

**Cabinet**  
**Minutes of the Meeting held on Monday 7 March 2022**  
**in the Council Chamber, County Hall, at 10am**

**Present:**

|                        |  |
|------------------------|--|
| Cllr Andrew Proctor    | Chairman. Leader & Cabinet Member for Strategy & Governance.       |
| Cllr Graham Plant      | Vice-Chairman and Cabinet Member for Growing the Economy.          |
| Cllr Bill Borrett      | Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, Public Health and Prevention |
| Cllr Margaret Dewsbury | Cabinet Member for Communities & Partnerships.                     |
| Cllr John Fisher       | Cabinet Member for Children's Services                             |
| Cllr Tom FitzPatrick   | Cabinet Member for Innovation, Transformation & Performance.       |
| Cllr Andy Grant        | Cabinet Member for Environment and Waste                           |
| Cllr Andrew Jamieson   | Cabinet Member for Finance.  |
| Cllr Greg Peck         | Cabinet Member for Commercial Services & Asset Management.         |
| Cllr Martin Wilby      | Cabinet Member for Highways, Infrastructure & Transport.           |

**Executive Directors Present:**

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

On behalf of Councillors and officers of Norfolk County Council, the Chairman condemned Russia's unprovoked war against Ukraine. Norfolk County Council stood ready to help Ukraine and refugees where possible; in the meantime, the People from Abroad team were making preparations to accept refugee settlements in Norfolk. The Chairman advised that the best way for people to help was to make cash donations to organisations such as the Red Cross and the Disasters Emergency Committee Ukraine appeal. Norfolk County Council did not have any energy contracts with Russian controlled firms and had not identified any contracts with any such Russian controlled companies; if they became aware of any, they would take action. The one small contract that was in place with an interpreting company would no longer be used. The Norfolk Pension Fund's exposure to Russian investments before the invasion was small and was now smaller, and work was underway to disinvest in such funds. The Council was proudly flying the Ukrainian flag in solidarity with the Ukrainian people and Councillors' and officers' thoughts and prayers were with them.

A minute's silence was observed to reflect that.

Cabinet Members and Executive Directors formally introduced themselves.

## **1 Apologies for Absence**

1.1 There were no apologies.

## **2 Minutes from the meeting held on Monday 31 January 2022.**

2.1 Cabinet agreed the minutes of the meeting held on Monday 31 January 2022 as an accurate record.

## **3 Declaration of Interests**

3.1 The Chairman declared a “non-pecuniary” interest as a Council appointed director of Repton Property Developments Ltd and Norse Group Ltd.

3.2 The Cabinet Member for Commercial Services and Asset Management declared a “non-pecuniary” interest as a director of Repton Property Developments Ltd and Hethel Innovation Ltd.

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

4.1 No matters were referred to Cabinet.

## **5 Items of Urgent Business**

5.1 No items of urgent business were discussed.

## **6 Public Question Time**

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

6.2.1 Darrel Roper asked a supplementary question:

- He stated that various media statements appeared to be incorrect as they stated that some foster carers may see a reduction in payments, but no one should lose out.
- He noted that documents stated there were 360 fostering households of which 82% were level 5. He stated that this would mean there were 292 carers who would see a loss in allowances each year. The report said of the 427 children cared for 5% were in the category of complex needs which was 22 children.
- Mr Roper noted from his calculations that 75% of carers would be losing a significant amount of their allowance to look after Norfolk’s most vulnerable children and asked if this was acceptable and fair for children to see their opportunities limited and, in some cases, removed by foster carers having their allowances so severely cut.

6.2.2 The Cabinet Member for Children’s Services replied that there was no intention of cutting allowances and payments but instead to put an extra £700,000 into the fostering service and reward carers for the work they did, assessed on the

needs of children using a recognised tool.

6.3.1 Lucy Jones asked a supplementary question:

- The valuing care tool was stated in the report as being an established tool; Lucy Jones asked if it had been used in another authority and linked to foster carer pay and allowances or whether its use in Norfolk was a trial, making Norfolk's children guinea pigs.

6.3.2 The Cabinet Member for Children's Services replied that the valuing care tool was a recognised tool used across the country and was linked to allowances to his knowledge.

6.4.1 Caroline Sykes asked a supplementary question:

- Children with special educational needs and disabilities were disproportionately affected by the pandemic; most children didn't receive speech and language therapy for 18 months or more due to therapists being redeployed. This was understood but not the further reduction; this wasn't widely shared such as with parent carer forums.
- Caroline Sykes asked what measures were being put in place to address the shortage of speech and language therapists.

6.4.2 The Cabinet Member for Children's Services replied that the council was working with speech and language therapy to restore the service that was impacted by Covid-19; there was a nationwide shortage of therapists. The service in Norfolk would be restored to 100% after Easter 2022.

6.5.1 Dennis English asked a supplementary question

- He noted that the council was spending as much on 4 miles of road as on planning with central Government for buses for the whole county.
- He asked if work on the existing route had stopped to limit any further waste of money caused by ground surveying while further routes were assessed.

6.5.2 The Cabinet Member for Highways, Infrastructure and Transport replied that the Norwich Western Link was a priority for the Council, with strong support and would bring many benefits to the county. Slight refinements to the route were normal and it would continue to be worked on with contractors.

6.6.1 Sean Collins asked a supplementary question

- The response to his substantive question indicated there were no grounds to assume building the Norwich Distributor Road had led to an increase in emissions despite a Government report in 2021 which showed a reduction in emissions in Norwich City Centre from 2017-2019 which was due to an increase in traffic flow around the NDR instead of through the city centre.
- Sean Collins asked how the claimed carbon dioxide reductions to be delivered by western link road could be proved if the council denied Government data caused by the NDR.

6.6.2 The Cabinet Member for Highways, Infrastructure and Transport replied that when the Norwich Western Link was built it would cut congestion to the west of Norwich, journey times would be reduced, and emissions would be reduced for areas in the west of Norwich.

## **7 Local Member Questions/Issues**

- 7.1 The list of Local Member questions and the responses is attached to these minutes at Appendix B.
- 7.2.1 Cllr Ben Price asked a supplementary question:
- The publicly available risk register for the Norwich Western Link lists as the first risk “there may be a delay in funding approval for the outline business case due to a general election being called or other factors affecting sign off”. This was categorised as a low risk and the target was July 2021.
  - Cllr Price asked if the Cabinet Member acknowledged that the council had underestimated the risk of the scheme not gaining Department for Transport approval.
- 7.2.2 The Cabinet Member for Highways, Infrastructure and Transport replied that the Norwich Western Link offered good value for money; it was in the council’s submission to the Department for Transport for funding and their decision was awaited so that the project could be continued with.
- 7.3.1 Cllr Jamie Osborn asked a supplementary question:
- Cllr Osborn asked how much money had been spent in the intervening period since bats were found in the area of the Western Link Road up until now when the route was being realigned, which would now be wasted.
- 7.3.2 The Cabinet Member for Highways, Infrastructure and Transport agreed to send a written response to Cllr Osborn. (See appendix C of these minutes).
- 7.4.1 Cllr Brenda Jones asked a supplementary question:
- There was no mention in the report of engagement with carers, providers or those who needed care; Cllr Jones asked which groups were met with, what their input was and when the Cabinet Member would meet with them again to assess success
- 7.4.2 The Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, Public Health and Prevention replied that this was an existing service, and backlogs were a result of the huge pressure in the health and social care system caused by Covid-19. It was not intended to design a new service but to look at what resources and what people were available; due to this and the nature of issues involved there had been no consultation, however, there would be space for a consultation in the future as the service offered was developed.
- 7.5.1 Cllr Mike Smith-Clare asked a supplementary question:
- Cllr Smith-Clare asked why foster carers living outside the county, yet still supporting children in the county, had their questions to cabinet refused. He also asked how many children were being cared for by foster carers outside of the county.
- 7.5.2 The Cabinet Member for Children’s Services agreed to provide a written reply to Cllr Smith-Clare. (See appendix C of these minutes).
- 7.6.1 Cllr Emma Corlett asked a supplementary question

- Cllr Corlett asked how many route variations to the Norwich Western Link were being considered.

7.6.2 The Cabinet Member for Highways, Infrastructure and Transport replied that the route was currently being refined and any information would be brought to the June 2022 Cabinet meeting.

7.7.1 Cllr Maxine Webb asked a supplementary question:

- Cllr Webb stated that taking away speech and language therapy from children with special educational needs and disabilities was cruel, especially given the impact of the pandemic on such children.
- Given the shortage of speech and language therapists she noted that there were many private therapists practicing in Norfolk which the council could employ.
- Cllr Webb stated that this was the third successful legal challenge she knew of and asked when Norfolk County Council would stop targeting children with special educational needs with cruel policies.

7.7.2 The Cabinet Member for Children's Services replied that he didn't believe that children with special educational needs and disabilities had been targeted as the department had managed to engage with an extra 800 children on the waiting list as part of the new policy.

7.8.1 Cllr Brian Watkins asked a supplementary question:

- Cllr Watkins asked for information on the underlying issues leading to the departure of the previous chief executive of Norse Group and what safeguards needed to be introduced to avoid similar issues in future.

7.8.2 The Chairman replied that a briefing note was sent to Councillors stating that Dean Wetteland had left Norse Group in November 2021 and a new chief executive and other senior officers were currently being recruited.

## **8. Point of order**

8.1 Cabinet agreed to take item 14, "Fostering Review", first and then return to the running order of the agenda.

## **9. Fostering Review**

9.1.1 Cabinet received the report setting out proposals to change the way the council remunerated in-house foster carers in response to the current care market, challenges locally and nationally with sufficiency, and our commitment to children being placed in family-based care whenever they are unable to live within their own network. The proposed changes were within the context of and aligned to the wider fostering transformation work which focused a new service delivery model alongside a practice development and training framework for all Fostering Service staff and foster carers.

9.1.2 The Executive Director for Children's Services introduced the report to Cabinet:

- A new fee structure was proposed for in-house foster carers and a recognition scheme to support the placement of harder to place young people and children.
- The Executive Director for Children's Services welcomed foster carers

attending the meeting and thanked those who submitted questions; it was clear the proposals had created strong feelings and she was grateful to those who had given their views to the consultation. The Executive Director for Children's Services recognised that the consultation had created uncertainty and worry which was not the intention and she was sorry for any upset caused.

- Some of what was being proposed had been misconstrued and she hoped that reassurance could be provided in the responses to people and as the report was reviewed.
- The Executive Director for Children's Services recognised that relationships mattered, and the department wanted to have a positive ongoing relationship with all carers. Foster carers did tremendous work, and the Executive Director for Children's Services recognised their dedication. They deserved to be fairly rewarded for their work which was why the payment system had been reviewed, it was proposed to invest £700,000 more in carer allowances and to invest more money in training and support to make Norfolk carers the best paid in the country.
- The policy in place currently didn't reward the carers who looked after children with the highest needs. With extra support and training it was believed more carers could provide loving care and support.
- Norfolk had skilled and experienced carers and with enhanced support they would receive recognition for this under the proposals. Officers didn't want anyone to experience financial hardship and so would continue to work with each carer to review personal circumstances.
- The Executive Director for Children's Services addressed the issues raised around labelling children. It was not proposed to change the way that children in care were assessed, which was based on developmental needs. This was a non-stigmatising way of describing children's needs.
- Foster carers did an excellent job of providing stability and positive outcomes for children in care, but needs often increased as children got older, leading to placements coming under pressure and sometimes breaking down. The proposals in the report hoped to address these challenges and recognise those who committed to children as their needs increased through recognition payments so children could experience stability.

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

- The proposals set out the new suggested fee structure for in-house placements based on Valuing Care scores.
- The Cabinet Member for Children's Services noted the number of questions raised and conversations and meetings held with foster carers and social workers to understand what was being proposed, acknowledging the concerns raised.
- The proposed approach was for the cost of each placement to be dictated by the needs of the child, but training would be provided to ensure all foster carers were trained to meet requirements
- Page 264 of the report identified the rationale of the changes.
- The proposed savings scheme was being put in place based on feedback from foster carers and older looked after children to ensure all children in care had savings and skills to save money for their future independence.
- Page 265 of the report explained the valuing care score which was a recognised way of identifying children's needs.

- Work would be carried out with all carers over the next 18 months to ensure any financial issues were addressed.
- The benefits of the proposals were set out on page 270 of the report including improving stability of placements and children having better stability in education due to staying in placements longer.
- The proposals would increase the financial reward for looking after children with higher need, and hopefully encourage more foster carers to look after sibling groups.
- Some foster carers were worried about a reduction in pay; the Cabinet Member for Children’s Services stated that this would not affect the majority of foster carers. Support would be offered to the minority of foster carers who were affected, including hardship support where required and advice on other benefits available.
- New therapeutic support would be available with a new team available providing outreach support
- The enhanced offer would continue to support carers with greater stability, meaning they did not have to move between teams, something many foster carers had commented on. Training and development would also be improved and strengthened from April 2022.
- It was clear that carers welcomed the proposals in principle, but some were worried about a reduction in fees, which had been acknowledged and these carers would be worked with to address their concerns.
- The increase in money paid to foster carers would be balanced by a decrease in payments to independent fostering agencies.
- The Cabinet Member for Children’s Services moved an amendment to recommendation 1 that Cabinet “approve the investment of £700,000 into the fostering service and the proposal for fostering allowances and fees paid to foster carers, including the increased fee for placements for enhanced needs and agree they take effect for new placements from April 2022”.
- The Cabinet Member for Children’s Services moved recommendation 2 as set out in the report.

9.2 The Cabinet Member for Innovation, Transformation and Performance acknowledged that some people may find the changes challenging but noted there had been a consultation. Some people were on special packages for financial support and were supported on a case-by-case basis; the Cabinet Member for Innovation, Transformation and Performance asked if this would continue. The Cabinet Member for Children’s Services confirmed that this arrangement would continue.

9.3 The Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, Public Health and Prevention welcomed the proposals, noting the excellent work of foster carers and the additional £700,000 to be spent on foster carers and the greater recognition of keeping siblings together. The table on page 286 showed the enhancements of payments which would be available to foster carers under different situations.

9.4 The Cabinet Member for Communities and Partnerships noted that this was the first time fees had been updated since 1993 and would provide security of placement for teenagers and family groups which she felt was the right thing to do.

9.5 The Cabinet Member for Finance noted that Cabinet were being asked to agree

to increase the quantum paid to foster carers of £700,000 each year to begin in April 2022. The purpose of this was to work with, support and incentivise carers to take more children that they were approved for and those with greater need.

9.6 The Chairman pointed out that the report outlined proposed changes to the payment structure and an extra £700,000 a year for carers to focus on the needs and outcomes for children. The intention was for allowances to reward carers who supported children with greater needs and increase use of available foster placements to avoid children being placed in residential care. The structure of foster carer fees had not been reviewed since 1993 and it was important to provide a fair and consistent approach to fees based on the needs of children and increase the support given to all foster carers.

9.7 Cabinet **RESOLVED** to:

1. approve the investment of £700,000 into the fostering service and the proposal for fostering allowances and fees paid to foster carers, including the increased fee for placements for enhanced needs and agree they take effect for new placements from April 2022
2. approve the savings scheme

9.8 **Evidence and Reasons for Decision**

See section 4 of the report.

9.9 **Alternative Options**

Due to the complexity of the proposal, alternative options have been included within the proposal section (section 2 of the report).

**10. Adult Learning Annual Plan**

10.1.1 Cabinet received the report setting out the annual Adult Learning Plan reflecting Norfolk County Council's strategic objectives, as detailed in the Better Together, For Norfolk Strategy 2021-2025.

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

- Recommendation 1 asked Cabinet to commend the Adult Learning service for its exceptional contribution to Norfolk's priorities; the service was one of the largest in the country and was cost neutral to the county.
- Ofsted rated it as a good provider, and it was believed to be close to outstanding.
- When the Covid-19 pandemic started, lockdown caused many adult learning courses to close, but in Norfolk, only those which required specific venues closed, while all others were hosted online. This put more courses online than before the pandemic allowing more people to access courses. One yoga session was attended by 145 people.
- The service was awarded the title of Adult and Community Learning Provider of the Year 2021 At the Times Education Supplement Further Education awards.
- While now moving back to in-person lessons, the service could change the delivery method to online overnight if required. Learners in classrooms and online could join the same lesson at the same time

- Adult Learning had secured £560,000 from the Community Renewal Fund to establish two permanent construction hubs. There was an aim to enrol 600 construction students this year and take up from female learners was being encouraged.
- The service's aspirations were to offer face to face courses within 10 miles of over 90% of Norfolk's communities; running courses in libraries would make them more accessible to communities.
- The wide curriculum included entry level to degree qualifications and allowed people to learn new skills and gain qualifications.
- 41% of learners were from the 30 most deprived wards in Norfolk.
- 98% of apprentices had stayed in long term employment and it was aimed to increase apprenticeships over the next two years.
- Using local facilities and providing 50% of courses online would contribute to the council's net zero aspirations.
- Adult Learning, Together with the Library Service received the Best of Communities Award at the Smarter Working Live Awards 2021, for 'Creating Communities During Covid'.
- The Cabinet Member for Communities and Partnerships moved the recommendations as set out in the report.

10.2 The Chairman endorsed the Cabinet Member for Communities and Partnerships' commendation of the Adult Learning service.

10.3 The Cabinet Member for Children's Services congratulated the Adult Learning Service. The service had shown it was meeting the demands of the current climate.

10.4 The Cabinet Member for Innovation, Transformation and Performance noted that the work of the service built on work done in other parts of the county such as Better Broadband for Norfolk which allowed people in rural areas and those without access to a car to access online courses.

10.5 The Vice-Chairman noted the strength of delivery of apprenticeships. The Vice-Chairman also noted that learners could access the same course online and in a classroom at the same time which provided equitable access to learning for people who wished to retrain.

10.6 The Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, Public Health and Prevention noted the comments of Voluntary Norfolk on page 48 of the report and thanked the Cabinet Member for Communities and Partnerships and the adult learning team for all the support given to people during the pandemic.

10.7 The Chairman commented that this report was demonstrating what Norfolk could do; the service was innovative, with national recognition, bringing in money, and fits well with the Better Together for Norfolk corporate plan.

10.8 Cabinet **RESOLVED** to:

1. commend the Adult Learning service for its exceptional performance and contribution to Norfolk priorities.
2. approve the Adult Learning Annual Plan for 2022/23.

10.9 **Evidence and Reasons for Decision**

This paper demonstrates that the performance of the Adult Learning service, which has gained national recognition for Norfolk County Council and is making strong progress towards a self-assessment judgement of Outstanding, is exceptional in meeting the needs of Norfolk residents and communities.

The Adult Learning Annual Plan is based on the identified needs and priorities for adults in Norfolk. The service's external funding and income enables Norfolk County Council to provide wide-ranging opportunities to Norfolk residents and communities to learn, gain new skills and qualifications and to progress. In addition, residents can access the support they need to live healthy, connected, safe, resilient and independent lives.

## 10.10 **Alternative Options**

The proposed Adult Learning Annual Plan enables Norfolk County Council to maintain its external funding contract with the Education and Skills Funding Agency and tuition fee income and an Ofsted rating of good, as well as to deliver strong outcomes that respond to Norfolk priorities. Cabinet could decide not to deliver adult education in Norfolk and the outcome of this decision would result in the loss of this external funding and the high-quality, place-based service it currently provides to Norfolk residents, communities and employers.

## 11. **Highway Parish Partnership Schemes 2022-23**

11.1.1 Cabinet received the report providing information on the Parish Partnership scheme bids submitted in 2022-23.

11.1.2 The Cabinet Member for Highways, Infrastructure and Transport introduced the report to Cabinet

- The Parish Partnership scheme was established to give local communities the opportunity to influence the programme of small highway improvements.
- The scheme was very popular, and officers had assessed 160 individual bids from Town and Parish Councils across Norfolk. This year's programme would see 153 small local schemes, delivering what communities needed including trods, village gateways, bus shelters and vehicle activated signs.
- The programme was funded with Town and Parish Councils making a contribution, meaning that the council could more than double the impact of the funding. This year, the council's proposed contribution of £674,739 and a Safety Camera Partnership contribution of £62,744 would support the delivery of schemes totalling £1,493,057.
- Whilst the Parish Partnership scheme was not available in urban areas without Parish or Town Councils, significant investment continued to be made in these areas, including the investments being made in Norwich as part of the Transforming Cities Fund and in Great Yarmouth with the Third River Crossing.
- The Cabinet Member for Highways, Infrastructure and Transport moved the recommendations as set out in the report.

11.2 The Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, Public Health and Prevention noted the importance of the scheme for small villages and communities, allowing them to set the agenda for their area. As all projects were match funded from outside

the council this provided good value for money. The Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, Public Health and Prevention noted the positive outcomes of a trod put in place in his constituency area.

- 11.3 The Vice-Chairman noted the variety of schemes that could be funded by this scheme and the positives that could be provided for local areas.
- 11.4 The Cabinet Member for Environment and Waste pointed out that, in the spirit of Working Together for Norfolk, Parish Councils could work together to fund more expensive or larger schemes in their area.
- 11.5 The Cabinet Member for Communities and Partnerships reported that the scheme was valued by Parish Councils, particularly those smaller councils who couldn't raise sufficient funding to put in place schemes themselves.
- 11.6 Cabinet **RESOLVED**:
1. To approve the 121 local schemes listed in Appendix B of the report for inclusion in the Parish Partnership Programme for 2022/23.
  2. To approve the 32 vehicle activated sign schemes listed in Appendix C of the report for inclusion in the Parish Partnership Programme for 2022/23, subject to securing funding from the Safety Camera Partnership.

#### 11.7 **Evidence and Reasons for Decision**

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

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

#### 11.8 **Alternative Options**

It could be decided to reduce the County Council's contribution to the Parish Partnership Programme, or the Council could decide to not utilise highways funding to enable all the assessed bids to progress. In which case, a set of additional criteria would need to be developed to enable the current list of proposed schemes for 2022/23 to be re-assessed. Neither of these options are recommended.

### 12. **Highways Capital Programme 2022/23/24 and Transport Asset Management Plan**

- 12.1.1 Cabinet received the report setting out the Highways Capital Programme 2022/23/24 which helped to deliver corporate objections from the Council's Strategy "Better Together for Norfolk" 2021-25 and Local Transport Plan and detailing the Transport Asset Management Plan.
- 12.1.2 The Executive Director for Community and Environmental Services pointed out

an error in funding figures shown in the report at 1.3.4, appendix A and appendix C of the report; the reported figure of £59.007m should be £81.716m for 2022-23. This related to the external funding profile for the Third River Crossing and did not affect the recommendations set out in the report.

- 12.1.3 The Cabinet Member for Highways, Infrastructure and Transport introduced the report to Cabinet:
- The report summarised the three-year settlement following the Government's October 2021 budget and proposed allocations for 2022/23/24/25.
  - The report also included information on the successful progression of the Third River Crossing in Great Yarmouth, the Transforming Cities Fund in the Greater Norwich Area and Long Stratton Bypass.
  - In recent years, competitive bids had secured significant funding from the Local Growth Fund via the New Anglia Local Enterprise Partnership as well as the Department for Transport's Transforming Cities Fund for improvements, the Challenge and Incentive funds for maintenance, and Active Travel for Walking and Cycling. These funds were replacing needs-based allocations.
  - The recommended allocations for 2022/23 were set out in paragraphs 1.3.3, 1.3.4 and Appendix A of the report.
  - Since writing the report the Department for Transport had announced, on the 28 February 2022, the Highways Capital allowances for the coming year. They were the same as the assumed allocations in the report. They had also given indicative funding levels for subsequent years, allowing planning for the following 3 years, however, allocation remained at 2021-22 levels with no allowance for inflation.
  - The Cabinet Member for Highways, Infrastructure and Transport moved the recommendations as set out in the report.
- 12.2 The Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, Public Health and Prevention endorsed the report which showed the ambition of the Norfolk highways authority to provide a good network across the county. This was an asset used by all people in the county.
- 12.3 The Cabinet Member for Finance endorsed the report and recommendations and noted that £1.5m had been received in tranche 2 of active travel. The outcome of the next tranche was being awaited. The Strategic Outline Business Case for Pullover Roundabout would start soon on West Winch Road, assuming that Government permissions were granted.
- 12.4 The Chairman noted that a lot of money was at stake in the bids being put to Government, but they were progressing positively so far.
- 12.5 The Vice-Chairman noted that investment being brought in across Norfolk showed the council was seeking what was needed to provide infrastructure in Norfolk and thanked the Cabinet Member for Highways, Infrastructure and Transport and his team for their work in achieving this funding. The Cabinet Member for Highways, Infrastructure and Transport added that the Council was lobbying and had support for the A47 dualling; this remained a priority for the council and would be included in the RIS3 submission for funding.
- 12.6 The Cabinet Member for Environment and Waste pointed out that Government

funding tended to be awarded to ambition led authorities, so funding received for the non-active travel was a boost for Norfolk County Council who were being ambitious with highways and alternative forms of transport.

12.7 Cabinet **RESOLVED** to:

1. Approve the Highways Capital Programme including the proposed draft allocations and programme for 2022/23 and indicative allocations for 2023/24/25 (as set out in Appendices A, B and C of the report).
2. Approve the proposals for the £10m Highway Maintenance Fund (as set out in Appendix D of the report).
3. Approve the proposals for the Road Safety Community Fund (as set out in Appendices E and F of the report).
4. Approve the Transport Asset Management Plan (TAMP) for 2022/23 to 2026/27.

12.8 **Evidence and Reasons for Decision**

See section 5 of the Cabinet report

12.9 **Alternative Options**

Differing proposals could be put forward to utilise planned invest differently across the highway assets or provide additional investment from our Council. However, given the performance as detailed in section 5.2 of the report, this is not recommended.

**13. Bus Back Better – Norfolk’s Enhanced Partnership with Bus Operators**

13.1.1 Cabinet received the report setting out Norfolk County Council’s plans to form an Enhanced Partnership with bus operators in order to ensure future financial support for local bus services under the Government’s Bus Back Better National Bus Strategy.

13.1.2 The Executive Director for Community and Environmental Services pointed out the challenges faced by public transport operators over the past two years; the council had strong partnership working with the operators as they bid to Government to take the project to the next stage.

13.1.3 The Cabinet Member for Highways, Infrastructure and Transport introduced the report to Cabinet:

- The Cabinet Member for Highways, Infrastructure and Transport thanked bus companies across the county for their work over the past two years and continuing to deliver a good service.
- In March 2021, the Government announced its new National Bus Strategy, Bus Back Better, setting out their vision to improve bus services in England outside London through better local leadership and joint working between local transport authorities and bus operators to make bus transport a practical and attractive alternative to the car for more people.
- The strategy was announced with £3bn of new funding, since reduced to £1.2bn. To receive any of this funding and continue to receive existing transport-related funding Local Transport Authorities were required to

produce a Bus Service Improvement Plan by 31 October 2021 and form an Enhanced Partnership with local bus operators by 31 March 2022.

- Norfolk's Bus Service Improvement Plan was published by the deadline, with high level aims and objectives to improve public transport in Norfolk. It was not consulted on before publication due to the short timescales involved but would be subject to a full consultation in March 2022.
- The Council requested £106m of funding to deliver the aspirations in the Bus Service Improvement Plan and the consultation would help prioritise deliverables if the full funding was not received.
- The Enhanced Partnership was being formed with bus operators. The report set out what this meant, the initial commitments being made by the County Council and bus operators to improve public transport, next steps, and how commitments could be increased once the level of funding was known.
- Norfolk County Council was on track to meet the 31 March 2022 deadline to form and submit its Enhanced Partnership.
- The Cabinet Member for Highways, Infrastructure and Transport moved the recommendations as set out in the report

- 13.2 The Chairman noted that a better deal for passengers and residents was being sought through this piece of work.
- 13.3 The Cabinet Member for Environment and Waste welcomed the partnership approach and noted this had come about through the London approach where all partners worked together to identify and simplify routes. This partnership would provide a single brand, contactless payments on buses, and help move towards zero carbon buses.
- 13.4 The Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, Public Health and Prevention noted the four key objectives underpinning the partnership which showed the council was engaged in an ambitious bid to meet the four objectives.
- 13.5 The Cabinet Member for Children's Services pointed out that having a better transport system was important to encourage public transport as a first-choice mode of transport.
- 13.6 The Cabinet Member for Innovation, Transformation and Performance discussed integration of timetables and ticketing as an important action and running later buses in rural areas to encourage people to use buses in these areas.
- 13.7 The Vice-Chairman discussed page 147 of the report, where it discussed that the council would be working with neighbouring authorities to synchronise the offer. He pointed out the importance of this to ensure synchronised public transport services for customers.
- 13.8 Cabinet **RESOLVED**:
1. To agree the proposed EP Plan and the commitments in the initial EP (Enhanced Partnership) Scheme, including the EP Board Terms of Reference as detailed in Appendix 3 of the report.
  2. To agree that this Plan and Scheme are adopted by 31 March 2022 as per the original deadline (noting that variations can be made once we know the actual funding levels).

### 13.9 **Evidence and Reasons for Decision**

See section 4 of the report.

### 13.10 **Alternative Options**

See section 5 of the report.

## 14. **Norwich Western Link Update**

- 14.1.1 Cabinet received the report providing an update on progress with the Norwich Western Link since the Cabinet meeting on 7 June 2021, including development of the scheme design and the need to complete this work before undertaking a pre-application consultation.
- 14.1.2 The Executive Director for Community and Environmental Services reported that Council's brief to officers had been to develop a design that would satisfy the business case requirement to Government and meet the high bar at planning which would be tested at public inquiry; this report was an update to Cabinet on the process.
- 14.1.3 The Cabinet Member for Highways, Infrastructure and Transport introduced the report to Cabinet:
- If completed and open for use the Norwich Western Link would have a number of benefits, set out on page 162-163 of the report.
  - Complementary measures to maximise these benefits and support sustainable forms of transport would also be delivered as part of the project and as part of the Transport for Norwich Strategy including a network of walking and cycling links to connect communities within proximity to the Norwich Western Link project, as part of the Sustainable Transport Strategy for the project and improvements to the Dereham Road corridor into Norwich.
  - The benefits of the project were being carefully balanced against potential environmental impacts and concerns that had been raised. The Council was taking its environmental responsibilities very seriously and environmental mitigation measures were an essential part of the scheme design. A significant proportion of the scheme cost was allocated to ensure their provision and delivery of biodiversity net gain on all applicable habitats.
  - The project aimed to minimise and mitigate adverse effects it may have on nature and wildlife, to create new habitats for wildlife and improve existing ones across a wide area to the west of Norwich. The project team were taking an evidence-based approach and receiving advice from experts and statutory bodies to develop the design proposals.
  - The Cabinet Member for Highways, Infrastructure and Transport moved the recommendations as set out in the report
- 14.2 The Cabinet Member for Innovation, Transformation and Performance noted that the project would impact on reducing delivery times to businesses and have positive impacts on the environment. He asked how often the route had been amended in the past and if it would be amended in the future; the Cabinet Member for Highways, Infrastructure and Transport replied that the alignment of the route had been refined where needed, for example to tie in with the proposed

highway junction with the A47 for example. It was appropriate for the design to be realigned in response to evidence. The design would also continue to be developed in response to the upcoming consultation.

- 14.3 The Cabinet Member for Commercial Services and Asset Management spoke in support of delivery of the Norwich Western Link as the Local Member of the area that the road would run through. He reported that villages in this area suffered from rat running and the road would reduce traffic through these villages, for example reducing traffic through Weston Longville by 80%. The Cabinet Member for Commercial Services and Asset Management believed that not building the road would be more damaging to the environment, noting the amount of traffic travelling through rural villages in the surrounding area.
- 14.4 The Cabinet Member for Children's Services felt it was important to move ahead with the Norwich Western Link and was disappointed that Norwich City Council had withdrawn their support for the road.
- 14.5 The Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, Public Health and Prevention spoke in support of the project as a Councillor representing 19 villages to the West of Norwich which suffered from rat running, mostly caused by lorries, resulting in noise and disturbance on narrow rural roads. Providing the Norwich Western Link would improve the lives of people affected by this. Breckland District Council had confirmed that their Cabinet and Council were in support of the Norwich Western Link.
- 14.6 The Vice-Chairman voiced his support for the project pointing out that this scheme sat alongside others which would improve people's lives in Norfolk. The Third River Crossing had to change alignment due to placement of a warehouse and he therefore noted that changes to schemes did not necessarily cost large amounts of money to the council. The council had undertaken research to identify if bats were along the proposed route and realigned it in response to the findings
- 14.7 The Cabinet Member for Communities and Partnerships discussed how Easton, which was in her constituency area, suffered from rat running by lorries on narrow roads. People in the area were therefore in support of the Norwich Western Link to take pressure off their village. Costessey had also put forward their support. An additional benefit of the route would be that the fire service would be able to get to incidents quicker
- 14.8 The Chairman noted information on page 167 of the report at paragraphs 2.2.4 which outlined how the design was based on evidence and advice. Paragraph 2.2.7 of the report discussed how work was being undertaken to refine the route "Following analysis of the data obtained from our 2021 surveys". Page 170 of the report set out the coordinated approach with the A47 dualling. These examples and others throughout the report showed how the route had been proceeded with on an evidential basis.
- 14.9 Cabinet **RESOLVED** to note the work undertaken to progress the NWL and the plan for a further update report to be presented to its meeting on 6 June 2022.
- 14.10 **Evidence and Reasons for Decision**

This report is intended to provide Cabinet with an update on the work undertaken to progress the NWL since the last report to its meeting on 7 June 2021 and to outline its planned intention to continue the necessary scheme development work and submit a further report to its meeting in June 2022.

#### 14.11 **Alternative Options**

The preferred route decision on 15 July 2019 by Cabinet was made as a result of extensive studies and consultation to deal with the transport issues in the area, whilst also having regard to environmental constraints.

Based on development of the design proposals to date, and on the basis of the information collected to date, it is not considered necessary for the Council to re-examine the options selection decision that it made in July 2019.

14.12 Cabinet took a break from 11.58-12:10

#### 15. **NCC Companies Business Plans**

15.1.1 Cabinet received the report seeking Cabinet approval for each of the County Council's four main companies to operate within their 2022/23 Business Plan as approved by their respective Boards.

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

- Cabinet was tasked with reviewing and approving the 2022/23 Business Plans for Hethel Innovation Ltd, Independence Matters C.I.C, Norse Group Limited and Repton Property Developments Limited to ensure they reflected the aspirations of the shareholder.
- The business plans for these four companies were presented to and reviewed by the newly established NCC Owned Companies Governance Panel at its meetings in February 2022 and recommended to Cabinet for approval.
- Hethel Innovation Ltd aimed to extend its reach and be a place for collaborative communities. Its phase four development would increase the offering at the Hethel site, and the council would receive the business case regarding this development. Their strategy was to increase the number of high value jobs and upskill businesses in line with the shareholder objectives. Implementation of the business plan would have a positive impact for the county, providing flexible business spaces coming out of the Covid-19 pandemic.
- It was the first time that Independence Matters C.I.C. had brought their business plan to Cabinet in line with the goal to improve the governance of all Norfolk County Council companies. The plan outlined the challenges in the care market, showed their vision and purpose, an overview of their two care companies, governance arrangements and risks sitting behind the plan. There was a skill shortage in the sector and the business plan set out how they would meet objectives against this.
- Norse Group Limited currently had 60 companies of which 20 were joint ventures with the council. The Business plan outlined how the group would work with unitary, county and district councils along with clients from care, the voluntary sector and education. The business plan

indicated a £2.65m return to the shareholder.

- Repton Property Developments Limited's business plan confirmed they were performing well against objectives and meeting environmental and social objectives. They had a firm pipeline of projects and were seeing progress on a number of sites including providing much needed affordable housing. The company were exceeding targets for private sale receipts and entered into major contracts with providers. The first people had now moved into a Repton home. The business plan set out plans for the future with an emphasis on the next four years. The company were on track to pay a dividend to the shareholder in the next 2-3 years.
- The Cabinet Member for Commercial Services and Asset Management moved the recommendations as set out in the report.

- 15.2 The Cabinet Member for Finance noted the success of the council in developing assets and companies; Norse Group Ltd was the largest Local Authority Trading Company in the UK, returning £2.65m to the council and delivering very good services across the country. Repton Property Developments Ltd was on track to return a £1m dividend to the council but £5m had already been received selling land to the company. The Cabinet Member for Finance highlighted the response to Cllr Steff Aquarone's question about affordable homes which indicated that Repton Property Developments Ltd were ahead in the statutory requirement of providing affordable homes.
- 15.3 The Cabinet Member for Innovation, Transformation and Performance felt that the business plans presented to Cabinet were all positive.
- 15.4 The Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, Public Health and Prevention felt that the business plans were ambitious and pointed out that these companies provided jobs, skills and good and efficient services for the people of Norfolk. He hoped to see Hethel Innovation Ltd grow even more than proposed. The work of Independence Matters C.I.C. was very good and he therefore supported it. Repton were doing a good job of providing affordable housing as well as providing a return to the council.
- 15.5 The Chairman noted that the NCC Owned Companies Governance Panel would review performance of these companies on a regular basis. Hethel Innovation Ltd's business plan set out their four priorities clearly, allowing them to be held to account. Independence Matters C.I.C. was carrying out good work around reablement and prevention, in line with the aims of the council. Norse Group's business plan set out the strengths of the company, variety of services it provided and how the company had ensured it obtained new and maintained existing business. Repton Property Developments Ltd was ensuring that schemes came forward in a measured manner, were meeting policy objectives and making sales.
- 15.6 Cabinet **RESOLVED** to:
1. Review and approve the Hethel Innovation Ltd 2022/23 Business Plan in Appendix A of the report.
  2. Review and approve the Independence Matters C.I.C 2022/23 Business Plan in Appendix B of the report.
  3. Review and approve the Norse Group Limited 2022/23 Business Plan in Appendix C of the report.
  4. Review and approve the Repton Property Developments Limited 2022/23

Business Plan in Appendix D of the report.

## 15.7 **Evidence and Reasons for Decision**

Each company's board has approved a 2022/23 Business Plan and are seeking Cabinet's consent to operate the company in accordance with their Business Plan.

## 15.8 **Alternative Options**

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

## 16 **Impact of winter and Covid on social care - planning for recovery**

16.1.1 Cabinet received the report setting out the Council's proposed approach to recovery and the short to medium-term actions being considered to stabilise services and lay the platform for longer-term recovery aligned to ongoing transformation goals.

16.1.2 The Executive Director for Adult Social Services introduced the report to Council:

- Adult Social Services had been shielding and protecting people and ensuring the NHS was resilient throughout the Covid-19 pandemic. This had sometimes meant taking difficult decisions.
- The report recognised that the nature of Covid-19 had changed, and it was time for recovery actions to start being made.
- The report had been drawn up in discussions with partners in the NHS and in conversations with the voluntary sector. There would be further conversations through the People and Communities Select Committee and Adult Social Care Performance scrutiny sub-committee.
- COVID is not over, and there were continuing restrictions in the care sector related infection control, testing, isolation, and protection of vulnerable people.

16.1.3 The Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, Public Health and Prevention introduced the report to Cabinet:

- The past two years had been a difficult time for everyone in health and social care and there were new outbreaks still occurring in care homes among the most vulnerable people.
- The report looked at how to move forward to recover from the pandemic in social care so that everyone received the care we expect.
- The principles underpinning the approach to recovery were set out on page 326-327 of the report.
- Moving forward and moving out of the emergency phase of the recovery plan, the voice of the service user would be key in looking at permanent solutions. This approach would also be taken through the People and Communities Select Committee process for Councillor input.
- This report represented an opportunity for change, acknowledging the difficulties the health and care system had experienced over the past two years.
- The Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, Public Health and Prevention moved the recommendations as set out in the report.

16.2 The Chairman endorsed recognition of the impact of the pandemic on health and social care and expressed his support of social work teams. He noted it was important to ensure the service was back up to standard for the future. The report summarised the actions required, and work being carried out. Page 346 of the report, paragraph 4.1, set out the equality impact assessment which identified that the approach would be unlikely to impact on people with protected characteristics or disabilities.

16.3 The Cabinet Member for Finance reported that the national hospital discharge fund was extended until the end of this financial year, 2021-22, however there were no agreed plans to extend this further, as detailed in the report. Cabinet Members were working with NHS partners locally and urging Ministers nationally to see if ongoing funding could be secured.

16.4 Cabinet **RESOLVED** to:

- a) Agree the Adult Social Services approach to recovery planning as set out in section 2
- b) Agree that on-going review and monitoring of recovery planning continues through the Performance Review Panel and People Select Committee

16.5 **Impact and Reasons for Decision**

N/A

16.6 **Alternative Options**

None identified

**17 Corporately Significant Vital Signs**

17.1.1 Cabinet received the report setting out the latest corporately significant vital signs outcomes.

17.1.2 The Cabinet Member for Innovation, Transformation and Performance introduced the report to Cabinet:

- Norfolk County Council set itself strong, challenging targets. The vital signs were aligned to the principles underlining Better Together for Norfolk.
- Performance set out in this report included the time when the country moved into the plan B Covid-19 arrangements and when staff were working from home.
- 22 vital signs exceeded target, 6 were within the accepted tolerance and 14 were below or behind their set target.
- The ongoing impact of Covid-19 was seen in several of the corporate signs. For example, the percentage of fire safety audits completed was at 50%, an increase from the previous period, and was due to a Covid-safe service being provided meaning only those most at risk were completed.
- The rate of admissions of people to residential and nursing care per 100,000 population (18-64 years), was red rated but had improved due to the action plan in place.
- The percentage of Looked After Children with up-to-date Personal Education Plan had increase to 96%.
- Sickness absence was below the target indicator at 3.4%.

- There were plans for corrective action for the indicators which were below target.
- The Cabinet Member for Innovation, Transformation and Performance moved the recommendations as set out in the report.

17.2 The Cabinet Member for Children’s Services acknowledged that the rate of Looked-After Children was static. The number of unaccompanied asylum seekers were increasing, and the County was ready to receive asylum seekers from Ukraine if needed. The number of children not in education, employment or training was now improving.

17.3 The Chairman highlighted key vital signs. Vital Sign 501: % of employees with written and agreed goals had a target of 95% and current performance was 83%. This target ran until 30 June 2022, giving further time to achieve the target. The vital sign “absence due to mental health as a percentage of all absence” was static and above target. The Vital Sign “Children's Social Worker Vacancies - % establishment filled (Grade I - L)” was improving with the number of vacancies filled increasing.

17.4 The Cabinet Member for Finance reported that six of the seven finance vital signs were green. The one that was not green was related to the percentage of savings, but this was expected due to the pandemic.

17.5 Cabinet **RESOLVED** to:

1. Review and comment on the end of quarter three performance data.
2. Review the considerations and next steps.
3. Agree the planned actions as set out.

## 17.6 **Evidence and Reasons for Decision**

N/A

## 17.7 **Alternative Options**

Information report.

## 18. **Risk Management**

18.1.1 Cabinet received the report setting out the key messages and the latest corporate risks in March 2022.

18.1.2 The Chairman introduced the report to Cabinet:

- Page 372 of the report, paragraph 2.1, set out general risk messages. Bullet point 3 was highlighted to Cabinet.
- Key changes to corporate risks in the last quarter:
  - RM002: “The potential risk of failure to manage significant reductions in local and national income streams”. The score had been temporarily reduced due to reaching the end of the financial year, but it would increase again in the next financial year.
  - RM010: “The risk of the loss of key ICT systems including: - Network connectivity; - Telephony; - Microsoft Office & all business systems caused by physical, technical or cyber problems”. There were risks of cyber-attacks on UK based organisations due to the

current global situation. There was also a proposed title change as set out on page 373.

- RM023: “Failure to respond to changes to demography, funding, and government policy, with particular regard to Adults Services” was proposed to have its score reduced from 25 to 20.
- RM032: “Capacity to manage multiple disruptions to business”. This risk score was being reduced to 9 due to work done to reduce the risk of disruption to business as usual
- RM022b: this risk had a proposed title change to “Implications of EU Transition for a) external funding and b) Norfolk businesses”.
- The description for RM004 had been updated to reflect risk of failure.

- The Chairman moved the recommendations as set out in the report.

- 18.2 The Vice-Chairman gave an update on RM022b, “Implications of EU Transition for a) external funding and b) Norfolk businesses”. The Norfolk Investment Framework was progressing well. Workshops had been held with key stakeholders to shape priorities for the Norfolk Investment Framework and a collaborative approach would be taken.
- 18.3 The Cabinet Member for Innovation, Transformation and Performance discussed RM010: “The risk of the loss of key ICT systems including: - Network connectivity; - Telephony; - Microsoft Office & all business systems caused by physical, technical or cyber problems”. With the current situation in Ukraine he noted that organisations were more likely to undertake cyber-attacks, so work in this area was very important.
- 18.4 Cabinet **RESOLVED**:
1. To consider and agree the key messages in paragraphs 2.1 and 2.2 and Appendix A of the report containing key changes to corporate risks since the last risk management report in December 2021.
  2. To consider and agree the corporate risks as at March 2022 (Appendix C of the report).
- 18.5 **Evidence and Reasons for Decision**
- Not applicable as no decision is being made.
- 18.6 **Alternative Options**
- There are no alternatives identified.
- 19. Finance Monitoring Report 2021-22 P9 & P10: December 2021 & January 2022**
- 19.1.1 Cabinet received the report giving a summary of the forecast financial position for the 2021-22 Revenue and Capital Budgets, General Balances, and the Council’s Reserves at 31 March 2022, together with related financial information
- 19.1.2 The Cabinet Member for Finance introduced the report to Cabinet:
- The report laid the foundation for next year and it was important to ensure that in the final quarter there were no unforeseen overspends.
  - The Cabinet Member for Finance was pleased to report that, as at the end

of January 2022, the Council was forecasting a balanced budget.

- All departments were at or near budget due to the way emergency funding from Government had been used over the past two years. The Cabinet Member for Finance had attended the resources committee and there was no indication that funding would continue next year.
- Impacts felt across the council and the rise in ongoing demand would remain, as seen in Children's Services where departmental overspend had increased to £13.66m. Departmental reserves had been set against this, so the net overspend was now £6.55m, up from £5.05m in November 2021.
- Children's Services continued to experience high operating pressures as set out in paragraph 2.5 of the report. External social care costs impacted the department as they reduced the number of foster carers and places in residential homes became more expensive. The new deal would increase money paid to foster carers by £700,000 each year, and carers of more challenging children should receive more than those with less challenging needs.
- Adult Social Services were forecasting a balanced in year position after using £8.9m of financial reserves.
- The Community and Environmental Services' position remained unaltered from last month.
- Table 3 showed the rise in forecast departmental position from last month at £143.541m due to increase in LMS balances but mostly due to an increase in Adult Social Services forecast balances.
- The £55m negative reserve was not out of line with similar local authorities and Norfolk County Council and the Local Government Association were lobbying the Government on this matter. The overall quantum of the deficit and formula on what it was based needed to be addressed.
- Achieving 90% of savings targets was a positive achievement due to the disruptions seen this year.
- The Council's borrowing requirement for the year had been completed and taking advantage of low borrowing rates had allowed the council to take advantage of a £718,000 saving on interest payable. Borrowing for capital purposes was £855.324m at the end of January 2022 with £30.905m annual interest.
- No Russian or Belarussian banks were on the approved party list, so the Council had no direct or indirect exposure to them. Norfolk pension fund was valued at 5bn with a total value to Russian interests at 0.25% and reducing. As a member of a pool fund these could not be disinvested as this would mean changes to the investment guidelines which require FSA approval
- The schemes outlined in Recommendation 1 were externally funded showing success in sourcing funding for schemes. Fifty five percent of the capital programme was externally funded.
- The Cabinet Member for Finance moved the recommendations as set out in the report.

## 19.2 Cabinet **RESOLVED** to:

1. To recommend to County Council the addition of **£3.766m** to the capital programme to address capital funding requirements funded from various

external sources as set out in detail in capital Appendix 3, paragraph 4.1 as follows:

- £1m ASC Transformation Programme funded from capital receipts
- £0.880 DfT funding received for the Norwich Western Link
- £0.301m DfT funding received for the St Williams Way Cycle Lane
- £0.225 DfT funding received for the King Street Walking scheme
- £0.116m Local Authority funding received for the Harleston & Redenhall Town Centre Refurbishment
- £0.832m increase in various projects funded by local developer contributions
  - £0.412m increase in the Academies expansion project funded by Academies contributions

2. Subject to County Council approval of recommendation 1 to delegate:

2.1) To the Director of Procurement authority to undertake the necessary procurement processes including the determination of the minimum standards and selection criteria (if any) and the award criteria; to shortlist bidders; to make provisional award decisions (in consultation with the Chief Officer responsible for each scheme); to award contracts; to negotiate where the procurement procedure so permits; and to terminate award procedures if necessary;

2.2) To the Director of Property authority (notwithstanding the limits set out at 5.13.6 and 5.13.7 of Financial Regulations) to negotiate or tender for or otherwise acquire the required land to deliver the schemes (including temporary land required for delivery of the works) and to dispose of land so acquired that is no longer required upon completion of the scheme;

2.3) To each responsible chief officer authority to:

- (in the case of two-stage design and build contracts) agree the price for the works upon completion of the design stage and direct that the works proceed; or alternatively direct that the works be recompeted
- approve purchase orders, employer's instructions, compensation events or other contractual instructions necessary to effect changes in contracts that are necessitated by discoveries, unexpected ground conditions, planning conditions, requirements arising from detailed design or minor changes in scope
- subject always to the forecast cost including works, land, fees and disbursements remaining within the agreed scheme or programme budget.
- That the officers exercising the delegated authorities set out above shall do so in accordance with the council's Policy Framework, with the approach to Social Value in Procurement endorsed by Cabinet at its meeting of 6 July 2020, and with the approach set out in the paper entitled "Sourcing strategy for council services" approved by Policy & Resources Committee at its meeting of 16 July 2018.

3. To recognise the period 10 general fund forecast revenue of a **balanced budget**, noting also that Executive Directors will continue to take measures to reduce or eliminate potential over-spends where these occur within services;

4. To note the COVID-19 funding available of **£102.023m**, including £22.745m brought forward from 2020-21;

5. To recognise the period 10 forecast of 90% savings delivery in 2021-22, noting also that Executive Directors will continue to take measures to mitigate potential savings shortfalls through alternative savings or underspends;
6. To note the forecast General Balances at 31 March 2022 of **£23.763m**.
7. To note the expenditure and funding of the revised current and future 2021-25 capital programmes

### 19.3 **Evidence and Reasons for Decision**

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

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

- Forecast over and under spends
- Covid-19 grant income
- Changes to the approved budget
- Reserves
- Savings

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

- Treasury management
- Payment performance and debt recovery.

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

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

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

### 19.4 **Alternative Options**

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

## 20. **Disposal, acquisition and exploitation of property**

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

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

- Beeston Park was a proposed urban extension to the north of Norwich in the Broadland District Council area.
- The promoter of the development, Town and U&I Plc, came forward with a

proposal to dispose of the site to a single purchaser in 2020. Cabinet resolved to implement the terms of the sale agreed by all landowners in the consortium at their meeting in August 2020.

- This sale did not proceed, however a new bidder had come forward to acquire the development site on similar terms to the previous deal. All other landowners had accepted the proposal.

20.2 The Chairman was pleased to see this project moving forward to realise development on the site.

20.3 The Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, Public Health and Prevention supported this proposal as it had been earmarked for development for some years, noting the need for new homes in this area and that affordable homes would be provided.

20.4 Cabinet **RESOLVED** to instruct the Director of Property to dispose of the County Councils property interest in the Beeston Park development, on the terms as set out in confidential annex Appendix A. In the event the disposal receipt exceeding delegated limits, or this current disposal does not proceed the Director of Property in consultation with the Executive Director of Finance and Commercial Services and Cabinet Member for Commercial Services and Asset Management is authorised to agree terms with the new bidder (or future bidder) and complete the disposal on the best terms possible.

#### 20.5 **Evidence and Reasons for Decision**

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

#### 20.6 **Alternative Options**

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

### 21. **Reports of the Cabinet Member and Officer Delegated Decisions made since the last Cabinet meeting**

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

The meeting ended at 13:11

**The Chairman**

**Cabinet**  
**7 March 2022**  
**Public & Local Member Questions**

| <b>Agenda item 6</b> | <b>Public Question Time</b>   |
|----------------------|---|
| 6.1                  | <p><b>Question from Eleanor Laming</b><br/> In 2023 130 zero emission double decker buses will be added to the existing electric bus fleet with the aim of making Coventry the UK's first all-electric bus city. The target is to have 297 zero emission buses by 2025 and funding has been secured.</p> <p>In contrast Norfolk still has no electric buses at all running on its roads. Bids have been made, but delivery of buses is dependent on these being successful and are for lower vehicle numbers.</p> <p>What further actions will NCC take to make Norfolk a zero emission bus county and what target date has been set to achieve this?</p> <p><b>Response from the Cabinet Member for Highways, Infrastructure and Transport</b><br/> The County Council has submitted an application to the Zero Emission Bus Regional Area (ZEBRA) fund for 15 electric buses to be introduced in Norwich in partnership with First Bus. We hope to hear the outcome of this application before the end of March 2022, which could see these buses in service by March 2024. A successful funding award through ZEBRA provides the opportunity to act as a springboard for further deployment of zero emission buses in Norwich and across Norfolk.</p> <p>We also published the Norfolk Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) in 2021, which sets out a joint aspiration between the County Council and all Norfolk-based bus operators to decarbonise the bus fleet by introducing 100 zero emission buses in Norfolk by 2027. Government funding will be required for the additional cost of buying a zero emission bus compared to a modern diesel bus, as zero emission buses are likely to still attract a premium price that cannot be fully recovered through operating cost savings. Funding will also be required for the installation of suitable charging infrastructure (for battery electric buses) or fuelling infrastructure (for hydrogen fuel cell buses). In total, we have asked Government for £21m through the Norfolk BSIP to fund this ambitious zero emission bus programme. Delivery of the Norfolk BSIP will be closely monitored so that appropriate targets can then be set for the remainder of buses in Norfolk to transition to zero emission beyond these initial funding timescales.</p> <p>Through the delivery of the Transforming Cities Fund (TCF) programme in Greater Norwich, First Bus has also committed to investment of £18m in the delivery of new and refurbished buses in Norwich, as well as the roll-out of next-stop audio and visual announcements on all buses, along with service frequency enhancements. First Bus has made a clear commitment to identify appropriate opportunities to invest these funds in zero emission vehicles where possible.</p> <p>The cost of zero emission buses and supporting infrastructure are the main challenges and there is a strong reliance on government funding to support the transition to zero emission. So far, Government has provided funding to support the delivery of circa 900 zero emission buses out of their target of getting 4,000 zero emission buses in operation by 2025. We remain in close dialogue with all bus operators so that we are in a good position to move forward together in the delivery of zero emission buses when opportunities arise.</p> |

|     |   |
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| 6.2 | <p><b>Question from John Martin</b><br/>Please will you tell me how you reconcile the second sentence of the opening paragraph of the Council's published flyer entitled "Paying for your social care after leaving hospital" with paragraph 6.14 of the Government's policy document published on 19 October last entitled "Hospital Discharge and Community Support: Policy and Operating Model.</p> <p><b>Response from the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, Public Health and Prevention</b><br/>Thank you for your question.</p> <p>This is quite straightforward, the Government's policy document includes information about how services for people discharged from hospital will be funded. As described in paragraph 6.3, the Government has agreed to fund up to four weeks of care for new or additional needs of an individual on discharge from hospital. This is funded via the national NHS hospital discharge budget, and only available for a time limited period, relating to care delivered up to and including 31 March 2022. Paragraph 6.14 says that from week five, the national hospital discharge budget cannot fund services for people discharged from hospital. This means that after that time, the usual charging arrangements apply, and people may be liable to pay for their care. This is in line with what it set out in the Council's leaflet.</p>  |
| 6.3 | <p><b>Question from Phil Garnham</b><br/>The residents of Seething have had to endure the unlawful operation and associated traffic of Whites Recycling for 3 years. As a result of the decision of the Planning Committee made on the 4th February 2022 to refuse the retrospective planning application FUL/2019/0031 by Whites Recycling, will Mr Grant now move quickly towards enforcement measures to ensure the current activities being undertaken at Whites recycling site are stopped?</p> <p><b>Response from the Cabinet Member for Environment and Waste</b><br/>Thank you for your inquiry. Undertaking development without the benefit of planning permission is not an offence, and as the operations has been authorised by the Environment Agency it is not unlawful.</p> <p>However, following the decision by members to refuse the application on highways grounds, the planning service has engaged with the site operator in order to address the alleged breaches of planning control.</p> <p><b>Supplementary Question from Phil Garnham</b><br/>Can he confirm that any enforcement / inspection officers sent to the site, will be representatives of NCC rather than SNDC to ensure that no allegations can be made of conflict of interest overriding enforcement due to the site being owned by South Norfolk Leader, Mr John Fuller?</p> <p><b>Response from the Cabinet Member for Environment and Waste</b><br/>As the matters relate to the management of waste, I can confirm that in this case the county council is the relevant planning authority. The officers dealing with this alleged breach of planning control will come from the County's Planning Service.</p> |
| 6.4 | <p><b>Question from Gaye de Leiros</b><br/>Work has started on a new road system which will mean the closure of Thorpe Road</p>   |

to incoming traffic to the city. Little or no attention was paid to the very deep public concern which was expressed about the increase in traffic that will result, particularly on Rosary Road, St Leonard's Road and Telegraph Lane East. Temporary diversions have shown that these roads are inadequate to serve the more long-term increase in traffic that these changes will bring about. Can you outline what measures you will now introduce to mitigate the impact of increased traffic in these residential areas?

**Response from the Cabinet Member for Highways, Infrastructure and Transport**

At present, Riverside Road (inbound) and Thorpe Road (outbound) are closed during the construction work, which will be having a temporary impact on the local road network. There is signage directing drivers to use appropriate diversion routes and advising drivers not to use smaller local roads. The Council has listened carefully to concerns raised about changes in traffic flows and extensive traffic surveys were undertaken in this area ahead of the scheme starting and further surveys are being undertaken both now and more will be undertaken following scheme completion. The roads being monitored include Telegraph Lane East, Rosary Road, Quebec Road, St Leonards Road and St Matthews Road.

It is important to note that the current temporary restrictions on Riverside Road (inbound) and Thorpe Road (outbound) that are influencing traffic flows in this area at the moment, will be removed following completion of the works, leaving the inbound closure of Thorpe Road in place as a permanent arrangement.

We are aware that your local Councillor has been in dialogue with local residents and business, which included a local survey, and we are working with Cllr Price to identify appropriate measures to address local concerns about speeding and rat running. It has always been the intention of the rail station scheme to look at a wider 20mph zone in this area following the completion of the Thorpe Road bus gate, and funding has been set aside to achieve this. Further engagement with local residents will take place prior to any mitigating measures being provided.

**Supplementary question from Gaye de Leiros**

There was an agreement at the Cabinet meeting September 2020 to introduce a 20-mph limit on Wolfe Road and Quebec Road. Implementation is inexplicably long overdue and public consultation has not even taken place. In the light of the impact of the closure of Thorpe Road can this now be expanded to include, Telegraph Lane East, St Leonard's Road and Rosary Road, together with additional traffic calming measures including speed bumps at key locations?

**Response from the Cabinet Member for Highways, Infrastructure and Transport**

We are aware of the impact of Thorpe Road and are working with Cllr Price to identify appropriate measures to address local concerns about speeding and rat running. As previously outlined, it has always been the intention of the rail station scheme to look at a wider 20mph zone in this area following the completion of the Thorpe Road bus gate, and funding has been set aside to achieve this. Wolfe Road, Quebec Road, Telegraph Lane East, St Leonards Road and Rosary Road will be picked up as part of this assessment. Consideration will be given to the most appropriate form of traffic calming measures to introduce.

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| 6.5 | <p><b>Question from Sally Hook</b><br/>Regarding the scoring of a child, how can you possibly quantify a child's needs when you don't know them?</p> <p><b>Response from the Cabinet Member for Children's Services</b><br/>Social workers are fully trained in assessing the needs of children and there are 6 monthly reviews of the assessment. For any children who have been Looked After for a period of time, their needs will be well known through regular updated assessment. The social worker for the child and the supervising social worker will work together to ensure the assessment of need is accurate and the care needs of the child are well understood.</p>   |
| 6.6 | <p><b>Question from Lucille Omurcan</b><br/>Is it ok in this day and age to label a young person and this to sit on their records? This is what will happen in the proposal for foster carers pay. Also detriment to young person as they won't get the activities due to finances being dropped- activities are needed for continued therapeutic care for our looked after young people</p> <p><b>Response from the Cabinet Member for Children's Services</b><br/>The assessment of children's needs using the valuing care tool is work that is routinely undertaken by social workers. It is completed when a new placement is required and reviewed each time there is a Looked After Child Review. The valuing care tool is designed to consider what children need as opposed to focusing on risks or behaviour as was the basis for assessment previously. As such, the records for children will remain exactly as they are now. We would hope that foster carers continue to utilise the full basic maintenance allowance to provide for the children they care for – this is set at a level that ensures children receive what they need.</p> <p><b>Supplementary question from Lucille Omurcan</b><br/>Have the Norfolk in care council had a voice in this? Usually they are consulted in things that involve them, ultimately this does as it sits on their record.</p> <p><b>Response from the Cabinet Member for Children's Services</b><br/>We really value the input of our In Care Council but we didn't think it would be fair or appropriate to consult young people on what their carers should be paid.</p> |
| 6.7 | <p><b>Question from Darrell Roper</b><br/>The approach of disproportionately affecting level 5s is short sighted...Have you assessed the cost to the NCC of having to pay higher fees to IFAs when a large portion of FCs leave NCC and sign up with them? And in the worse scenario, NCC having to approach IFAs as FCs resign due to the proposed lower allowances</p> <p><b>Response from the Cabinet Member for Children's Services</b><br/>NCC has a clear and consistent approach to family-based placements irrespective of whether they are provided by in-house foster carers or Independent Fostering Agencies (IFAs), including capping fees for foster placements with IFAs to ensure the fees paid to carers are consistent. The approach with IFAs also focuses on ensuring the quality of placements is the same irrespective of whether foster carers are registered with the Norfolk Fostering Service or an IFA.</p>   |
| 6.8 | <p><b>Question from Lucy Jones</b><br/>Could the cabinet explain how they will tell children in a way that builds their self</p>   |

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|      | <p>esteem and self worth rather than re-traumatizes them, that their cooperate parent thinks they are best described standard or complex and the financial implications of this label rather than a unique and loved individual?</p> <p><b>Response from the Cabinet Member for Children's Services</b><br/>The categories for fostering payments are not discussed with children. We share their valuing care assessment with them, but fees paid to foster carers are not something appropriate to talk to children about.</p>   |
| 6.9  | <p><b>Question from Rosie Wright</b><br/>Could the council explain why carers who stated in supervision to their supervising social worker that they had lost confidence in the county council were informed that if this was recorded that it was likely the children would be removed from their care?</p> <p><b>Response from the Cabinet Member for Children's Services</b><br/>We are not aware this has been said to any foster carers and would not condone it. If it has, we would strongly urge them to speak to their supervising social worker's manager or the Head of Fostering.</p> <p><b>Supplementary question from Rosie Wright</b><br/>Does the council accept this is a bullying tactic designed to stop carers speaking out?</p> <p><b>Response from the Cabinet Member for Children's Services</b><br/>Again, this is not something that should ever be said to a foster carer. We would urge the foster carer to speak to a manager so that it can be addressed with the individual social worker.</p>   |
| 6.10 | <p><b>Question from Rachel Howard</b><br/>EDP council quote, "Whilst we have a high proportion of foster carers on level five, many of them are caring for children with significant additional needs or are caring for more than one child." Does the council have any statistics to support this, specifically the number of level five carers who are being recognized as caring for those children and young people who would be considered as enhanced or complex given that at the date that on the date this question was submitted scaling for current children placed with carers has not been released?</p> <p><b>Response from the Cabinet Member for Children's Services</b><br/>We do have this data, although it is based on a fixed point in time. The data is from the start of the consultation period, 25<sup>th</sup> January 2022, which evidences that more than one third (approx. 35%) of Level 5 carers will receive payments based on enhanced or complex needs.</p> <p><b>Supplementary question from Rachel Howard</b><br/>How does the council intend to ensure the dehumanizing grading of children is done with the child's needs at the heart of the process rather than budgetary needs of childrens services and isn't used as a tool by childrens services to control and penalize carers who advocate for the needs of very vulnerable children in their care but may disagree with social workers as they spend significantly more time with the children in their care.</p> <p><b>Response from the Cabinet Member for Children's Services</b><br/>The social workers for the children, who will complete the valuing care tool, will</p> |

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|      | <p>assess accurately and carefully according to the needs of the child. They are not involved in payments to carers and will not be considering this when they complete the assessment. The assessments are overseen by the Team Manager for the child as well as the Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO), both of whom will be considering the accuracy and needs led nature of the assessment. The IRO is an advocate for the child and would not be factoring in the cost of the placement in forming their professional view as to their best interest.</p>  |
| 6.11 | <p><b>Question from Thomas Howard</b><br/>Can the council clarify where the specialist support provision that is being implemented is being recruited for; that it is not people already in role; that it is not social workers who have existing duties being given a training course but not being allocated the time to perform the dual roles and how many new full time employees is this the equivalent of?</p> <p><b>Response from the Cabinet Member for Children's Services</b><br/>We can confirm that the posts are new roles. All recruitment opportunities are shared on our website with existing and new applicants welcomed. These are not roles that require someone to be a qualified social worker.</p> <p><b>Supplementary question from Thomas Howard</b><br/>How many, or what proportion of children in Norfolk's care will have access to these services given that the proposal document indicates that it is specialists working with CWD and post adoption rather than the majority.</p> <p><b>Response from the Cabinet Member for Children's Services</b><br/>The Supporting Resilience Team will be available to all foster carers when support is needed. It is the Occupational Therapist Assistant Practitioner who will in the main work with Children with Disabilities. The Post Adoption Support Team is a wholly separate team in another part of the service and not in scope within the considerations for support to foster carers.</p> |
| 6.12 | <p><b>Question from Sharon Donoghue</b><br/>Would the councillors like to apologise to the most vulnerable children in Norfolk for the distress and anxiety this consultation has caused?</p> <p><b>Response from the Cabinet Member for Children's Services</b><br/>We do not believe that children have been distressed as a result of the proposals as we have urged foster carers not to discuss this with the children they look after as it would be inappropriate to do so. We would want to know if that is the case so support could be offered to the child as required.</p> <p><b>Supplementary question from Sharon Donoghue</b><br/>Will the council apologise for the additional stress to the bereaved friends and families of two families who were end of life when this process was brought in?</p> <p><b>Response from the Cabinet Member for Children's Services</b><br/>The proposals were not designed to cause additional stress to any foster carers. We apologise if this has caused additional stress to the families you speak of and would welcome these instances being highlighted with the Head of Fostering who will respond to them directly to offer support and condolences.</p>  |

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| 6.13 | <p><b>Question from Barbara Dickins</b><br/>Can the Council explain which is more important – matching a young person to the most suitable carers, who able to meet their needs, or adding another young person to a fostering family because they have a spare bed? If matching is the most important factor, then the new pay structure is pointless. It is possible to match a child without giving them a score. If it is adding a child to fill a vacancy, rather than it being the best match, why has matching suddenly been discarded? Matching is considered the most important factor in preventing family breakdown.</p> <p><b>Response from the Cabinet Member for Children’s Services</b><br/>Matching remains the highest priority. All foster carers have their own valuing care score which supports matching. The fostering allowances proposal is not linked to matching in any way, it is a way of determining the fee paid only.</p> <p><b>Supplementary question from Barbara Dickins</b><br/>Does Council agree that carers are skilled and experienced people, who do exceptionally challenging work and that they deserve to be rewarded for this, not expected to take a cut in income? After many years of service this makes many carers feel completely devalued.</p> <p><b>Response from the Cabinet Member for Children’s Services</b><br/>Foster carers are highly valued and provide high quality care and support to many of Norfolk’s Looked After Children. We very much appreciate the work that they do and want them paid fairly. At the moment, we know that some carers who look after children with the greatest needs are not being paid at the higher levels. We also want to work with carers so that they don’t see a reduction in allowances. Our Level 5 carers are highly skilled and can be supported to care for children with additional and/or complex needs or take additional placements they have been approved for to avoid any reduction in income.</p> |
| 6.14 | <p><b>Question from Jason Donoghue</b><br/>Could the committee explain why the consultation started on 17th January, but it was not shared with carers until 26th January?</p> <p><b>Response from the Cabinet Member for Children’s Services</b><br/>It is not clear where the date of 17<sup>th</sup> January came from. The proposal was shared with the Fostering Advisory Partnership on 18<sup>th</sup> January to seek their views, which were taken into account when writing the engagement document and sent on 25<sup>th</sup> January 2022.</p>  |
| 6.15 | <p><b>Question from Andy Oakley</b><br/>Could the committee explain why carers were asked to discuss the consultation with their support social workers and their support managers, but these practitioners had no information on the consultation and could not give information on how the consultation would impact families?</p> <p><b>Response from the Cabinet Member for Children’s Services</b><br/>The consultation document and the proposal were shared with the entire service, both verbally in a whole service meeting prior to the consultation commencing, and then in writing when the consultation document was shared with foster carers on 25<sup>th</sup> January 2022.</p>   |

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|      | <p><b>Supplementary question from Andy Oakley</b><br/>Could the council explain why the consultation was sent out with no co-production with carers, or their supporting network, who understand the role and needs of the children best?</p> <p><b>Response from the Cabinet Member for Children's Services</b><br/>The idea of changes to the accreditation matrix and related fees was raised with the task and finish subgroup of the Fostering Advisory Partnership, chaired and attended by foster carers, throughout 2021. However, the steer from the group, captured in the meeting minutes, was that this should be a task for Children's Services as a department, rather than the group. We therefore worked up a proposal for comment by carers.</p>  |
| 6.16 | <p><b>Question from Laura Oakley</b><br/>Can the council state how much money they will be saving by asking carers to complete life story work with children, this was previously seen a professional role undertaken by specific social work teams?</p> <p><b>Response from the Cabinet Member for Children's Services</b><br/>All within a child's network are responsible for supporting children to understand their life story, and it is the expectation that social workers and other professionals support the conversation. However, children themselves told us they would like to complete at least some of their life story work with their foster carers, and the network will be supported in doing so by the new Support for Success service.</p> <p><b>Supplementary question from Laura Oakley</b><br/>Can the council clarify where the 'specialist support provision' is being recruited from? And that it is not people already in role; and that is it not social workers who have existing duties being given a training course but not being allocated capacity to perform the dual roles.</p> <p><b>Response from the Cabinet Member for Children's Services</b><br/>Please see response given to first question at 6.11</p> |
| 6.17 | <p><b>Question from Yvonne Green</b><br/>How many foster carers does the council expect to lose due to these changes and do they have a plan for the shortfall?</p> <p><b>Response from the Cabinet Member for Children's Services</b><br/>We do not expect to see many foster carers leave us unless that was already their plan, as both the support and remuneration they receive will be highly competitive. However, we have put in place an effective approach with Independent Fostering Agencies, and we are renewing our own recruitment strategy to ensure we have sufficient foster carers.</p> <p><b>Supplementary question from Yvonne Green</b><br/>Is the recruitment and training of replacement carers built into the £700,000.00 increase in budget?</p> <p><b>Response from the Cabinet Member for Children's Services</b><br/>No, the £700,000 is only the additional payments we will be making to the foster carers. The recruitment and training budget is separate from this.</p>  |

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| 6.18 | <p><b>Question from Ben Foster</b><br/>If this new structure is implemented many carers will need to return to paid employment so their houses are not repossessed and they can pay utility bills, in order to carry on fostering. Can the council outline their plan to offer training, statutory meetings and family time supervised by carers out of working hours, Can the council further state that they will pay for child care so carers can attend these meetings that currently happen in school hours?</p> <p><b>Response from the Cabinet Member for Children’s Services</b><br/>There is currently no policy preventing foster carers from working in addition to being foster carers, and we know many foster carers do work as well as foster children. Any child care arrangements would need to be approved by the child’s social worker and would need to be funded by the carer, unless agreed based on individual circumstances of the carer and child.</p> <p><b>Supplementary question from Ben Foster</b><br/>Can the council explain why they are investing 50 million pounds into private profit-making independent fostering agencies but are removing £100 per week from their own experienced carers?</p> <p><b>Response from the Cabinet Member for Children’s Services</b><br/>We are not investing any money in Independent Fostering Agencies. The contract referred to is a re-tendering process for Independent Fostering Agencies, which has a value of approximately a fifth of that stated. The re-tendering process is being completed to ensure that we have the same payments and expectations for both In-House and IFA carers.</p> |
| 6.19 | <p><b>Question from Rosie Smith</b><br/>The consultation states that placements are likely to breakdown when the child reaches 14. Can the council explain the finding of any audit or Independent research they have completed in the last 3 years into why these Norfolk placements have broken down and therefore why they think they won’t breakdown in the future when children receive a voucher for a one off day out as described in the proposal?</p> <p><b>Response from the Cabinet Member for Children’s Services</b><br/>The factors identified in respect of placements breaking down are wide ranging, relating to earlier planning, better training and support for carers and recognition of those carers who are caring for adolescents. As such, we have implemented a number of new policies to support placement stability for this cohort. This includes the introduction of the Placement Planning Review Meetings; new, more in-depth support and training for foster carers; training for supervising social workers; and the recognition scheme. These are all in addition to the existing policies, such as Signs of Stability Meetings and Placement Reflection and Learning Meetings. The recognition scheme is described in full in the paper to Cabinet, which comprises of a voucher up to £100 for a family activity 3 months after the placement starts (or 3 months after a young person reaches their 14<sup>th</sup> birthday), as well as annual payments of £500 for those who continue to care for children aged 14 and over.</p>  |
| 6.20 | <p><b>Question from Susan Mayhew</b><br/>Can the council explain why they are investing 50 million pounds into private profit-making independent fostering agencies but are removing £100 per week from their own experienced carers?</p>  |

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|      | <p><b>Response from the Cabinet Member for Children's Services</b><br/>Please see the response given to the supplementary question at 6.18</p>  |
| 6.21 | <p><b>Question from Lisa Mackenzie</b><br/>Can the council explain if the consultation is not about saving money then why is it going to be 18 months before level 3 kinship carers will be receiving an enhanced package?</p> <p><b>Response from the Cabinet Member for Children's Services</b><br/>Whilst it is something that was considered, recommending that those who will receive an increase in payments do so from April 2022, would incur substantial additional costs (not savings) of approx. £2,250,000. This is because the payments to Level 5 carers are being protected for 18 months.</p>   |
| 6.22 | <p><b>Question from Jo Hacon</b><br/>Could the council explain why the Norfolk in care council were not aware of this consultation over a week after it opened?</p> <p><b>Response from the Cabinet Member for Children's Services</b><br/>Please see the response given to the supplementary question at 6.6</p>   |
| 6.23 | <p><b>Question from Elizabeth Martin</b><br/>Can the council state exactly what they are doing to recruit carers to offer respite to other families to ensure carers do not suffer compassion fatigue and risk placement breakdown. Carers have been told if they asked for respite support so they can say goodbye to a terminally ill family member the placement would be brought to an end. This would mean children who have lived with families for over 3 years losing their home, family and move school for the sake of a few days help. Can the council explain why as a corporate parent this could ever be acceptable practice or in the best interests of the child?</p> <p><b>Response from the Cabinet Member for Children's Services</b><br/>We have a recruitment strategy for foster carers which we continue to review and update to maximise efficacy.<br/>We are unaware of the individual situation you raise but would urge you to raise this with the Head of Fostering so that it can be properly investigated.</p> <p><b>Supplementary question from Elizabeth Martin</b><br/>Does the council accept that with the significant increases in cost of living and an equally significant reduction in allowances children will be put at detriment despite Norfolk having a duty of care for them?</p> <p><b>Response from the Cabinet Member for Children's Services</b><br/>The amount paid to foster carers in respect of meeting the needs of the children in their care (basic maintenance allowance) has been uprated for some children (those aged 0 – 4 and 11 – 15) and remains the same for those aged 5-10 and 16/17. The expectation is that foster carers use the basic maintenance allowance to meet the needs of the children in their care. We want to offer foster carers choice regarding the children they look after and will be supporting them to develop their ability to care for children with additional needs.</p> |

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| 6.24 | <p><b>Question from Kerry Burnett</b><br/>Does the council accept that most children in care have their needs met using at least some of the foster carers professional fee and as such cutting that element significantly means that Norfolk is directly putting the children it has a duty of care for at detriment?</p> <p><b>Response from the Cabinet Member for Children's Services</b><br/>It is the decision of foster carers how they use the 'fee' element of the allowances paid to them.</p>  |
| 6.25 | <p><b>Question from Paul Hammond</b><br/>Can the council explain what new therapeutic support will be in place for children? Will this be similar to the disastrous support for success team which has been found to delay referrals to CAMHS by gatekeeping social workers ability to make referrals. The impact of this has caused more distress to children and stopping CAMHS from being able to support children at an early intervention level, leaving children to deteriorate to a point that they need crisis intervention.</p> <p><b>Response from the Cabinet Member for Children's Services</b><br/>Support for Success has been widely seen as a positive and helpful service, with evidence suggesting it is promoting positive outcomes for children. Delays in CAMHS support are unrelated to Support for Success. The Supporting Resilience Service however is wholly for supporting foster carers in their role and not linked to CAMHS or the emotional wellbeing of children.</p> |
| 6.26 | <p><b>Question from Elisa Hammond</b><br/>Can the council state what they are doing to recruit carers to offer respite to other families to ensure carers don't suffer compassion fatigue and risk placement breakdown. We have numerous examples of carers who were told if they requested respite support so they can say goodbye to a terminally ill family member the placement would be ended. This would mean children who have lived with families for over 3-years would lose their home, family and probably have to move school for the sake of a few days help. Can the council explain why as corporate parent this could ever be acceptable practice or in the best interests of children?</p> <p><b>Response from the Cabinet Member for Children's Services</b><br/>Please see response given to first question at 6.23</p>  |
| 6.27 | <p><b>Question from Debbie Burrell</b><br/>NCC are quoted in the Eastern Daily Press on 23rd February 2022 as saying that level five carers will also have the choice to take on additional children or children with greater needs, which would also lead to an increase in payments. Can the council explain why they are suggesting that carers end existing placements and cause more trauma to children so they can get more money taking on 'children with greater needs'? How does this align with the council's other statements that they are not putting a price on a child's head or that the proposal will stop placements breaking down?</p> <p><b>Response from the Cabinet Member for Children's Services</b><br/>This was not in any way a suggestion for carers to end existing placements, but a statement about their choice and opportunity moving forward. We remain committed to supporting carers who will experience genuine financial hardship on a case-by-</p>             |

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|      | case basis.   |
| 6.28 | <p><b>Question from Martin Dickins</b><br/>Can I ask council if they have considered how a young person might feel when they become eighteen years old and gain access to their records? They will be able to read their scores, agreed at statutory reviews, held twice a year. These amount to someone making a subjective judgement about them as they grow up, and recording this score. I wonder how many cabinet members would like that. Do council accept reading their life story is already likely to be a traumatic experience for a young person.</p> <p><b>Response from the Cabinet Member for Children's Services</b><br/>Young people are aware that their valuing care assessment is routinely updated for and at their review as it is part of the Combined Assessment and Progress Report submitted to the meeting. This has been the case since 2019.</p> <p><b>Supplementary question from Martin Dickins</b><br/>Does council agree that scoring a child at their review is not the best way to ascertain a foster carer's pay? The child and their birth family are often present at reviews. A young person's meeting should be focused on the child's wishes and feelings and not become a foster carer's pay review.</p> <p><b>Response from the Cabinet Member for Children's Services</b><br/>Valuing care assessments are routine assessments completed when a placement is required for a child and updated before every Looked After Child Review.</p> |
| 6.29 | <p><b>Question from Jackie Venables</b><br/>Do you know how much money was spent on external consultation with Impower and why children services didn't use their own experienced, knowledgeable members of staff or foster carers, as lots of the staff do not know anything about this?</p> <p><b>Response from the Cabinet Member for Children's Services</b><br/>IMPOWER has not been directly involved in valuing care in Norfolk since it was established as a core way of working in 2019. The assessment tool is well embedded in practice and continues to be a highly effective way of understanding the care needs of children in care.</p> <p><b>Supplementary question from Jackie Venables</b><br/>Have the In Care Council members been consulted?</p> <p><b>Response from the Cabinet Member for Children's Services</b><br/>In consultation with the Assistant Director for Corporate Parenting, participation of and consultation with children and young people regarding what foster carers should be paid was deemed inappropriate</p>   |
| 6.30 | <p><b>Question from Annette Clarke</b><br/>Can the council clarify why the retention, experience and skills of a social worker are worth paying for via golden handshakes amounting to £2,500, relocation payoff upto £10,000 and a loyalty payment paid in stages over three years totaling £12,000.... yet foster carers should not have their skills, experience and loyalty recognized and in fact should be financially penalized for those same values?</p>   |

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|      | <p><b>Response from the Cabinet Member for Children's Services</b><br/>The recruitment and retention of social workers is a separate issue from the payments we make to foster carers and are only made specifically to those in the Family Assessment and Safeguarding Teams due to the ongoing challenges with recruitment and retention in that area, mirroring a national picture.</p> <p><b>Supplementary question from Annette Clarke</b><br/>Clarify why Norfolk is budgeting above £50m for IFA's which undoubtedly includes profit margin for those agencies but will not fairly recognise that Norfolks own inhouse carers care for more children than IFA's for a fraction of cost even at higher (more appropriate) allowances. How can Norfolk justify cutting their own carers allowances when this will cause many to move to IFA's costing more to fund the same people to care for the same placements?</p> <p><b>Response from the Cabinet Member for Children's Services</b><br/>We are not budgeting £50m for Independent Fostering Agencies (IFAs). The amount paid to IFAs is substantially less - approximately a fifth of that stated - and it is expected to reduce over the next 3 years as advised within the paper to Cabinet. This reduction is expected due to the same principles being applied to IFA placements as those to in-house foster placements</p> |
| 6.31 | <p><b>Question from Beccy Emptage</b><br/>Does the council accept that most children in care have their needs met using at least some of the foster carers professional fee and as such cutting that element significantly means that Norfolk is directly putting the children it has a duty of care for at detriment?</p> <p><b>Response from the Cabinet Member for Children's Services</b><br/>The amount paid to foster carers in respect of meeting the needs of the children in their care (basic maintenance allowance) has been uprated for some children (those aged 0 – 4 and 11 – 15) and remains the same for those aged 5-10 and 16/17. The expectation is that foster carers use the basic maintenance allowance to meet the needs of the children in their care. It is the decision of foster carers how they use the 'fee' element of the allowances paid to them.</p> <p><b>Supplementary question from Beccy Emptage</b><br/>Does the reduction/levelling of fees take into account the mandatory savings or will carers be expected to pay this too on the reduced fee?</p> <p><b>Response from the Cabinet Member for Children's Services</b><br/>The mandatory savings should be taken from the basic maintenance allowance.</p>   |
| 6.32 | <p><b>Question from Leanne Roper</b><br/>Does the council accept that losing over 100 caring households in a year (450 reduced to 352) is a significant reduction in carers prepared to work for the council?</p> <p><b>Response from the Cabinet Member for Children's Services</b><br/>We are unaware of the numbers quoted within this question. We currently have 368 fostering households. The number of fostering households remains relatively static, with only small changes from year to year. Whilst we have 368 fostering households now, in March 2021 we had 358 and in March 2020 we had 378.</p>  |

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| 6.33 | <p><b>Question from Mark Emptage</b><br/>Can the council state exactly what they are doing to recruit carers for respite, to ensure carers do not suffer compassion fatigue and risk placement breakdown? We have numerous examples of carers who were told if they asked for respite support so that they can say goodbye to a terminally ill family member the placement would be brought to an end. To be very clear this would mean children who have lived with families for up to and over three years would lose their home, family and probably have to move school for the sake of a few days help.</p> <p><b>Response from the Cabinet Member for Children's Services</b><br/>Please see response given to first question at 6.23</p> <p><b>Supplementary question from Mark Emptage</b><br/>Can the council explain why as a corporate parent this could ever be acceptable practice or in the best interests of the child?</p> <p><b>Response from the Cabinet Member for Children's Services</b><br/>Please see response given to first question at 6.23</p>  |
| 6.34 | <p><b>Question from Michael Jones</b><br/>Could the officer responsible explain what plans are in place to apologise and mend relationships with experienced carers following this damaging consultation or has the numbers of experienced and dedicated carers who will have to make the heartbreaking decision to leave the profession been written off in order to save face for the council and the assistant director just to get the proposal through?</p> <p><b>Response from the Cabinet Member for Children's Services</b><br/>We hope that no foster carers will leave Norfolk Fostering Service as we remain dedicated to supporting them in continuing to provide excellent care to children in Norfolk. We want to continue to engage and work with carers and have offered to meet individually with those who want to discuss the proposals</p> <p><b>Supplementary question from Michael Jones</b><br/>Could the officer state exactly how much of the £700, 000.00 investment will be wasted on recruiting new carers urgently, rather than valuing the committed service current carers provide and how they can justify the additional damage this will cause to the already vulnerable young people in the care of the council as their corporate parents ?</p> <p><b>Response from the Cabinet Member for Children's Services</b><br/>The £700,000 represents the increased allowances paid to foster carers only. We have a separate budget to support our recruitment strategy for foster carers.</p> |
| 6.35 | <p><b>Question from Sarah Butterfield</b><br/>Quote from Communitycare.co.uk 25/02/2022. Article- Call for 'serious reform' to reduce number of children placed out of area. "To address this, the APPG called for a national recruitment, skills and retention strategy for the workforce, including foster carers, to tackle current shortages, reduce turnover and improve career progression."</p> <p>How does Norfolk feel it's transformation plans reflect the strategy of the APPG who are looking at the best needs of looked after children in this context?</p>   |

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|      | <p><b>Response from the Cabinet Member for Children's Services</b><br/>The transformation of Norfolk Fostering Service and the proposal in respect of fostering allowances are part of a wider Norfolk strategy to support children to being placed in family based care close to their families and communities.</p> <p><b>Supplementary question from Sarah Butterfield</b><br/>Do the new proposed allowances include holiday, birthday and Christmas elements or will these be paid separately or alternatively stopped completely?</p> <p><b>Response from the Cabinet Member for Children's Services</b><br/>These will continue to be paid as they are now, with no changes proposed.</p>  |
| 6.36 | <p><b>Question from Julie Pyatt</b><br/>Does the Council accept that losing over 100 foster caring Norfolk households in the last year (450 reduced to 352) is haemorrhaging carers prepared to work for the council and this will have a detrimental impact in matching carers who have the right skills and experience to care for children coming into care, furthermore this will lead to more frequent moves for children which is documented to be detrimental to children's future outcomes?</p> <p><b>Response from the Cabinet Member for Children's Services</b><br/>We are unaware of the numbers quoted within this question. We currently have 368 fostering households. We are aware that the number of fostering households remains relatively static, with only small changes from year to year. Whilst we have 368 fostering households now, in March 2021 we had 358 and in March 2020 we had 378.</p> <p><b>Supplementary question from Julie Pyatt</b><br/>Is this the reason that advertising for new carers has been changed to include the term "urgently needed" in the advertising description for new carers, would it not be a better option for the council to offer carers a co-produced and balanced proposal which is better in order to encourage them to stay thereby allowing Norfolk children to be cared for by experienced carers rather than new inexperienced ones?</p> <p><b>Response from the Cabinet Member for Children's Services</b><br/>We already know that we need more foster carers over the coming years due to the age profile of our current fostering household cohort. We also know that more children nationally are in care (15% increase), and as such, we are seeking to recruit more foster carers and continue to review our strategy for recruitment.</p> |
| 6.37 | <p><b>Question from Sarah Mayes</b><br/>Can the council explain if the consultation is not about saving money then why is it going to be 18 months before level 3 kinship carers will be receiving an enhanced package?<br/>I am in Norfolk</p> <p><b>Response from the Cabinet Member for Children's Services</b><br/>Whilst it is something that was considered, recommending that those who will receive an increase in payments do so from April 2022, would incur substantial additional costs (not savings) of approx. £2,250,000. This is because the payments to Level 5 carers are being protected for 18 months.</p>  |

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|      | <p><b>Supplementary question from Sarah Mayes</b><br/>Does the council accept that increasing the number of children in a foster family due to a child being labeled as "standard" can reduce stability and increase placement breakdowns?</p> <p><b>Response from the Cabinet Member for Children's Services</b><br/>The assessment of need for each child is completed individually, considering only that child. Matching is also considered on an individual basis to support stability of the placement. Additional support will be available to any foster carer experiencing challenges that may lead to breakdown of placement, and will be fully explored, including early planning via the Placement Planning Review and Signs of Stability meetings. Additional support is available should there be any concerns regarding stability from the Support for Success and Supporting Resilience services, both of which have clinical oversight.</p>   |
| 6.38 | <p><b>Question from Susan Madden</b><br/>In view of the all-party parliamentary group (APPG) on children in care and care leavers recommendations on children being placed within 20 miles of home, continuity of placements/reduction in placement moves, recruitment and retention of the workforce including foster carers how do you the council members as corporate parents plan to implement suggestions when the current proposals are not valuing the expertise and experience of Norfolk LA foster carers and appears to encourage them to either leave the profession (resulting in placement breakdowns) or move to agencies at an increased cost to NCC ?</p> <p><b>Response from the Cabinet Member for Children's Services</b><br/>We very much value the care provided by Norfolk foster carers. We aim to always place a child within 20 miles from home when it is in the child's best interests. However, this does not always necessarily mean a placement in the county of Norfolk, as it depends on where the parents live. As we know, some living in the West and East of the county would be closer to Suffolk or Cambridgeshire/Lincolnshire, and others no longer live in Norfolk.</p> <p><b>Supplementary question from Susan Madden</b><br/>Given that Ofsted will not award good or outstanding marks to any council that is not completing high standard work on life story work for looked after children why are you changing from life story work being completed by fully trained social workers to foster carers?</p> <p><b>Response from the Cabinet Member for Children's Services</b><br/>Please see response given to first question at 6.16</p> |
| 6.39 | <p><b>Question from David Hughes</b><br/>Surely it is in the best interest of the child to have stable placements. These require a stable home, which in turn require a stable income, linked to inflation. Therefore how can the Council justify the proposed continual uncertainty for carers of their fostering income, particularly using a tool which by their own admission (recent NCC-sponsored article in "Community Care") can give quite different results from one social worker's assessment to another's?</p> <p><b>Response from the Cabinet Member for Children's Services</b><br/>The purpose of the 6 monthly review is to consider the needs of the child and how</p>   |

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|      | <p>they impact on the placement as well as the support that is needed. We anticipate that in the main, needs will increase. However, we will closely monitor the prevalence of decreasing need and impact on carers and make adjustments accordingly. Social workers are skilled in completing assessments for children and the valuing care tool has been embedded in practice for the past three years. There is significant oversight of the valuing care assessment from professionals within the child's network to ensure that the assessment is accurate.</p>  |
| 6.40 | <p><b>Question from Emma Stannard</b><br/>The council is quoted as saying "other level 5 carers will also have the choice to take on additional children or children with greater needs, which would also lead to an increase in payments." Is the council encouraging carers to end placements, to take on more complex children, so as not to be at financial detriment?</p> <p><b>Response from the Cabinet Member for Children's Services</b><br/>This was not in any way a suggestion for carers to end existing placements, but a statement about their choice and opportunity moving forward. We remain committed to supporting carers who will experience genuine financial hardship on a case-by-case basis.</p>   |
| 6.41 | <p><b>Question from Clare Gasson</b><br/>NCC are quoted in the Eastern Daily Press on 23rd February 2022, as saying that level five carers will also have the choice to take on additional children or children with greater needs, which would also lead to an increase in payments. Can the council explain why they are suggesting that carers end existing placements and cause more trauma to children so they can get more money taking on "children with greater needs"?</p> <p><b>Response from the Cabinet Member for Children's Services</b><br/>Please see response given to question at 6.40</p> <p><b>Supplementary question from Clare Gasson</b><br/>How does this align with the council's other statements that they are not putting a price on a child's head, or that the proposal will stop placements breaking down?</p> <p><b>Response from the Cabinet Member for Children's Services</b><br/>We are not encouraging carers to give notice on existing placements. The fees paid to carers are focused on the needs of the child and the impact of those needs on foster carers who are looking after them</p> |
| 6.42 | <p><b>Question from Martyn Stannard</b><br/>How has the £700,000 invested into fostering been calculated? Does it include the recruitment and retainment packages for social workers? If the investment includes fostering allowances, how has this been calculated, when at the date this question is submitted, NCC has not yet scaled the children in its care, to establish what level of care each child fits within?</p> <p><b>Response from the Cabinet Member for Children's Services</b><br/>The £700,000 represents the increased allowances paid to foster carers only. We have a separate budget to support our recruitment strategy for foster carers. The calculations are included in the proposal to Cabinet and can be accessed on the <a href="http://norfolk.gov.uk">norfolk.gov.uk</a> website. All children in care have a valuing care assessment as one is</p>   |

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|      | required prior to a child being placed in care.   |
| 6.43 | <p><b>Question from Roni Kingston-miles</b><br/>Has the council taken into consideration the impact this is going to have on children and young people, when 82% of their carers are level 5 and this decrease in the allowance's means that we aren't going to be able to support these young people in the way that they deserve to be. Many fostering families have children of their own and to give experiences to the young people that they have missed out on, involves a family trip out, which we won't have the money to do. Basic things like going to the cinema, swimming.</p> <p><b>Response from the Cabinet Member for Children's Services</b><br/>Currently, 73% of foster carers are level 5 carers. We pay a basic maintenance allowance for children and would expect that this is used in its entirety to meet the needs of the child in placement.</p>   |
| 6.44 | <p><b>Question from Chris Smith</b><br/>The consultation states that placements are likely to break down when the child reaches 14. Can the council explain the finding of any audit or independent research they have completed in the 3 years into why these Norfolk placements have broken down and therefore why they think they won't breakdown in the future when children receive a voucher for a one off day out as described in the consultation?</p> <p><b>Response from the Cabinet Member for Children's Services</b><br/>The factors identified in respect of placements breaking down are wide ranging, relating to earlier planning, better training and support for carers and recognition of those carers who are caring for adolescents. As such, we have implemented a number of new policies to support placement stability for this cohort. This includes the introduction of the Placement Planning Review Meetings; new, more in-depth support and training for foster carers; training for supervising social workers; and the recognition scheme. These are all in addition to the existing policies, such as Signs of Stability Meetings and Placement Reflection and Learning Meetings. The recognition scheme is described in full in the paper to Cabinet, which comprises of a voucher up to £100 for a family activity 3 months after the placement starts (or 3 months after a young person reaches their 14<sup>th</sup> birthday), as well as annual payments of £500 for those who continue to care for children aged 14 and over.</p> |
| 6.45 | <p><b>Question from Desiree Pennington</b><br/>As a foster carer, my relationship with social workers is characterised by open communication around the child. The proposal changes this relationship, as the social workers become an integral part of the financial machinery. This will create resentment when a foster carer's own assessment of their child's banding differs with their social worker's assessment. What research evidence do you have that the resulting tension will not lead to more broken placements rather than the optimistic reliance on foster carer goodwill cited at Para 9.3?</p> <p><b>Response from the Cabinet Member for Children's Services</b><br/>The proposal will be reliant on the open communication with social workers that you refer to. This approach will be needed to ensure that the scoring is reflective of the needs of the child, and both the child's social worker and the supervising social worker will work with the foster carer around the scoring. We know that both social workers and the foster carers will focus on the best interests of the young person,</p>   |

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|      | <p>and we hope that this will take precedence over any resentment.</p> <p><b>Supplementary question from Desiree Pennington</b><br/>Building on the theme of goodwill, your proposal states that foster carers are driven by goodwill, and not motivated by financial reward. What research evidence, therefore, leads you to believe that changing the remuneration structure will unlock un-used fostering placement bedrooms, when the fostering household has decided that their limit has been reached?</p> <p><b>Response from the Cabinet Member for Children's Services</b><br/>The role of the supervising social worker will be to support foster carers to consider their situation where they are approved for more placements than they currently have. Where foster carers are of the view that they do not want to offer placements according to their approval, the matter will be addressed within their annual review via Panel. We have reviewed the annual reviews for foster carers over the past year and we have seen a number of foster carers respond to this reviewing process in this matter.</p>   |
| 6.46 | <p><b>Question from Samantha Adcock</b><br/>Can you explain why some foster carers are being told another placement is not possible along their current foster child placement due to their needs, but then the current child is classed as a standard placement?</p> <p><b>Response from the Cabinet Member for Children's Services</b><br/>It is not possible to discuss individual cases, however, where this is the case, we would urge you to speak to your supervising social worker and/or their manager to establish what the reasons are. This will ensure that there is an open conversation, and any financial implications can be discussed too.</p> <p><b>Supplementary question from Samantha Adcock</b><br/>This would then mean a lower payment to foster carers or possibly meaning a breakdown in that current placement- how is that right?</p> <p><b>Response from the Cabinet Member for Children's Services</b><br/>It is not possible to discuss individual circumstances. Sometimes there is a request that children have time to settle in placement before another child is matched, or sometimes it is due to the needs of the child a placement is being sought for. Similarly, it can be due to the specific skill set of that carer. However, where there is a genuine need for a child to remain the only child in placement, the fostering service will consider the financial implications of this.</p> |
| 6.47 | <p><b>Question from Dawn Prideaux</b><br/>Can the council account, for why they are intending to reduce the child's maintenance for 5-10 year olds and 16-18 year olds in this proposal?</p> <p><b>Response from the Cabinet Member for Children's Services</b><br/>This is not a reduction of basic maintenance allowance (BMA) for those age groups. We have extended the BMA to include children aged 0-4 and 11-15 respectively.</p> <p><b>Supplementary question from Dawn Prideaux</b><br/>Does the council accept that even with more than one child in a carers home, a level five carer will still be at a financial loss compared to before the transformation?</p>  |

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|      | <p><b>Response from the Cabinet Member for Children's Services</b><br/>This will depend on the assessed needs of the children in placement.</p>  |
| 6.48 | <p><b>Question from Natasha Potter</b><br/>The papers submitted to cabinet state that the allowances are equivalent to a salary of 27kpa for a single "standard" child under 10. Normally a salary can be spent on whatever the person who earned it sees fit. The council appears to have included the child maintenance element in what it called the equivalent of a 27kpa salary. does the council understand that the child maintenance element has to be spent on certain thing which are dictated to us; and that the fee element is equivalent to £11,900 per annum (gross) in a normal role which, I think, the council has to agree is substantially differently to the proposals claim.</p> <p><b>Response from the Cabinet Member for Children's Services</b><br/>The financial statement within the Cabinet paper that is referred to was designed to explain the impact of the tax and National Insurance relief.</p> <p><b>Supplementary Question from Natasha Potter</b><br/>Proposal documents state: 75% of children will be "standard", 20% will be "enhanced" and 5% will be "complex" no complex will be under 11yrs old. Can the council accept that it's impossible to know the needs of children coming into care and that to fit these proposed figures and budgets it's highly likely that children will be inaccurately scaled to fit within budget rather than focusing on the needs of the child and good matching?</p> <p><b>Response from the Cabinet Member for Children's Services</b><br/>The paper sets out that there is only one allowance paid to carers irrespective of the age of the child, not that there are no children under the age of 11 with complex needs</p> |
| 6.49 | <p><b>Question from Francis Pennington</b><br/>Para 3.2.6 in the proposal indicates a change in fee from £27,832 to £22,100. Once we strip out the basic maintenance allowance for the child - (approx. £10,000 per year), the skills payment for a foster carer reduces from £17,832 to £12,100. A 32% reduction, which is to be considered every six months. This is a huge change in income. It is also a perverse incentive for foster carers whose therapeutic dedication has helped achieve the outcome. Payment could increase but decreases matter more to household budgets. What research evidence, therefore, is there that "we will see an increase in the number of potential foster carers coming forward?" Para 9.2</p> <p><b>Response from the Cabinet Member for Children's Services</b><br/>This statement is based on the payments we are proposing for foster carers who join Norfolk Fostering Service. We know that we will be one of the highest paying Local Authorities, both in terms of our minimum and maximum payments, and is competitive with many Independent Fostering Agencies (IFAs). This was established through researching fostering allowances paid by other Local Authorities and IFAs.</p> <p><b>Supplementary question from Francis Pennington</b><br/>Does the Cabinet believe that the foster carer fee of £12,000 - approx £250/week - which will apply to 75% of the children in care - adequately reflects the skills, knowledge and attitude required by Norfolk foster carers?</p>   |

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|      | <p><b>Response from the Cabinet Member for Children's Services</b><br/>The fostering allowances set within the proposal are designed to be competitive when compared with other Local Authorities and Independent Fostering Agencies.</p>  |
| 6.50 | <p><b>Question from Hannah Roach</b><br/>The proposal document shows improved figures for allowances after feedback but the proposal does not recommend the improved figures to be approved. Can the council clarify why the stability of placements and the retention of carers is so worthless that the improved offer would not cost out or be recommended given that the proposal itself states that this improved figure would make the council comparable to the highest paying IFA's, surely this is the minimum allowance to ensure that carers transfer from IFA's rather than to them?</p> <p><b>Response from the Cabinet Member for Children's Services</b><br/>The cost of the increases suggested are prohibitive in these challenging financial times and it has not been possible to mitigate within the Children's Services budget the additional £0.5m it would cost each year. However, the increase in allowances paid to children with additional needs (Enhanced) has been recommended so that it matches the current Level 5 accreditation.</p> <p><b>Supplementary question from Hannah Roach</b><br/>The documents submitted say that the council will support carers facing financial hardship with advice on claiming benefits. Does this mean that the council openly admits that it is forcing carers, and by default, children in care into poverty to save money on their budgets?</p> <p><b>Response from the Cabinet Member for Children's Services</b><br/>We said that those carers who are unable to increase their income due to personal circumstances would be supported, both in terms of available universal payments and in terms of financial support from the Local Authority.</p> |
| 6.51 | <p><b>Question from Sean Collins</b><br/>The council has claimed the WLR will reduce CO2 emission by 450,000 tCO2, (7,500 tCO2 per year). It does not include the CO2 emissions caused by the construction of the road, the loss of natural carbon capture (destruction on the woodlands) or the increased road usage. The NDR had caused an increase in CO2.</p> <p>It is claimed that it will increase and improve natural habitats and biodiversity. Building a road through a diversity rich natural habitat will clearly not do that. The Council have to mitigate the vast amount of ecological destruction that will be caused by this road.</p> <p>Will the council stop spreading these falsehoods.</p> <p><b>Response from the Cabinet Member for Highways, Infrastructure and Transport</b><br/>The June 2021 Cabinet report set out details that confirmed the relevant guidance in relation to carbon calculation is being followed for the project. That report also set out that "Significant levels of planting, included as part of the project's environmental mitigation and enhancement aims, will also help to offset carbon emissions. Overall, when considering both construction and operation, it is anticipated the Norwich Western Link will be beneficial in achieving reductions in carbon emissions, again</p>   |

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|      | <p>supporting national and regional policy. Details will be provided in the Environmental Statement submitted as part of the planning application.”</p> <p>The Council has been very clear that it is taking its environmental responsibilities seriously and the principle of achieving Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) on all applicable habitats was adopted some time ago for the Norwich Western Link project. BNG has now also been included within the Environment Act 2021. Government metrics developed by Defra will be followed to ensure the project meets the targets set out within the new Act for all applicable habitats.</p> <p>Details were provided in the June 2021 Cabinet report, which also set out that “The impacts of the NWL on biodiversity and climate, along with other environmental topics, will be robustly assessed as part of the Environmental Impact Assessment. Surveys are being carried out to establish a robust baseline and the Contractor’s design will be used to inform the assessment of likely scheme impacts. The findings of the assessment will be reported in the Environmental Statement submitted as part of the planning application and will be subject to public scrutiny as part of the planning application process.”</p> <p>There are no grounds to assume that building the NDR has led to emissions increase. Government figures published last year show carbon emissions from transport at a district level between 2005 and 2019. There is no data relating to individual roads. From this dataset, it is not possible to say with any degree of certainty that the changes in Broadland or elsewhere are due to the opening of the NDR or due to other factors.</p> <p>There are no falsehoods; the Norwich Western Link is being developed based on evidence and following all applicable guidance, which will be able to be reviewed and tested through the forthcoming planning process.</p> |
| 6.52 | <p><b>Question from Alex Catt</b></p> <p>Following the news that Angel Road Junior School is to be permanently closed and both schools are to be housed on the Infant School site by September 2022, there has been public outcry about the future of the junior school building and a lack of confidence in plans for investment in the infant school site. Pupils, parents and residents are seeking clarity and information. Will the cabinet member explain the process and rationale behind the decision to accommodate both schools on a single site?</p> <p><b>Response from the Cabinet Member for Children’s Services:</b></p> <p>Angel Road Infant and Junior school transferred from being maintained schools by the Local Authority to become Academies, four years ago, in April 2018. As a result the Trust received any Capital funding to support the school buildings and the Local Authority did not. Up until then the school had been part of the Local Authority Building Maintenance Programme. Academy Trusts take over the responsibility for this maintenance and liaise directly with the Education Schools Funding Agency for their Capital funding. We have worked closely to support the Chief Executive Officer of the Trust in her efforts to resolve the buildings issues for the Junior School, with the relevant national bodies. The decision, to move both schools to the one site is the Academy Trust decision, which we understand and support.</p> <p>Most importantly Angel Road Junior has not closed. The school is being moved to</p>  |

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|      | <p>the Infant School site. To understand further the rationale for this decision it will be necessary for the school community to ask the Academy Trust, if it has not yet been made clear. The Local Authority has no role in the process or decision making for Academies in this context. As Cabinet Member I have taken a personal interest and am reassured that the decisions taken by the Trust will continue to secure the good education for children at Angel Road Junior School.</p> <p><b>Supplementary question from Alex Catt</b><br/>Given the lack of confidence in plans for the infant school and the outcry about the future of the junior school site, will the cabinet member commit to opening a community consultation on the future of the junior school site and inform local parents of the steps being taken to make up for the deterioration in the educational experience of junior school children?</p> <p><b>Response from the Cabinet Member for Children's Services</b><br/>We will carefully consider the opportunities for future use of this site, considering the quality of the buildings, location and need for education provision. We recognise the strong community interest. We believe Evolution Academy Trust are pro-actively sharing their plans for the future of both schools with stakeholders. If local parents are concerned about the quality of the education of pupils, then this should be raised with the school leadership team. The staff remain the same, they are located in different classrooms. I know from senior officers they remain totally committed to providing a high- quality education to all the children in Angel Road Junior School.</p>   |
| 6.53 | <p><b>Question from Caroline Sykes</b><br/>As a parent of a disabled child affected by Norfolk County Council's immoral policy to halve her speech therapy, despite children and young people with SEND having been disproportionately affected by the pandemic, I'm shocked by the excuse given to the press that the policy "was always intended as a short-term plan...." This council should not be advocating unlawful policies, particularly against those children with the most need.</p> <p>Why did Norfolk County Council choose to quietly implement this unlawful policy without informing families rather than investing more funding to support recovery from the Covid-19 pandemic as other councils have done, in order to address the waiting list?</p> <p><b>Response from the Cabinet Member for Children's Services</b><br/>The decision to reduce provision for speech therapy for a period of time was taken with the overall aim of meeting the needs of the largest number of children possible. We agreed that it was morally right to address the backlog of cases and so we took a pragmatic decision to ensure as many children and young people could benefit from speech and language therapy as possible, as soon as possible. The decision was made as a result of the shortage of therapists available nationally and locally, compared to the significant number of children awaiting assessment and support, and for no other reason.</p> <p>The reference to a 'short term' plan to address those waiting for provision, was made in reference to the two-term arrangement within a 5-year contract with the provider. It was by no means an excuse, but an explanation of the decision that was taken on moral grounds to speed up more children's access to assessment and support. Had we been able to do so in any other way, we would not have taken this decision. We</p> |

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|      | <p>saw within one term of this short-term approach a halving of the list of those waiting. Clearly following the challenge from those families who have been in receipt of this service to date we have not been able to continue with that strategy and the shortage of therapists remains locally and nationally.</p> <p>We did inform parent/carer groups and schools regarding this plan, and parents as individual children whose programme of support was temporarily affected to enable more children to be assessed. We published the information on relevant websites having made the decision with the best interest of many children in mind. We had been transparent and in no way were we trying to do this 'quietly'. The fact that we had published this plan led to the legal challenge recently reported.</p>  |
| 6.54 | <p><b>Question from Dennis English</b><br/>In January last year, the cost of the Norwich Western Link was £153million. Within months, the cost shot up to £196million. The delay to the project caused by the realignment will cause more cost increases. At what point does this road become too expensive to proceed with?</p> <p><b>Response from the Cabinet Member for Highways, Infrastructure and Transport</b><br/>The Cabinet report sets out the importance of the Norwich Western Link and the benefits it will provide. It also sets out that work is continuing and further details relating to the programme and budget are planned to be reported to Cabinet in June 2022.</p> <p>Our current work to refine the route and develop mitigation is necessary to deliver the project in an environmentally responsible way and taking the time to do this is the right thing to do. We are striking the right balance in providing much-needed infrastructure for Norfolk's residents and businesses while also continuing to make protecting the environment a key priority.</p> |

**Cabinet  
7 March 2022  
Local Member Questions**

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| <b>Agenda item 7</b> | <b>Local Member Issues/Questions</b>   |
| 7.1                  | <p><b>Question from Cllr Paul Neale</b><br/>Last year opposition councillors asked for the council to provide details of the legal advice sought in relation to the NWL’s impact on wildlife. The council refused on multiple occasions to provide that information. Given that there has now been an enforced change that will result in further delays and costs, it is clearly in the public interest to provide assurance that potential legal pitfalls are being considered. Will the Cabinet Member provide that assurance by revealing details of the legal advice received by the council regarding the impact on habitats?</p> <p><b>Response from the Cabinet Member for Highways, Infrastructure and Transport</b><br/>The Cabinet report sets out the reason for the work now being undertaken to refine the alignment of the project. It is in response to additional survey data obtained in 2021 and doesn’t therefore relate to any changes in advice from the project legal advisors. As stated in June 2021 to similar questions raised at that Cabinet meeting, the Council has appointed external legal representatives to provide ongoing legal support in relation to its emerging planning and statutory order proposals for the NWL project. The Council does not routinely publish the legal advice it receives.</p> <p><b>Second question from Cllr Paul Neale</b><br/>Brighton and Hove council have already committed to welcome Ukrainian refugees fleeing the Russian invasion of their country. What is Norfolk County Council committing to do in support of Ukrainian refugees?</p> <p><b>Response from the Leader and Cabinet Member for Governance and Strategy</b><br/>Thank you for your question. We’ve all been shocked by events in Ukraine, and I know many people in Norfolk are already helping the innocent victims of this war in many different ways. Central government has already committed to sincere and immediate support for those fleeing the conflict and Norfolk will certainly play its part. In the meantime donations of money and other assistance is best channelled through the Red Cross, UNICEF and Save the Children and DEC.</p> |
| 7.2                  | <p><b>Question from Cllr Ben Price</b><br/>The Cabinet papers quote a DfT letter of 18 January 2022 which states “it is likely that we will not have sufficient funding to continue to fund all the schemes currently in the programme to the current scale or timing” and recommends that scheme promoters reconsider their schemes. How is Norfolk County Council preparing for the likely eventuality that the DfT will not fully fund the NWL?</p> <p><b>Response from the Cabinet Member for Highways, Infrastructure and Transport</b><br/>To place this question in context, the letter referred to is within the Highways Capital Programme report to Cabinet (at paragraph 1.2.7 of agenda item 10). This letter, sent by DfT to all sub-national transport bodies sets out that they should review their</p>   |

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|     | <p>listed project priorities and confirm these to DfT. The County Council has therefore been working with Transport East to support them in their response to DfT. There is currently no reason to believe that the support for the NWL to remain part of their recommended projects, alongside other important infrastructure projects within Norfolk, has changed.</p>  |
| 7.3 | <p><b>Question from Cllr Jamie Osborn</b><br/>In 2019, a warning that the proposed NWL would harm barbastelles was removed from the NDR bat monitoring report at the insistence of the council. In 2021, expert bat ecologist Dr Packman warned the council that the NWL “as proposed cannot be delivered in compliance with wildlife laws” due to the “significant and long-term damage” it would cause to barbastelles. Dr Packman offered a summary of evidence to the council and offered to meet them to provide more detailed information, but the council rejected this. Can the Cabinet Member explain why the council chose to ignore the evidence presented again and again over three years and what has changed now?</p> <p><b>Response from the Cabinet Member for Highways, Infrastructure and Transport</b><br/>The details that were within the draft version of the NDR monitoring report referred to were removed on the basis that they were not relevant to the monitoring of the NDR project. However, the details that were removed from that report were made available to the NWL project team. The Council has consistently requested the evidence that supports the details provided by Dr Packman, however for reasons that they have set out (and that were referenced in the June 2021 Cabinet report), the evidence has not been provided to the Council or published. The Council has been clear throughout that the project is being progressed based on evidence and that it takes its environmental responsibilities seriously. The response to this latest evidence from our own surveys completed during 2021 has clearly demonstrated this commitment.</p> |
| 7.4 | <p><b>Question from Alexandra Kemp</b><br/>Hopkins Homes' revised planning application for 1100 new homes in West Winch shows the pressure from the traffic on the Hardwick Roundabout slip roads will run at 125% capacity, and the serious effect on the hospital roundabout of at least 10 second delays per vehicle in the tea time rush hour. Hopkins failed to complete an assessment on the A10 Junctions in West Winch. There is no funding for walking and cycling improvements along the A10 or for the bypass. The Steering Group for West Norfolk meets behind closed doors and publishes no minutes. Where is Norfolk County Council's strategic highways infrastructure plan for West Norfolk?</p> <p><b>Response from the Cabinet Member for Highways, Infrastructure and Transport</b><br/>The County Council continues to work collaboratively with the Borough Council, developers and the local community to ensure the planned growth appropriately mitigates its impacts whilst also delivering significant benefits.</p> <p>The West Winch Housing Access Road (WWHAR) is an integral part of the allocated West Winch housing growth area and will reduce traffic levels on the existing A10 through West Winch. This will enable traffic calming, together with walking and cycling improvements to be implemented with developer funding from the individual</p>   |

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|     | <p>housing sites that comprise the growth area. Scheme development and business case work over the last 4 years, representing a significant investment by NCC, has enabled us to submit a Strategic Outline Business Case (SOBC) to the Department for Transport (DfT) to secure funding to accelerate the delivery of the WWHAR. We are optimistic that after submitting further details to DfT outlining the Councils' commitment to bus priority and active travel measures, the SOBC will be agreed and DfT will provide funding towards the Outline Business Case (OBC), which is vital to secure scheme funding. The joint member West Norfolk Transport and Infrastructure Steering Group (WNT&amp;ISG) is updated on all relevant infrastructure projects in the Borough and provides a useful steer to officers taking these projects forward. Collectively these infrastructure projects comprise a strategic highways infrastructure plan for the Borough.</p> <p>The County Council in its role as highway statutory consultee in the planning process is currently reviewing the information supplied by applicant with its application to ensure the development complies with the National Planning Framework. The applicant not only proposes significant financial contributions to walking and cycling improvements but is also offering a sustainable transport contribution which will help deliver a travel plan and enhanced bus services.</p>   |
| 7.5 | <p><b>Question from Cllr Brenda Jones</b></p> <p>The situation in Adult Social Care is concerning. I note there is no mention of the risks to the services we deliver from the current situation. Providers continue to fail or withdraw from the market, staff shortages and recruitment difficulties get worse and worse, and demand continues to rise</p> <p>What does the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, Public Health and Prevention consider to be the biggest current threats to services and how are these being monitored and managed, both for the people we serve and the Social Care staff who provide the care?</p> <p><b>Response from the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, Public Health and Prevention</b></p> <p>Thank you for your question.</p> <p>The backlogs of work caused by the Covid Pandemic are a significant concern because they represent people waiting for support longer than they should have to. Our social work teams constantly risk assess and triage people to ensure the most urgent get support. At the same time, the Care Market is still experiencing the impact of continued cases of Covid, with staff absences and limited capacity to take on new people.</p> <p>I refer you to the Cabinet paper today which sets out ideas about how our teams can make in-roads into the backlogs, in the short-term. To do this we may need to extend temporary teams who were brought in to support the winter pressures, and a continued focus on recruiting, retaining and supporting staff wellbeing remains crucial. The senior officer team in Adults is leading and managing the recovery planning; the People Select Committee and the Adults Performance Review Panel will provide oversight and monitoring.</p> |

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| 7.6 | <p><b>Question from Cllr Mike Smith-Clare</b><br/>How many Norfolk Foster Carers has the Cabinet Member for Childrens Services personally spoken to either before or during the proposed transformation consultation?</p> <p><b>Response from the Cabinet Member for Children’s Services</b><br/>I have spoken to many foster carers and also received a number of emails from them regarding the proposals, as well as speak to social workers and retired social workers associated with fostering and representatives from the fostering panel. These communications have been predominately in favour of the proposals, and in general the response has been that an overhaul of the system has been long overdue.</p>   |
| 7.7 | <p><b>Question from Cllr Emma Corlett</b><br/>Can the Cabinet Member for Highways, Infrastructure and Transport confirm who will bear the additional cost of the variation of route to the Western Link road – Norfolk County Council or the contractor, Ferrovial Construction?</p> <p><b>Response from the Cabinet Member for Highways, Infrastructure and Transport</b><br/>The design development for the Norwich Western Link is part of the design and build contract awarded to Ferrovial Construction. The latest alignment refinement is part of the design process and has been instructed by the Council and therefore the cost of this work rests with the Council under the terms of the contract as it is a change to the original contract proposals. As set out in the Cabinet report, the design work is ongoing and further details, including implications to programme and budget are planned to be provided in a further report to Cabinet in June 2022.</p>  |
| 7.8 | <p><b>Question from Cllr Maxine Webb</b><br/>It has been 45 days since Norfolk County Council was found to have unlawfully cut Speech and Language Therapy services for children. Can the Cabinet Member for Childrens Services confirm how many children were affected by this cruel and illegal change in policy and how many have been contacted since 24<sup>th</sup> January 2022?</p> <p><b>Response from the Cabinet Member for Children’s Services</b><br/>I am happy to provide an update on this important matter and in particular the opportunity to correct misunderstandings that have occurred due to national and local press coverage of this issue in recent days.</p> <p>Firstly, I take issue with the emotive language stating that this was a cruel decision. No-one in Children’s Services takes any action that is cruel. The decision taken was a pragmatic one intended to be the exact opposite of cruel, it was intended to respond rapidly to a backlog of speech therapy referrals which if left would have meant 1500 children in Norfolk would not have had an assessment and would not have started to receive support. Due to the decision that we took that waiting list reduced to 800 after just 1 term of action and was on target to reduce even further by the end of the current spring term.</p> <p>I do acknowledge that the interim plan, to address the waiting list backlog, was not in line with our statutory duties for EHCP. However, the plan was a short term plan – 2 terms duration within a new 5 year contract with the new provider – and was due to cease at Easter 2022. The legal challenge that we have accepted in full required a</p> |

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|      | <p>change of that interim plan and this has been responded to. Since then we have been working with our provider to ensure that we can reinstate provision fully for children that had been receiving a reduced level of support whilst also continuing to address the remaining waiting list as best we can, given the shortages of therapists across the country. We have put further funding in to support speech and language, and we continue to work hard to identify the capacity to ensure more children get their assessment and provision. If the workforce is not there, this can be a major challenge.</p> <p>The new provider have confirmed that 2216 families have been in direct contact with them since the end of January this year, this includes contact such as telephone discussion, face to face appointment or letter/report.</p>   |
| 7.9  | <p><b>Question from Cllr Terry Jermy</b><br/>Given the significant changes to the Norwich Western Link project since the Outline Business Case was submitted, how confident is the Cabinet Member for Highways, Infrastructure and Transport that the Outline Business Case for the Norwich Western Link is still fit for purpose and does he think it will be rejected outright by the Department for Transport given the lack of consideration given to the climate and environmental impact of the project?</p> <p><b>Response from the Cabinet Member for Highways, Infrastructure and Transport</b><br/>There will be some changes to the indicative project timescales referenced in the outline business case (OBC) which will be discussed with the Department for Transport (DfT) but we don't anticipate that there will be a need to resubmit the OBC. Continuing to develop the design of the road and its associated measures in response to evidence is a normal and expected part of the process for an infrastructure project and it is possible that further changes may be needed in response to our upcoming pre-planning application public consultation.</p> <p>The Council remains in dialogue with the Department for Transport (DfT) to close out their appraisal of the OBC. Project changes are something that the funding approval process takes account of, which is why, following resolution of the statutory approvals processes for projects, a full business case will also need to be submitted to DfT. The council remains committed to delivering this project in an environmentally responsible way. Issues of climate and environmental impact are primarily dealt with by the planning approval processes and full details of these will be provided within the planning application submission.</p> |
| 7.10 | <p><b>Question from Cllr Brian Watkins</b><br/>The Chief Executive of Norfolk County Council owned Norse Group left the company at the end of November. Can you let us know when a new Chief Executive will be appointed?</p> <p><b>Response from the Leader and Cabinet Member for Governance and Strategy</b><br/>Thank you for your question. We have appointed an interim Chief Executive from the existing leadership team, to lead Norse at this time. Andy Wood has recently been appointed as the new Chair of the Group, and he is working with the Council and the Norse Board to bring in a new Chief executive to take the company forward. The</p>   |

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|      | recruitment campaign is already under way.   |
| 7.11 | <p><b>Question from Cllr Sharon Blundell</b><br/>The new NHS programme for low calorie diet treatment for people who are overweight and living with type 2 diabetes is being piloted in 10 areas with a further 11 to come on stream. Norfolk is not one of the areas chosen. Why is this?</p> <p><b>Response from the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, Public Health and Prevention</b><br/>Thank you for your question.</p> <p>This is a specialist clinical programme delivered by the NHS, not the responsibility of the Norfolk County Council. There is however a range of support that is available to everyone in Norfolk that is designed to help identify people that may be at risk of diabetes including weight management services delivered by Slimming World and NHS Health Checks.</p>  |
| 7.12 | <p><b>Question from Cllr Tim Adams</b><br/>How many people are using the Council's Adult Social Services compared to this date 4 years ago?</p> <p><b>Response from the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, Public Health and Prevention</b><br/>Thank you for your question.</p> <p>In 2017/18 we had 25,162 requests for support.<br/>In 2020/21 (latest full year information), we had 41,412 requests for support.<br/>In 2017/8 we had 2203 new requests for short-term reablement support.<br/>In 2020/21 (latest full year information) we had 6705 new requests for short-term reablement support.<br/>In 2017/18 we had 16,817 people accessing long-term support.<br/>In 2020/21 (latest full year information) we had 15,612 people accessing long-term support.</p> <p>In line with the national data requirements, we do not routinely capture the overall number of people accessing adult social care at any one point, instead we collect and report the types of service people are using.</p> <p><b>Second Question from Cllr Tim Adams</b><br/>If you agreed with Tim Farron MP that the Government could follow the lead of the Welsh Government and give councils the power to increase council tax by up to 100% on second homes in the worst-affected communities how much would that raise in additional council tax across Norfolk?</p> <p><b>Response from the Cabinet Member for Finance</b><br/>The County Council has a track record of working with District Councils in partnership to remove the discounts historically provided to second homes.</p> <p>It is difficult to estimate with certainty how much a second homes council tax premium might raise as it would depend upon a number of factors including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• District Councils agreeing to charge a premium, and at what rate (<a href="#">evidence</a>)</li></ul> |

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|      | <p>from the application of a premium in Wales is that this has not been applied universally at 100%).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• What definition of “worst affected” areas were to be applied (although it is likely that the ability to charge a premium would be universal across England).</li><li>• Whether the introduction of a premium would result in behaviour change (i.e. a reduction in the number of second homes).</li><li>• Whether any second homes were eligible for other discounts or exemptions which would reduce their liability to pay council tax.</li></ul> <p>Of more practical use in the short term is the work that the Member for Finance has undertaken with James Wild MP to support his campaign to address the issue of second homes being transferred to the business rates list.<br/><a href="https://www.gov.uk/government/news/gove-closes-tax-loophole-on-second-homes">https://www.gov.uk/government/news/gove-closes-tax-loophole-on-second-homes</a><br/>Work continues in this area.</p> <p>However, <a href="#">2021 council tax statistics</a> indicate that there are 11,607 Band D equivalent properties identified as second homes in Norfolk. This equates to approximately 3.8% of the total Norfolk tax base. Assuming a universal 100% premium, no behaviour change, and no other discounts applying, this would result in a (theoretical) increase in council tax income of approximately £17.6m based on the 2022-23 Band D rate of £1,516.95. The actual additional income achieved would be likely to be substantially lower than this for the reasons given</p>   |
| 7.13 | <p><b>Question from Cllr Steffan Aquarone</b><br/>As you are also Chair of the Health and Well Being Board can you tell us what urgent work is being done to ensure that the NHS dental contracts for Fakenham and Thetford are filled before July 1st?</p> <p><b>Response from the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, Public Health and Prevention</b><br/>Thank you for your question. For your information it is possible to submit questions directly to the Health and Wellbeing Board.</p> <p>Access to dental services is currently being investigated by the Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee (HOSC). Public Health officials have assisted HOSC in facilitating joint working with the regional dental Public Health specialist, to jointly undertake a data needs assessment which will be reported at the next HOSC meeting.</p> <p>As you are aware commissioning of dental services is the responsibility of the regional NHS England office. The regional commissioners have agreed to attend HOSC and give evidence on the current issues in procuring sufficient NHS dental services. This evidence should include their plans to secure emergency dental access for areas that were not successfully covered in the recent competitive tender process for these services – including Thetford and Fakenham. They will also include evidence on securing routine dental access across the county.</p> <p><b>Second question from Cllr Steffan Aquarone</b><br/>Can you tell us how many new affordable homes have been constructed across Norfolk in the last three years to include the percentage of those that have been built by Repton property developments?</p> |

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|      | <p><b>Response from Commercial Services and Asset Management</b></p> <p>The number of affordable homes built in Norfolk is set by the local planning authority through their planning policy and they hold the most up to date data.</p> <p>Repton entered its delivery phase in December (2021) with 5 sites gaining planning permission, of which 2 (Acle and Hopton) are in the construction phase.</p> <p>In terms of affordable housing, both schemes are delivering over and above the number required by the local planning policy. Acle will provide 68 affordable homes (23 more than the policy requirement) and Hopton will provide 60 affordable homes (40 more homes than the policy requirement).</p> <p>The scheme due to start in Attleborough in June 2022 will be wholly affordable with 48 homes (36 more than the policy requirement).</p>   |
| 7.14 | <p><b>Question from Cllr Saul Penfold</b></p> <p>I note from your proposed motion to full council (that we still have not had a chance to debate) that it says – “Recognises the need for some of these projects to make landfall and grid connection in various parts of the county, involving cable routes and new sub-stations”. Can you tell us how many homes and how much wildlife would be in the locality of these cable routes and would be affected by their construction?</p> <p><b>Response from the Cabinet Member for Growing the Economy</b></p> <p>Members will be aware that the County Council as a statutory consultee has responded to a number of consultations on offshore wind farms and the associated onshore infrastructure in recent years.</p> <p>The onshore cable routes have been specially designed to minimise both impacts on local communities and the environment. All the consented schemes have been through a rigorous Development Consent Order (DCO) process associated with Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects (NSIPs). This has involved County Council officers working closely with the various developers and attending expert technical groups covering ecology and other matters.</p> <p>There are a number of recently consented wind farms off the Norfolk coast comprising:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li><b>1. Hornsea Project Three (Orsted)</b> – which was granted consent by the Secretary of State in December 2020. This will make landfall at Weybourne with a 53 km buried cable route making grid connection at Norwich Main and requiring a new sub-station;</li><li><b>2. Norfolk Vanguard (Vattenfall)</b> – re-determined by the Secretary of State in February 2022. This will make landfall near Happisburgh with a 60 km buried cable route to Necton where it will make grid connect at a new sub-station;</li><li><b>3. Norfolk Boreas (Vattenfall)</b> – determined by Secretary of State in December 2021. This project shares most of its onshore infrastructure with the Vanguard project above.</li></ol> <p>In addition the County Council has responded to pre-application consultations on the Sheringham Shoal and Dudgeon Wind Farm Extensions (Summer 2021). This</p> |

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|      | <p>project will make landfall at Weybourne, with a 60 km buried cable route to Norwich Main where a new sub-station will need to be built.</p> <p>Officers have contacted the developers of the above schemes to gather further information on the precise number of households and environments affected by their projects and this information will be shared with members when received.</p> <p>With regard to any further offshore windfarm projects potentially affecting Norfolk, the County Council is not aware of any at this time. However, given the Government's ambitious target of Net Zero by 2050 and the expectation that 40 GW of electricity will be generated from offshore wind by 2030, it is likely that further offshore wind farms will need to make grid connection in Norfolk.</p>   |
| 7.15 | <p><b>Question from Cllr Rob Colwell</b></p> <p>With the upsetting and devastating developments in Ukraine, and the UNHCR estimating a worst case scenario of 5 million refugees, please can you provide details of what preparations and provision Norfolk County Council is making for the urgent care of future Ukrainian refugees?</p> <p><b>Response from the Leader and Cabinet Member for Governance and Strategy</b></p> <p>Thank you for the question. As per my answer to a previous question we've all been shocked by events in Ukraine, and I know many people in Norfolk are already helping the innocent victims of this war in many different ways. Central government has already committed to sincere and immediate support for those fleeing the conflict and Norfolk will certainly play its part. In the meantime donations of money and other assistance is best channelled through the Red Cross, UNICEF and Save the Children and DEC.</p> <p><b>Second question from Cllr Rob Colwell</b></p> <p>Norfolk has a proud history of helping desperate and vulnerable refugees. Please can the 4th flag pole of County Hall (currently unused) fly the Ukrainian flag as a show of support to our European friends and that we stand with Ukraine.</p> <p><b>Response from the Leader and Cabinet Member for Governance and Strategy</b></p> <p>Thank you for your question. I am glad to say that this important display of support for Ukraine was already in train last week and after awaiting delivery the flag has been flying on the roof of County Hall</p> |
| 7.16 | <p><b>Question from Cllr Lucy Shires</b></p> <p>How much exposure does the County Council have due to treasury investments in Russia and Belarus?</p> <p><b>Response from the Cabinet Member for Finance</b></p> <p>The UK government has condemned the Russian government's unprovoked and premeditated war against Ukraine. The Council welcomes the tough, united and effective measures that democracies are taking against dictatorial aggression. Ukrainians have shown us why it is so important to remain proud of our nation, our institutions and our liberal democracy in the face of autocratic thuggery.</p> <p>The County Council has no direct exposure within its treasury investments as there are no Russian or Belarussian banks on the Council's approved counterparty list and at present there is no exposure indirectly through the Council's investments in Money</p>   |

Market Funds. In light of the current situation, the County Council will not invest directly in Russia or Belarus.

While the question does not include the Pension Fund, the issue of Russian exposure was discussed and considered by the Pensions Committee on 1 March 2022. Other than UK Government debt and a small number of direct property holdings, all of the investments of the Fund are managed through pooled investment vehicles that are the ultimate holder of the assets in question. Given that Russia is an Emerging Market and has always presented some investment challenges, overall the exposures are very small in the wider context of the Norfolk Pension Fund. At the end of the last year the total value of the Fund was around £5 billion and the total direct exposure to Russia on public markets was circa 0.2% of total Fund assets at that point. In addition there is a small exposure to Belarusian Sovereign Debt (around 0.01% of the total fund at 31 December 2021). The Fund has identified no real estate, infrastructure or timberland assets in Russia. The Fund's private equity managers are currently conducting look through analysis on their portfolios. The nature of the investments means that this is more time consuming but the geographic focus of the Fund's mandates on developed markets means that any exposure is likely to be negligible. Private equity is itself a smaller component of the overall investment strategy

**Second question from Cllr Lucy Shires**

I have two residents in my division who are in critical need of a social care assessment before they can get the support they need. What should I say to them and other people in similar circumstances about when they can be treated with the dignity they deserve and receive a social care assessment?

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

Thank you for your question.

The advice for people with urgent needs has not changed. They should ring 0344 800 8020 and choose option 1. This will ensure they get to speak to someone swiftly who can then advise and support them. They can directly contact our Swifts and Night Owls service on this number if they have unplanned care needs.

**Written Supplementary Questions requiring written responses from the Cabinet Meeting held on Monday 7 March 2022**

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|  | <p><b>Agenda item 7</b><br/><b>Local Member questions</b></p>   |
|  | <p><b>Supplementary question from Cllr Jamie Osborn</b><br/>Cllr Osborn asked how much money had been spent in the intervening period since bats were found in the areas of the Western Link Road up until now when the route was being realigned, which would now be wasted.</p> <p>The Cabinet Member for Highways, Infrastructure and Transport agreed to send a written response to Cllr Osborn.</p> <p><b>Response from the Cabinet Member for Highways, Infrastructure and Transport</b><br/>The Finance section in the Cabinet report sets out that “The report to Cabinet in June 2021 included project cost details in section 6.2. This showed costs up to the end of 20/21 were £11.5m and projected costs for the 21/22 financial year were £12.3m. To the end of January 2022, the total project liability is £19m, including allowances for all property purchases completed to date.” The project costs are not recorded in the format requested and cannot therefore be provided. As set out in the Cabinet report, it is intended that a report to the June 2022 Cabinet meeting will provide an update on the project programme and budget.</p> |
|  | <p><b>Supplementary question from Cllr Mike Smith-Clare</b><br/>Cllr Smith-Clare asked why foster carers living outside the county, yet still supporting children in the county, had their questions to cabinet refused. He also asked how many children were being cared for by foster carers outside of the county.</p> <p>The Cabinet Member for Children’s Services agreed to provide a written reply to Cllr Smith-Clare</p> <p><b>Response from the Cabinet Member for Children’s Services</b><br/>Paragraph 8.1 of appendix 9 of Norfolk County Council’s Constitution states that in order to ask a question to cabinet you must be “a person resident in Norfolk, or who is a non-domestic ratepayer in Norfolk, or who pays Council Tax in Norfolk. As such, the carers living outside of Norfolk were unable to have their question accepted by Cabinet.</p> <p>We currently have 35 children placed outside of Norfolk, 10 of these are placed with temporarily approved family carers who are unlikely to become fully approved foster carers. Of the 25 children with fully approved carers, 7 are with family carers.</p>                          |