some potential for redundancies.	-0.200	0.000	0.000	0.000	<b>-0.200</b>
<b>21-22 FCS002: New network and telephony support arrangements</b> - Reduced administrative effort to maintain network and telephone systems. Review small scale headcount reduction and / or reduced expenditure on third party support contracts.	-0.100	0.000	0.000	0.000	<b>-0.100</b>
<b>21-22 FCS003: Reduced expenditure on the corporate printing contract</b> - Contract renegotiation and reductions in volumes.	-0.100	0.000	0.000	0.000	<b>-0.100</b>
<b>21-22 FCS004: Schools IT reduced cost and increased income</b> - Implement a range of measures to improve profitability of the Schools IT operation, through increased efficiency / reduced costs to provide service, and ceasing trading in areas where the income does not cover the full cost of provision.	-0.050	0.000	0.000	0.000	<b>-0.050</b>
<b>21-22 FCS005: Switching all IMT mobile phones over to bring your own device (BYOD)</b> - Reduced expenditure on mobile telephony through BYOD, usage policies and contract management.	-0.020	0.000	0.000	0.000	<b>-0.020</b>
<b>21-22 FCS006: Reduced expenditure on software applications such as Adobe Acrobat and MS Project</b> - Challenging current use and requirements, and providing lower cost alternatives.	-0.020	0.000	0.000	0.000	<b>-0.020</b>

<b>Saving proposal</b>	<b>2021-22 £m</b>	<b>2022-23 £m</b>	<b>2023-24 £m</b>	<b>2024-25 £m</b>	<b>Total £m</b>
<b>21-22 FCS007: Travel and transport budget in IMT</b> - Reduced costs through increased mobile and flexible working, more virtual visits and reduced courier / delivery costs.	-0.010	0.000	0.000	0.000	<b>-0.010</b>
<b>21-22 FCS008: Increased Data Centre Income</b> - Sharing the NCC data centre more widely with Norwich City Council, and possibly other partners, enabling income targets to be overachieved.	-0.003	0.000	0.000	0.000	<b>-0.003</b>
<b>21-22 FCS009: One-off use of reserves</b> - One-off savings and use of reserves within Budgeting and Financial Management.	-0.255	0.255	0.000	0.000	<b>0.000</b>
<b>21-22 FCS010: Vacancy management within Internal Audit Service</b> - Vacancy management and team structure review, and review of contracted services budget.	-0.015	0.000	0.000	0.000	<b>-0.015</b>
<b>21-22 FCS011: Introduction of new technology and reduction in posts in Finance Exchequer Services</b> - Savings from reduction in headcount enabled by introduction of new technology including additional employee self-service.	-0.075	0.000	0.000	0.000	<b>-0.075</b>
<b>21-22 FCS012: Benefits realisation from the HR &amp; Finance System replacement project in Finance Exchequer Services</b> - Benefits realisation work is still underway to quantify value of saving from the HR & Finance System replacement, but current forecast reflects savings of £0.4m in 2022-23 which will be delivered by a combination of reduction in posts and changes to licence costs. Expected full year effect of the project being implemented is currently estimated as a further £0.1m from 2023-24.	0.000	-0.400	-0.100	0.000	<b>-0.500</b>
<b>21-22 FCS013: Corporate Property savings in direct revenue costs</b> - Savings achieved through reduced maintenance, security and other revenue costs based on exiting some additional sites, enabled by changes to ways of working due to COVID-19.	-0.358	0.000	0.000	0.000	<b>-0.358</b>
<b>21-22 FCS014: Further savings to deliver a net 2.75% reduction in staffing budgets across Finance and Commercial Services teams</b> - Targeting vacancy management and natural turnover as a priority; savings will be linked to achieving efficiencies through the HR and Finance System replacement.	-0.372	0.000	0.000	0.000	<b>-0.372</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>-1.578</b>	<b>-0.145</b>	<b>-0.100</b>	<b>0.000</b>	<b>-1.823</b>

**Table 10: Finance General gross new saving proposals 2021-22 to 2024-25**

<b>Saving proposal</b>	<b>2021-22 £m</b>	<b>2022-23 £m</b>	<b>2023-24 £m</b>	<b>2024-25 £m</b>	<b>Total £m</b>
<b>21-22 FIN001: One off release of Organisational Change Fund</b> - Underlying annual budget provision for organisational change and redundancy costs is £2.7m (2019-20). Assessment of amount required to be held against organisational need, experience of actual costs incurred, and the likely organisational and staffing impact of emerging saving proposals for 2021-22, indicate that it would be possible to continue release £0.500m from this budget on the same basis as 2020-21. This reflects a delay of cost pressure for 2021-22 to 2022-23.	-0.500	0.500	0.000	0.000	<b>0.000</b>
<b>21-22 FIN002: Insurance review (One-off use of reserves)</b> - Review of Insurance reserves, claims and risks allows £0.500m to be released on a one-off basis.	-0.500	0.500	0.000	0.000	<b>0.000</b>
<b>21-22 FIN003: Interest Payable / Receivable</b> - Revised estimates of interest payable and receivable budgets for 2021-22 based on latest forecasts enable a reduction in budget provision.	-0.120	0.000	0.000	0.000	<b>-0.120</b>
<b>21-22 FIN004: Employer pension contribution payment in advance</b> - Deliver a saving by paying the County Council employer pension contribution in advance, benefiting from the investment returns achieved by the Pension Fund over a longer period. Value of saving currently being confirmed/refined.	-1.500	0.000	1.500	0.000	<b>0.000</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>-2.620</b>	<b>1.000</b>	<b>1.500</b>	<b>0.000</b>	<b>-0.120</b>

## **10. Latest Budget and Medium Term Financial Strategy position**

10.1. A summary of the cost pressures and savings provided for in the February MTFS analysed by Service was reported to Cabinet in July. As set out in that report, the MTFS includes significant unavoidable ongoing pressures from 2021-22 to reinstate Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) budgets following the saving delivered over recent years. In September, Cabinet then considered a number of changes to the 2021-22 planning assumptions and noted a revised forecast gap position of £129.779m, incorporating a gap of £45.434m for 2021-22. This position was based on the following significant assumptions:

- 2020-21 funding levels being broadly maintained (i.e. a further rollover settlement).
- Pay inflation running at 3% from 2021-22 onwards, and providing for the additional 0.75% pay award for 2020-21, as the current year increase has now been confirmed as 2.75%, compared to the budgetary provision of 2%.
- Non-pay inflation provided for on some budgets being reduced from 2% to 1%.

- General council tax being increased by 1.99% per year, (this remains subject to both Member decision-making and Government announcements about referendum thresholds annually). This is discussed further in section 12 below.
- Previous increases in the National Living Wage (NLW) being continued. The Government could set a more significant increase, without additional funding. Announcements about the April 2020 level were made in January 2020. Each 1p rise in the NLW increases the costs of care by £0.200m. Many organisations have lobbied central government to make further increases in the NLW and in particular to seek higher increases for care workers. Either would increase costs significantly above the current budget assumptions.
- The tax base increasing by 0.5% in 2021-22 and thereafter by 1% each year to 2023-24 (1.39% growth was forecast for 2020-21).
- A Collection Fund surplus arising of £3m in 2021-22, £2m 2022-23, and £1.5m 2023-24. This remains an area of significant uncertainty and will be reviewed further as the budget process continues.

10.2. The forecast gap is kept under continuous review through the Budget process. However, **it is not proposed to update the forecast budget pressures from the September position at this point**, taking into account the wider uncertainty about the impact of COVID-19 on local authority finances and the absence of both government funding announcements and updated forecasts for local income streams including council tax and business rates. It is nevertheless important to note that as at October, **further revenue budget pressures are beginning to emerge** in relation to items such as specific Government funding ceasing (for example the Troubled Families Grant which is likely to end in March 2021), pressures linked to the National Living Wage (the level of which remains uncertain) and further service specific pressures. **Work is underway to fully quantify and validate these emerging pressures and they will be included in the final Budget proposals in February where they are shown to be appropriate and unavoidable.** This reflects the fact that local authorities continue to face a growing gap between funding and service pressures, driven in part by a combination of demographic changes, unfunded burdens, policy decisions, and the needs of vulnerable social care users becoming increasingly complex. Further risks are also emerging around the potential economic impact of a “no deal” exit from the European Union (Brexit), and associated cost pressures in areas such as Trading Standards. Brexit-related cost pressures may also be anticipated in the event of any delays in the process of exporting waste, which could give rise to additional costs relating to waste storage and / or more expensive disposal points. Similarly, any disruption to the food supply chain could result in additional costs related to the need to provide support to vulnerable members of society. Any resulting pressures in this area will be identified through the remainder of the budget process. Children’s services, in both social care and education (particularly the High Needs Block), are also under very significant stress. There remains a risk, as previously highlighted to Cabinet, that these pressures increase in the medium-term as a result of additional needs driven by the impacts of COVID-19.

10.3. The profound short-term effects on Council finance of the response to COVID-19 are being regularly presented to Cabinet in the Financial Monitoring report elsewhere on the agenda, but as previously identified, it remains unclear precisely what the medium- and longer-term financial impacts will be, and as such the full implications for the



council's Budget in 2021-22 have yet to be confirmed. What is clear is that some very significant financial risks associated with the pandemic exist in terms of the long-term design of some services, in relation to joint working, public expectations, levels of demand, and the underlying cost base. Risks also remain that adult social services will incur changed volume and market prices into 2021-22, which are not included within the current budget plans. Other key risks are linked to the changes to the hospital discharge service arrangements from September 2020. This could mean that higher than usual volumes and prices of care, following transition of the NHS funding arrangements, are incurred by the council going forward. In addition, some providers have needed to change business models to operate services in line with social distancing rules, which will reduce capacity and increase unit costs. Risks within Children's Services include the potential for additional cost pressures linked to surges in demand, particularly in relation to looked after children. In addition, there is a risk that the wider operating environment has shifted, which may put pressure on assumptions about trading with schools. Across a wide range of CES budgets there are significant risks to assumed income budgets and it remains uncertain how quickly demand will recover in 2020-21 and 2021-22. Any or all of these additional costs could persist into the next financial year if the pandemic and associated Government and local control measures continue. Critically, it remains to be seen in such a case to what extent emergency Government funding and support will be extended into 2021-22. As a result, **COVID-19 cost pressures will only be incorporated into Budget planning when there is greater certainty that they will remain and that they will not be mitigated by Government.**

- 10.4. Further details of both potential COVID-19 and "routine" revenue cost pressures for services have been set out in sections 5 to 9. As previously reported, it should also be noted in this context that the level of pressures included in the Children's Services budget for future years is substantially lower than has been provided for in 2020-21 and this may therefore be a particular area of risk for future cost pressures emerging through the remainder of the 2021-22 budget process. As set out above, the Adult Social Care budget for next year is also subject to significant uncertainty particularly in relation to ongoing costs of care that are currently funded by health under the Hospital Discharge Service requirements and market prices affected by COVID-19 measures and national living wage. **Further savings will therefore be required to address these pressures, should they arise, and to close the identified budget gap.**
- 10.5. The latest indicative MTFs position is shown in the table below, reflecting the forecast budget gap as at September and incorporating the savings proposals set out in this report. It should be noted that these saving proposals remain subject to further validation work to ensure that they are fully robust and deliverable, and **no final decisions on the implementation of savings will be made until February 2021 when the County Council considers the Cabinet's proposed Budget for 2021-22, including the findings of public consultation and equality and rural impact assessments.** With this caveat and assuming that all proposals in this report were to be progressed, **the indicative MTFs gap would be £98.057m, incorporating a gap of £15.062m for 2021-22.** This position will be impacted by any emerging pressures as outlined in paragraphs 10.2 and 10.3 and will be further updated and kept under continuous review through the remainder of the Budget process.

**Table 11: Updated Medium Term Financial Strategy 2021-22 to 2024-25**

	<b>2021-22</b>	<b>2022-23</b>	<b>2023-24</b>	<b>2024-25</b>	<b>Total</b>
	<b>£m</b>	<b>£m</b>	<b>£m</b>	<b>£m</b>	<b>£m</b>
<b>Medium Term Financial Strategy 2020-25</b>					
<b>Gap as reported to Cabinet 7 September 2020 (Surplus)/Deficit</b>	45.434	26.974	32.830	24.540	<b>129.779</b>
Remove Business Transformation savings held centrally (delivered within new service proposals) (table 2)	4.388	1.412	0.412	0.000	<b>6.212</b>
Removal, delay and deferral of existing 2020-21 to 2022-23 savings already in MTFS planning (table 4)	8.675	-2.440	0.000	0.000	<b>6.235</b>
Gross new 2021-22 proposals as at October Cabinet (excluding ASC precept)	-34.929	2.192	-0.100	-2.000	<b>-34.837</b>
Adult Social Care precept 2% increase for 2021-22	-8.505	-0.268	-0.286	-0.273	<b>-9.332</b>
<b>Latest forecast gap position as at 5 October 2020 Cabinet (Surplus)/Deficit</b>	<b>15.062</b>	<b>27.871</b>	<b>32.857</b>	<b>22.268</b>	<b>98.057</b>

10.6. In view of the scale of the remaining gap, the significant risks to the overall financial position, and the wider levels of uncertainty described throughout this report, **it is the recommendation of the Executive Director of Finance and Commercial Services that a further process to generate robust and sustainable service savings proposals in addition to those set out in tables 5 to 10 should be instigated.** This will need to be undertaken through the remainder of the financial year including a third round of “Budget Challenge” in December 2020 in order to provide Cabinet with further options to consider to support in recommending a balanced Budget for 2021-22 to Council in February 2021. Ultimately the options to close the remaining Budget gap will include:

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

## 11. Robustness of the Budget and compliance with the Financial Management Code

- 11.1. The Executive Director of Finance and Commercial Services is required by section 114 of the Local Government Finance Act 1988 to report to Members if it appears that the expenditure the authority proposes to incur in a financial year is likely to exceed the resources available to it to meet that expenditure. In addition, duties under section 25 of the Local Government Act 2003 establish a requirement to report on the robustness of the estimates made for the purposes of the calculation of the precept (and therefore in agreeing the County Council's budget).
- 11.2. As a result, these duties require a professional judgement to be made by the Executive Director of Finance and Commercial Services as the officer ultimately responsible for the authority's finances. The Executive Director takes a view of the robustness of the Council's budget across the whole period covered by the Medium Term Financial Strategy and this will be fully reported to Members as part of the budget setting process in February 2021.
- 11.3. Taking this duty into account, along with the considerable uncertainty about funding levels for next year, the Executive Director of Finance and Commercial Services considers that the proposals set out in this report, and the new savings proposals developed to date for 2021-22 will help to establish a solid platform for the development of a robust budget in future years, but that **a number of key risks to the 2021-22 Budget exist and significant further work will be required to develop sufficient sustainable savings proposals, to achieve the required level of savings, and ultimately enable a balanced budget for 2021-22 to be proposed.** This judgement is naturally subject to any further Government announcements about financial support for both the current year, and for the medium term as part of the Local Government Settlement for 2021-22, and the way in which the COVID-19 pandemic and associated cost, income and saving pressures continue to develop.
- 11.4. The Council needs to continue to develop the 2021-22 Budget in a way which offers flexibility to respond to any changes in the wider environment and operating context. This reflects a prudent response to the challenges and uncertainties present in the 2021-22 planning process and will ultimately enable the Council to develop a robust budget for the year. As such this report outlines in paragraph 10.6 the next steps that the Executive Director of Finance and Commercial Services considers are required in the budget process and the need for additional savings to be brought forward to Cabinet in February 2021. The Executive Director of Finance and Commercial Services is keeping the overall Budget position under review and will consider the need to propose further saving targets for services as budget planning continues through the remainder of the year. As part of setting the 2021-22 Budget, the Executive Director of Finance and Commercial Services will also consider the adequacy of the overall General Fund balance, as well as the need for a general contingency amount within the revenue budget, in light of the increasing level of the Council's net Budget, uncertainty about Government funding and the implications of Brexit, COVID-19, and the Council's wider value for money position.
- 11.5. The 2021-22 Budget needs to be prepared with reference to the **Financial Management Code** (the FM Code) published by the Chartered Institute of Public

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Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA). The FM Code provides guidance about the principles of good and sustainable financial management, and requires authorities to demonstrate that processes are in place which satisfy these principles. It identifies risks to financial sustainability and sets out details of a framework of assurance which reflects existing successful practices across the sector. In addition, the Code establishes explicit standards of financial management, and highlights that compliance with these is the collective responsibility of elected members, the chief finance officer and the wider Corporate Board. Full compliance with the FM Code is required from the 2021-22 Budget and further details of how this has been achieved will be set out in the February Cabinet report as appropriate.

## 12. Council tax and Adult Social Care precept

- 12.1. The MTFs as approved by Members in February 2020 assumed a 1.99% increase in council tax for 2021-22 and subsequent years. At the time of writing, the Government has not announced details of the referendum threshold for core council tax, or any further flexibility to raise the Adult Social Care (ASC) precept for 2021-22. However, it is proposed that the Council's budget planning should assume that the Government will allow councils to raise council tax by 4% in 2020-21 (reflecting a 2% general increase and 2% for the ASC precept).
- 12.2. After considering the currently available information, **the Section 151 Officer anticipates recommending that Members agree the maximum council tax increase available within the referendum threshold.** This judgement reflects:
- the levels of emerging service pressures balanced against saving proposals to date;
  - consideration of the robustness of the Council's overall 2021-22 budget;
  - the need to ensure that a resilient budget can be set in future years,
  - the very considerable remaining uncertainty and significant risks around funding in 2021-22 and beyond.
- 12.3. **It is therefore proposed that the Council's budget planning should include an assumption for a 3.99% council tax increase in 2021-22 (incorporating a 1.99% increase in general council tax and a 2% increase in the ASC precept).** Based on current tax base estimates, this would raise approximately £16.984m of additional funding for next year (made up of £8.478m general council tax and £8.505m from the ASC precept). An increase of this level would represent an indicative £56.43 increase in the Norfolk County Council Band D charge to £1,472.94 (increase of £28.17 to general council tax and £28.26 to the ASC precept). The precise final level of any change in council tax will be confirmed in February 2021 and is subject to Member decision making annually.

**Table 12: Latest Council Tax assumptions**

	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25
General council tax	1.99%	1.99%	1.99%	1.99%	1.99%
Adult Social Care precept	2.00%	2.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
<b>Total increase</b>	<b>3.99%</b>	<b>3.99%</b>	<b>1.99%</b>	<b>1.99%</b>	<b>1.99%</b>

### **13. Public consultation on the 2021-22 Budget**

- 13.1. As set out above, budget proposals for 2021-22 currently assume that general council tax will increase overall by 1.99%. As in previous years we are inviting comments on this approach through our consultation hub on Citizen Space, as well as seeking views on the scope for a larger increase, should the Government set a higher referendum threshold. In addition, we will be consulting on implementing a 2% precept for adult social care, although we await confirmation from Government as to whether this will be available in 2021-22, and at what level.

We will publish our budget consultation on the Council's online consultation hub, Citizen Space. We will produce large print, downloadable and easy read versions as standard and make any consultation documents available in other formats on request.

As well as alerting key stakeholders to the consultation, we will promote opportunities for people to have their say on budget proposals and council tax through news releases, online publications, social media, and by sharing with as many diverse community groups and networks as possible.

Our consultation will take place between October and the end of the year. Consultation feedback on both budget proposals and council tax will be available for Cabinet in February 2021. We will make extra effort to find out the views of people who may be affected by our proposals and we will also report on the equality and rural impact assessments we are undertaking.

### **14. Impact of the Proposal**

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

- set the context for public consultation on 2021-22 Budget proposals;
- provide an opportunity for Cabinet to comment on and provide guidance about the departmental saving proposals and emerging pressures; and
- determine the next steps which will contribute to the Council setting a balanced budget for 2021-22.

### **15. Evidence and Reasons for Decision**

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

the process. The report confirms that further savings are expected to be required to close the underlying gap.

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

## **16. Alternative Options**

- 16.1. This report forms part of the framework for developing detailed saving proposals for 2021-22 and at this stage no proposals have been agreed, meaning that a range of alternative options remain open.
- 16.2. In addition, there are a number of areas where Cabinet could choose to consider different parameters for the budget setting process, such as:
- Considering alternative approaches to the development of savings from those proposed.
  - Adopting an alternative allocation of targets between services, or retaining a higher or lower target corporately.
  - Considering an alternative timetable within the time constraints required to develop proposals, undertake public consultation, and meet statutory deadlines for the setting of council tax.
  - Changing assumptions within the MTFs (including the level of council tax) and therefore varying the level of savings sought.
- 16.3. Final decisions about the overall shape of the 2021-22 Budget, savings, and council tax will not be made until February 2021, when they will be informed by Local Government Finance Settlement figures, forecasts supplied by District Councils, and the findings of EQIA and public consultation activity.

The deliverability of all saving proposals will continue to be kept under review by the Section 151 Officer as further detailed implementation plans are developed and up until final budget setting proposals are presented to Cabinet in February 2021.

## **17. Financial Implications**

- 17.1. Financial implications are discussed throughout the report. This paper sets out the initial savings proposals developed to address the targets agreed in June and which will need to be delivered by each department to contribute to closing the 2021-22 and future year budget gap, subject to formal approval by Full Council in February 2021. The proposals in this paper will require departments to seek to identify further significant savings in addition to the latest proposals. The scope to achieve additional savings at the level required may continue to be limited by delivery of the response to COVID-19.
- 17.2. The Council is legally required to set a balanced Budget annually and should plan to achieve this using a prudent set of assumptions. However, Members could choose to vary the allocation of indicative targets between Directorates, establish an alternative approach to identifying savings, or substitute proposals brought forward. Work to

deliver additional Government funding could also have an impact on the overall budget gap to be addressed. As a result, the budget setting process and savings targets will continue to be kept under review as budget planning progresses. It is recommended that Departments be asked to bring forward further saving proposals; in the event that additional budget pressures for 2021-22 emerge through the remainder of budget planning, there may be a requirement to revisit the saving targets.

- 17.3. However, the scale of the budget gap and savings required are such that if the Council is required to deliver savings at this level there is a risk that this could result in the Council failing to fulfil its statutory responsibilities. As such the Government's response and decisions about Council funding in 2021-22 will be hugely significant. Government has an opportunity as part of the COVID-19 response to deliver a permanent step change in the recognition of the importance of social care, and to fund local authorities to provide a key contribution as part of the national recovery. Any changes in Government funding could have a material impact on both the level of savings to be identified, and the Council's wider budget process. Fundamentally there is a need for a larger quantum of funding to be provided to local government both to meet the immediate pressures of the COVID-19 pandemic, and to provide local authorities with a sustainable level of funding for future years.

## **18. Resource Implications**

### **18.1. Staff:**

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

### **18.2. Property:**

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

### **18.3. IT:**

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

## **19. Other Implications**

### **19.1. Legal Implications**

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

### **19.2. Human Rights implications**

No specific human rights implications have been identified.

### 19.3. Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA)

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

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

## 20. Risk Implications/Assessment

- 20.1. The ultimate impact and financial cost of the response to the COVID-19 outbreak will be highly dependent on a wide range of factors including the length of time that the pandemic continues, the severity of the impact (both nationally and in Norfolk), the impact of any second wave of infection, and the wider actions taken in response.
- 20.2. Further (non COVID-19) cost pressures may emerge through the 2021-22 budget setting process, these would increase the gap to be closed. Similarly, central Government funding decisions could have a material impact on the level of the budget gap.
- 20.3. The ongoing COVID-19 pandemic may continue to impact on the county council's budget setting process in a number of ways, most significantly:
- The council's available resources and capacity to plan robust future year savings while responding to a rapidly changing operating environment;
  - The ability to adhere to the proposed process and timetable;
  - The need to provide for any immediate or ongoing cost pressures emerging for the council; and
  - The medium to long term financial implications including the impact on the wider economy and council tax and business rates base and income. As reported to Cabinet in September, it remains highly likely that key income sources including council tax (through both the Collection Fund and tax base growth) and business rates will be under significant pressure in 2021-22, potentially requiring further revision to planning assumptions. Detailed work is continuing with District Councils to forecast the likely Norfolk impacts on both business rates and council tax. At this stage this remains a key risk in relation to these elements of the Budget, but it is not yet possible to produce a definitive forecast for 2021-22.
- 20.4. It will be necessary to operate with some flexibility in response to these and any other issues which may arise during the budget setting process.
- 20.5. As set out elsewhere in the report, the overall gap position will be kept under review throughout the budget setting process to inform changes to the MTFS gap. In the event that any other additional budget pressures for 2021-22 emerge through budget planning (for example as funding reductions, non delivery of savings, or additional pressures in services), it should be noted that there may be a further requirement to revisit the indicative saving targets for 2021-22.



- 20.6. The Council's Corporate Risk Register provides a full description of corporate risks, including corporate level financial risks, mitigating actions and the progress made in managing the level of risk. A majority of risks, if not managed, could have significant financial consequences such as failing to generate income or to realise savings. Chief Officers have responsibility for managing their budgets within the amounts approved by County Council. Chief Officers will take measures throughout the year to reduce or eliminate potential over-spends.
- 20.7. Other significant risks around budget setting are detailed in the 2020-21 budget papers to County Council<sup>8</sup>, and these will continue to apply in 2021-22, including risks associated with the departure from the European Union (Brexit). Any saving proposals with an impact on service delivery will require public consultation and an Equality and Rural Impact Assessment of all proposals will need to be completed as part of budget-setting.
- 20.8. There remains considerable uncertainty about reforms to local government finance and any funding changes that will be faced in 2021-22 as reflected in the report. The Norfolk County Council Corporate Risk Register details key financial risks in this area, and all risks associated with COVID-19 are also documented in the Risk Register.

## **21. Select Committee comments**

- 21.1. The Council's three Select Committees considered the broad approach to developing budget proposals for the services within their remit at meetings held in September, and noted the opportunities for Members to continue to contribute through the remainder of the 2021-22 Budget process. Specific comments included:
- A suggestion that Select Committees be engaged earlier in the budget setting process for 2022-23, ideally in July next year. [Corporate Select Committee]
  - Support for the value and importance of transformation proposals which should form a key element of 2021-22 proposals. [Corporate Select Committee]
  - Endorsement of the approach to lobbying Government for further funding and support, and the specific approach to responding to consultation on the Comprehensive Spending Review. [Corporate Select Committee]
  - That there is limited scope for savings and a reliance on generating income in relation to many of the services within the Committee's remit. [Infrastructure and Development Select Committee]
  - That the Council faces a difficult planning environment, with risks to the delivery of statutory duties, and that in this context there should be a focus on growing the local economy, attracting inward investment and pushing for further Government funding. [Infrastructure and Development Select Committee]
  - A consideration of the level of uncertainty and risk, including the extent of potential risks to the ability to deliver statutory services, and the importance of raising the Adult Social Care precept in full (if available). [People and Communities Select Committee]

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<sup>8</sup> [Agenda Item 5](#), County Council, 17 February 2020

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## 22. Recommendations

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

## 23. Background Papers

23.1. Norfolk County Council Revenue and Capital Budget 2020-21 to 2023-24, County Council 17/02/2020, agenda item 5 ([here](#))

COVID-19 financial implications for Norfolk County Council, Cabinet 11/05/2020, agenda item 9 ([here](#))

NCC response to COVID-19, Cabinet 11/05/2020, agenda item 8 ([here](#))

Strategic and Financial Planning 2021-22, Cabinet 08/06/2020, agenda item 12 ([here](#))

Strategic and Financial Planning 2021-22, Cabinet 07/09/2020, agenda item 11 ([here](#))

Norfolk County Council Budget Planning 2020-21:

- Corporate Select Committee, agenda item 12 ([here](#))
- Infrastructure and Development Select Committee, agenda item 10 ([here](#))
- People and Communities Select Committee, agenda item 10 ([here](#))

## Officer Contact

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## Appendix 1: Budget setting timetable 2021-22

Activity	Date
June Cabinet (to consider 2021-22 budget process and timetable, agree allocation of savings required and framework for service planning).	08/06/2020
Scrutiny Committee	23/06/2020
<i>FFR exemplifications to be published by Government</i>	<i>Originally Spring / Summer, now delayed</i>
Treasury Fundamental Business Rates Review	July 2020 to Spring 2021
Comprehensive Spending Review	July 2020 to 24/09/2020
NCC Financial Regulations update	Autumn 2020
Budget Challenge (Corporate Board and portfolio leads to consider proposals at extended Corporate Board / Budget Challenge session)	July 2020 (Round 1) September 2020 (Round 2)
September Cabinet (to review MTFs assumptions, proposed areas for savings, and agree any revisions to 2021-22 budget gap targets)	07/09/2020
Select Committees to consider proposed areas for savings	September 2020
Scrutiny Committee	23/09/2020
October Cabinet (to consider final 2021-22 savings proposals for consultation, and overall budget position. Key decision – agree 2021-22 budget proposals for consultation)	05/10/2020
Scrutiny Committee	21/10/2020
Public consultation on 2021-22 Budget proposals	Late October 2020 to December 2020
<del>Autumn Budget 2020 and Provisional Settlement</del> (5 December Government's target date for provisional Local Government Finance Settlement)	<i>November-December*</i>
<b>NEW:</b> Budget Challenge (Corporate Board and portfolio leads to consider proposals at extended Corporate Board / Budget Challenge session)	8 December 2020 (Round 3)
Final Settlement	<i>January 2021*</i>
February Cabinet (to recommend 2021-22 Budget and council tax to County Council).	01/02/2021
Scrutiny Committee (scrutiny of 2021-22 budget proposals, consultation and EQIA)	17/02/2021
County Council Budget Setting (to agree final 2021-22 Budget and level of council tax)	22/02/2021

### Notes:

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

<b>Decision making report title:</b>	<b>Outdoor Learning: A change of service, based at Holt Hall</b>
<b>Date of meeting:</b>	<b>18 November 2020</b>
<b>Responsible Cabinet Member:</b>	<b>Cllr John Fisher (Cabinet Member for Childrens services)</b>
<b>Responsible Director:</b>	Sara Tough
<p><b>Introduction</b></p> <p>Scrutiny have asked 2 questions about:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. the process and timeline for any change to the outdoor learning model at Holt Hall</li> <li>2. the process and timeline to plan the future of Holt Hall dependent on the outcome of (1)</li> </ol> <p><b>Executive Summary</b></p> <p>Outdoor learning is a key part of the curriculum for children and young people. It is a crucial element of a broad and balanced curriculum offer and the local authority has a key role to play in supporting and enabling a strong offer from every Norfolk school to every Norfolk child.</p> <p>At the end of 2019 a review commenced to determine the role of the LA in the provision of outdoor learning and to consider the current model of direct provider alongside a more strategic enabling role.</p> <p>This review has led to a proposal to cease residential and day visits that take place at Holt Hall in favour of a more strategic system leader role. At the time of writing no final decision has been reached as the concluding stage of staff consultation is pending. In coming to that view, it has taken account of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How the local authority can prioritise activity to benefit as many children and young people as possible</li> <li>• The current service is not able to cover costs</li> <li>• Too few Norfolk schools and children and young people access the service</li> <li>• There are other providers that have a similar offer</li> <li>• How we can enable and support the existing market by not being a competitor</li> </ul> <p>The process for reviewing the service was determined by the Children’s Services Leadership team and this process is that which would be undertaken for any service review or restructure</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Engagement with users to understand impact and implications</li> </ul>	

- Consideration and discussion with those directly affected by this decision
- Engagement with union representatives in relation to staff affected
- A detailed financial impact and a Quality Impact Assessment
- A formal staff consultation once a decision has been proposed
- A final decision to be taken by the Executive Director and shared with the council's corporate board once all stages of the process have been complete and taking account of all engagement and staff consultation

If the decision is taken finally, to cease the direct provider model, the building currently used by the service Holt Hall will be handed back to corporate property.

The decision about the future of the building will be taken following the outcome of the service review process. If there is no further use for the building by the council, it will be declared as surplus, and this is a decision taken by Cabinet. The Council will then consider whether the site can be used for other purposes including leasing, selling the business as a going concern, or disposal.

The following paper gives some background and rationale for the proposal to change the current approach

## **Recommendations**

- 1. To understand the process that has been undertaken to arrive at the service level decision.**
- 2. To acknowledge the timeline for the proposed service change**
- 3. To understand the process and timeline to decide the future of Holt Hall should it be declared surplus**

## **1. Background and Rationale**

- 1.1 Outdoor learning is a key approach for education providers, which supports curriculum delivery in a wide range of ways. Using the outdoor environment to teach knowledge as well and a range of personal, social and emotional skills, is a critical tool for teachers. We know and value the impact that learning in different ways i.e. through the physical, outdoor environment has on children's attitudes, engagement, confidence and wellbeing. It is our intention to ensure that we play a more significant role in enabling, supporting and creating curriculum learning opportunities for all children and young people in Norfolk schools, to learn outdoors.
- 1.2 We are reviewing an element of our outdoor learning provision which is currently based at Holt Hall. The current service is the direct provision of residential and day visits related to outdoor learning. We have offered this service for many years; however, it is now entirely dependent on income which must cover all costs.
- 1.3 The current service is supplemented by a small programme of professional development, which would continue, although would be developed more widely,

exploiting digital opportunities as well as delivery within the school and local environment.

- 1.4 The Council owns Holt Hall, which is a Grade II listed Victorian country house, set in 75 acres of woodland, lakes and gardens. It was purchased by Norfolk County Council in 1947 and has been used for educational purposes since the early 1950's. Holt Hall offers residential experiences and day visits for school groups, conference space for meetings, training and events, camping within the grounds, open gate events for the public and school holiday activities for children and their families.
- 1.5 As part of a larger review of all trading across the council, outdoor learning was reviewed, and this confirmed that there has been a significant subsidy needed to maintain the existing provision. Running the current service which prioritises direct delivery to groups of children and young people has cost the Council over £270K over the last 3 years. The review also identified some potential significant future costs to maintain the building.
- 1.6 Across the county of Norfolk, there are a number of outdoor learning / activity centres. As part of our review, we have sought to understand the planned offer and some of the current challenges in at least 10 other centres. It is clear there is alternative provision in the county for outdoor learning programmes including residential activity packages. Norfolk schools already make good use of the range of other providers.
- 1.7 Whilst those who use Holt Hall value it very highly, the usage is relatively small as a proportion of Norfolk schools and children. For example, in the financial year 2019 – 2020, 43 Norfolk schools out of over 450 made use of Holt Hall for a residential visit. This was approximately 7% of all residential outdoor learning visits undertaken by Norfolk schools anywhere in the country. In addition, 32 Norfolk schools held a day visit at Holt Hall and 9 Norfolk schools stayed at the campsite. This represents just over 3,000 children using Holt Hall in the last financial year out of approximately 30,000.
- 1.8 There are opportunities to develop a wider offer to support learning, through play in the outdoor environment, learning linked to the school curriculum and specific approaches to support the development of social, emotional and wellbeing opportunities, through outdoor activity for all Norfolk education providers. We want to significantly expand our role in providing key learning materials, resources and professional development to early years settings, schools and colleges.

## **2. Review Process**

- 2.1 In order to review our current service, we began in November 2019 with a wide-ranging look of our overall approach to outdoor learning within Children's Services. We recognised that predominantly our offer was built around existing physical locations, i.e. Holt Hall and Whitlingham. The need to ensure these services and the buildings they depended on was driving the offer while enabling NCC to take on a system leader role. It was clear that whilst the quality and value of the current offer

was high, it was having a limited reach and impact for Norfolk children across the county. Furthermore, it was being heavily subsidised by the council.

- 2.2 The initial findings of the review recognised the life-long value of outdoor learning experiences to children and citizens, and how this was currently being delivered through a multitude of ways in Norfolk. An option for consideration at this time, was that the Council withdraws from being a direct provider of outdoor learning and focusses on the advisory and support to school's role. Engagement with schools, staff, and stakeholder had only just commenced, when the review was paused in March 2020, as a result of the Coronavirus COVID-19 (COVID) outbreak.
- 2.3 The review was recommenced in July 2020, alongside a recognition of the need to resolve the ongoing financial losses, now exacerbated by closure, due to COVID at both Holt Hall and Whitlingham Adventure. As important, was the even more significant need for a universal offer to support and enable outdoor learning opportunities, across early years and schools. For many providers, utilising the outdoor environment to promote learning and play, was a crucial element to setting up COVID-safe and stimulating learning opportunities.
- 2.4 In order to prioritise the most significant aspects of change in the service, we prioritised the work in three phases. Services delivered from Holt Hall being phase 1, Whitlingham Adventure in Phase 2, and the Educational Advisory support as phase 3. Alongside all of these phases, we are developing our professional development and curriculum learning approach, in the light of the current COVID situation and new ways of learning. This will include our new, expanded offer of resources materials, curriculum plans and professional development.
- 2.5 **Holt Hall Review**  
The premise of our review of phase 1, services delivered at Holt Hall, was that we wanted to recognise the significant value of an outdoor learning curriculum offer and this required a service change to prioritise and develop this for all age groups. We therefore proposed that we should no longer invest in the direct provision of services to children and young people, in order to invest in the wider, enabling role.
- 2.6 The process following some early engagement with schools in July, began in earnest in September and included:
- talking with staff and volunteers,
  - engaging with schools,
  - engaging with Friends of Holt Hall,
  - engaging with the North Norfolk District Council.
- 2.7 This period of engagement did not provide any significant evidence that would change the course of action, and a proposal to cease being a direct provider to support our professional development and enabling role, was taken by the Children's Services Leadership Team in early October 2020.
- 2.8 The process then moved to a consultation with unions and staff members. Following the staff consultation, and a full review of all the outcomes from the process, a final decision will be recommended to the Director of Children's Services on whether to cease the delivery of the service.

## 2.9 High Level Timeline

Activity – Service level	Start	Finish
Staff listening and collation of staff feedback	09/09/2020	02/10/20
Other stakeholder engagement (e.g. FOHH, Holt Hall volunteers, Local Councillor)	09/09/2020	02/10/20
School engagement, to include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Questionnaire provided to all schools via weekly Learning &amp; Inclusion Alert</li> <li>• Direct emails to Schools who raised concerns with Holt Hall remaining closed directing to questionnaire and offering a follow up call</li> <li>• Direct emails to Schools who had future bookings &amp; previous customers at Holt Hall directing to questionnaire</li> </ul>	14/09/2020	25/09/2020
Children’s Services decision on the formal proposal for the future delivery of outdoor learning day visits and residentials at Holt Hall.	28/09/2020	09/10/2020
Formal staff consultation process	15/10/2020	06/11/2020
Consultation feedback process – this will include the publication of a Staff Consultation Feedback document (to include staff comments/questions and management responses)	16/11/20	20/11/2020

Activity – Building		
Children’s Services consider future use of the building (if decision is to cease service)	20/11/20	27/11/20
Property is handed to Norfolk County Council Property Services	27/11/20	
Cabinet report – anticipated December 2020 / January 2021		

## 2.10 Summary of school feedback:

- 46 Norfolk schools have indicated that they would see a reduction, including some stating a significant reduction, in their ability to run school residential visits should we cease to provide this from Holt Hall. This represents approximately 11% of Norfolk schools, and 75% of those that responded.
- 31 Norfolk schools have indicated that they would see a reduction, including some stating a significant reduction, in their ability to run school day visits should we cease to provide this from Holt Hall. This represents approximately 7% of Norfolk Schools, and 51% of those that responded.

2.11 The main challenges, that were common amongst the responses, related to the curriculum challenges that this would pose, to meet expectations without the availability of this resource.

2.12 The conclusion we drew from this engagement, is that a small proportion of schools, particularly those who regularly use Holt Hall, did foresee difficulties from the local authority ceasing to provide residential and day visits at Holt Hall. For schools who do



not use Holt Hall, there only appears limited concern, although we do need to acknowledge that schools will have found it difficult to comment on this due to the uncertainty of what the future will look like from an outdoor learning demand and availability perspective. We will make further contact with the small number of schools who registered that this decision would lead to some difficulties, and working with the market that is in place once residential provision is resumed, and through our curriculum offer, we will offer help and support to broker appropriate provision for these schools.

- 2.13 We received completed responses from 61 Norfolk schools, which equates to approximately 14% of all Norfolk schools. Most Norfolk schools who completed the questionnaire, 47 of the 61, were previous visitors to Holt Hall.
- 2.14 We recognise that the response rate is relatively low, and the current pressures for headteachers and staff in schools due to COVID may have had an impact on the time they could allocate to this task. Therefore, our working hypothesis for the low level of responses from Norfolk schools is that as this was a voluntary survey, only those schools which held strong opinions responded. The responses from those schools we directly contacted was also low which does support this hypothesis.
- 2.15 Other stakeholder feedback was collected through Zoom meetings, Microsoft Teams meetings and calls with those especially associated with Holt Hall. This included staff and volunteers and union representatives. Discussion took place with the Chair of the Friends of Holt Hall and a meeting with the Friends. The Leader of Norfolk District Council was also given an opportunity to provide feedback, from a District perspective.

### **3 Final decisions and the future of the building**

- 3.1 The final service level decision is delegated to the Executive Director for Children's Services, and will be made by the 17<sup>th</sup> of November. The implications of this decision will be considered by Corporate Board before the decision is published.
- 3.2 Following any decision staff will be informed of the outcome. If the decision is to cease the delivery of the service, in the light of the current COVID situation, this will be from December 1<sup>st</sup>, 2020. Wherever possible, we want to work with staff to minimise loss of employment and they will be prioritised at this point for redeployment. We will communicate the decision to all other stakeholders during the third week of November 2020.
- 3.3 The future of the building, Holt Hall is not yet determined. If we confirm our proposed service changes, we will no longer have a need for Holt Hall. At this point the building will be handed to Norfolk County Council's Property Services team. Although not explored in this report, the building condition was explored as part of the Traded Services Review and highlighted a number of areas of investment over the next ten years. As a listed building in a semi-rural area, it has limited alternative uses given Norfolk County Council's requirements for accessible and efficient buildings.

- 3.4 The surplus declaration will be taken to a future Cabinet meeting, but has, at the time of writing this report yet to be confirmed. Once declared as surplus, the Council will then consider whether the site can be other purposes including leasing, selling the business as a going concern, or disposal.

#### **4. Financial Implications**

- 4.1 There will be implications in respect of continuing or ceasing the service, which are largely explained in the report.

#### **5. Resource Implications**

- 5.1 **Staff:** There will be implications for the staff in terms of their future employment, if a decision is made to cease the service.

- 5.2 **Property:** There will be implications in terms of the future use of the building, Holt Hall if a decision is made to cease the service and this is explained in the report.

- 5.3 **IT:** None

#### **6. Other Implications**

##### **6.1 Legal Implications**

None

##### **6.2 Human Rights implications**

None

##### **6.3 Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) (this must be included)**

To be completed

##### **6.4 Health and Safety implications (where appropriate)**

None

##### **6.5 Sustainability implications (where appropriate)**

None

##### **6.6 Any other implications**

None

#### **7. Risk Implications/Assessment**

7.1 N/A

## **8. Select Committee comments**

8.1 N/A

## **9. Recommendations**

9.1 As above

## **10 Background Papers**

10.1 N/A

### **Officer Contact**

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

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## Report to Scrutiny Committee

<b>Report title:</b>	<b>Forward Work Plan</b>
<b>Date of meeting:</b>	<b>18 November 2020</b>
<b>Responsible Cabinet Member:</b>	<b>N/A</b>
<b>Responsible Director:</b>	<b>Executive Director of Strategy and Governance</b>
<b>Is this a key decision?</b>	<b>N/A</b>
<p><b>Actions required</b></p> <p>The Scrutiny Committee is asked to consider and agree the forward work plan and any future items for scrutiny</p>	

### 1. Background and Purpose

- 1.1. Since May 2020 Scrutiny Committee have been considering a forward programme of scrutiny regarding the County Council's response to COVID 19. Members have been focusing areas for consideration on lessons learnt that could be fed into any current emergency planning and issues for longer term recovery planning.
- 1.2. Attached at Appendix A is the proposed programme of work for the remainder of the year, including pre-March 2020 issues, for approval by the Committee.

### 2. Proposals

- 2.1. The Scrutiny Committee has been mindful that the County Council is still in the middle of the COVID 19 crisis and any programme of scrutiny work needs to be able to adapt to constantly changing situations. Proposed longer term areas of work may therefore need to be adapted and changed as the crisis evolves.
- 2.2. In considering any work programme the Committee should consider the following:
  - Is this something that the County Council has the power to change or influence
  - How this work could engage with the activity of the Cabinet and other decision makers, including partners such as the Norfolk Resilience Forum
  - What the benefits are that scrutiny could bring to this issue?
  - How the committee can best carry out work on this subject?
  - What the best outcomes of this work would be?
- 2.3. The Committee may wish to hold additional meetings in the coming months considering any issues highlighted for the work programme.

### **3. Resource Implications**

#### **3.1. Staff:**

The County Council is still in the middle of this crisis and the main focus for Officers will be in dealing with the crisis. Some Officers may be redeployed from their current roles elsewhere to support ongoing work during the pandemic and the Committee may need to be mindful of focusing requests on essential information at this time.

#### **3.2. Property:**

None

#### **3.3. IT:**

None

### **4. Other Implications**

#### **4.1. Legal Implications:**

The Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority and Police and Crime Panel Meetings) (England and Wales) Regulations 2020 ("the Regulations") sets out the framework for Councils to hold Council meetings remotely.

#### **4.2. Human Rights implications**

None

#### **4.3. Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) (this must be included)**

None

#### **4.4. Health and Safety implications (where appropriate)**

None

#### **4.5. Sustainability implications (where appropriate)**

None

#### **4.6. Any other implications**

None

### **5. Risk Implications/Assessment**

#### **5.1. None**

### **6. Select Committee comments**

6.1. Select Committees have received updates on COVID 19, addressing the response from their own service areas. The Scrutiny Committee should take into consideration any future comments raised by the Select Committees regarding their own forward work plans to avoid duplication. Forward work plans are attached as follows:

[Corporate Select Committee](#)

[Infrastructure and Development Select Committee](#)

[People and Communities Select Committee](#)

### **7. Recommendation**

7.1. The Scrutiny Committee is asked to consider and agree the forward work plan and any future items for scrutiny

### **8. Background Papers**

8.1. [Scrutiny Committee meeting : 27 May 2020](#)

## Officer Contact

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

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**Scrutiny Committee Forward Work Programme**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Report</b>	<b>Issues for consideration</b>	<b>Cabinet Member</b>	<b>Exec Director</b>
<b>14 December</b>	<b>Early Years and Family Service</b>	12-month review and update on the move to the new service	John Fisher	Sara Tough
<b>23 December</b>	<b>Call ins only</b>	-		
<b>27 January 21</b>				
<b>17 February 21</b>				
<b>24 March 21</b>				

**To be scheduled:**

- Lessons learnt from the Banham Poultry Outbreak (update following scrutiny at meeting held on 23<sup>rd</sup> September 2020)

**Items to be scheduled from pre-March 2020:**

**Regional Schools Commissioner:**

Report postponed from 17 March 2020 meeting

**Peer Review:**

Consideration of action plan agreed at Cabinet on 2 March 2020.– Report postponed from 17 March meeting