

Corporate Select Committee

Date: **Monday 12 September 2022**
Time: **2pm**
Venue: **Council Chamber, County Hall, Martineau Lane, Norwich**

Membership:

Cllr A Birmingham
Cllr S Blundell
Cllr S Clancy
Cllr E Colman (Chair)
Cllr N Daubney
Cllr B Duffin

Cllr L Hemsall
Cllr J James
Cllr T Jermy
Cllr K Mason Billig (Vice-Chair)
Cllr B Price
Cllr V Thomson

Advice for members of the public:

This meeting will be held in public and in person

It will be live streamed on YouTube and members of the public may watch remotely by clicking on the following link: [Norfolk County Council YouTube](#)

However, if you wish to attend in person it would be helpful if you could indicate in advance that it is your intention to do so as public seating will be limited. This can be done by emailing committees@norfolk.gov.uk

The Government has removed all COVID 19 restrictions and moved towards living with COVID-19, just as we live with other respiratory infections. However, to ensure that the meeting is safe we are asking everyone attending to practise good public health and safety behaviours (practising good hand and respiratory hygiene, including wearing face coverings in busy areas at times of high prevalence) and to stay at home when they need to (if they have tested positive for COVID 19; if they have symptoms of a respiratory infection; if they are a close contact of a positive COVID 19 case). This will help make the event safe for all those attending and limit the transmission of respiratory infections including COVID-19.

A g e n d a

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

2. Minutes

To receive the minutes of the previous meeting held on 11 July 2022

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3. Members to Declare any Interests

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

5. Public Question Time

Fifteen minutes for questions from members of the public of which due notice has been given. Please note that all questions must be received by the Committee Team (committees@norfolk.gov.uk) by **5pm Tuesday 6 September 2022**. For guidance on submitting a public question, view the Constitution at: [Ask a question to a committee - Norfolk County Council](#)

6. Local Member Issues/Questions

Fifteen minutes for local member to raise issues of concern of which due notice has been given. Please note that all questions must be received by the Committee Team (committees@norfolk.gov.uk) by **5pm Tuesday 6 September 2022**.

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|---|----------------|
| 7. Digital Strategy Update
Report by the Executive Director for Finance and Commercial Services | Page 11 |
| 8. Policy for Parental Leave for Councillors
Report by the Director of Governance | Page 17 |
| 9. Forward Work Plan 2022/23
Note by the Executive Director for Strategy & Transformation | Page 26 |

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Date Agenda Published: 2 September 2022



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Corporate Select Committee

Minutes of the Meeting Held on 11 July 2022 at
2pm in Council Chamber, County Hall, Martineau Lane Norwich NR1 2DL

Present:

Cllr Ed Colman (Chair)
Cllr T Adams
Cllr S Blundell
Cllr A Birmingham
Cllr G Carpenter
Cllr P Carpenter
Cllr N Daubney
Cllr B Duffin
Cllr L Hemsall
Cllr S Morpew
Cllr B Price
Cllr V Thomson

Substitute Members Present:

Cllr Stephen Morpew for Cllr T Jermy
Cllr Penny Carpenter for Cllr K Mason Billig
Cllr Tony Adams for Cllr J James
Cllr Graham Carpenter for the vacant position on the committee.

Also Present:

Cllr Tom FitzPatrick	Cabinet Member for Innovation, Transformation and Performance.
Cllr Greg Peck	Cabinet Member for Commercial Services & Asset Management.

1 Apologies for Absence

1.1 Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Kay Mason Billig (substituted by Cllr Penny Carpenter), Cllr Terry Jermy (substituted by Cllr Stephen Morpew), Cllr Jane James (substituted by Cllr Tony Adams). Cllr Stuart Clancy was also absent.

2 Minutes

2.1 The minutes of the meeting held on 23 May 2022 were agreed as an accurate record and signed by the Chair subject to an amendment that Cllr Sharon Blundell's apologies were recorded and that Cllr Dan Roper was her substitute.

3 Declarations of Interest

3.1 There were no declarations of interest.

4 Items of Urgent Business

- 4.1 There were no items of urgent business.

5 Public Question Time

- 5.1 There were no public questions.

6 Local Member Issues/Questions

- 6.1 There was one local member question from Cllr Kemp. A supplementary question was asked:

Why is there no policy from the current administration for levelling up in Kings Lynn and could the hierarchy of motions to council being considered, be removed, as it is considered to be discriminatory and puts Kings Lynn at the back of the queue?

The Chair responded by saying he did not recognise the sentiment or context that West Norfolk was being left behind by the County Council or was being discriminated against and that the County Council had a good record of touching all areas of the County through its extensive activities. The point about the hierarchy of motions to council being considered within the changes to the constitution had been noted by the Director of Governance. The committee would provide further such comment and a formal decision will be taken by Full Council on 19th of July 2022.

7 Smarter Working Update

- 7.1 The annexed report (8) was received and introduced by Cllr Tom FitzPatrick, Cabinet Member for Innovation, Transformation and Performance. The report focused on the approach to Hybrid working and the support in place for employees.
- 7.2 David Thom, Delivery Manager Strategy and Transformation undertook a [presentation which can be found on the committee's website pages](#).
- 7.3 In response to questions it was noted:
- A large number of employees had taken up the offer of a £250 grant to support home working.
 - Measures were in place for teams to meet and get together on a regular basis to help some tasks and build connectively to ensure work was completed in the most efficient and effective way. Managers also had training available to help them with working in a hybrid manner.
 - Guidance and principles have been issued to all line management to encourage some face to face meetings and tasks and this would enable managers to assess wellbeing and better manager staff working in a hybrid manner.
 - Members had been given access to the Smarter Working Dashboard and the Chair requested that if questions arose after viewing the dashboard that these should be sent to him so that a collective response can be obtained from officers. Responses to questions will be dealt with outside of meetings.
 - It was agreed that the item on Smarter Working would come to the committee at every other meeting. The next time the topic would be discussed would be on 14th November 2022.
- 7.4 The Select committee:
- **Reviewed** the work completed to date and **considered** the next steps and **provided** feedback on any areas of assurance the Committee requires to

form part of the next report.

8 Proposed Changes to the Constitution

- 8.1 The annexed report (7) was received and introduced by Helen Edwards, Director of Governance. The report included proposed changes within the appendices following a series of workshops attended by members and at a group leaders meeting. A final document would be produced for approval at Full Council on 19th July 2022.
- 8.2 In response to questions asked the committee discussed and noted the following:
- The 'incinerator clause' regarding referral of an item over £100m to full council should have been removed from the constitution when the council moved to a cabinet system as only cabinet can make an executive decision. All spending would need to be within the budget agreed by full council.
 - Suggestions were made that an extra full council meeting in the schedule might assist in getting more of the Council's priorities discussed.
 - Any changes in the constitution will still require the goodwill and discipline of members to ensure Council meetings function effectively.
 - The reduction in members speaking time on a motion may create a situation that more members wish to speak to ensure all points are covered. The order of motions proposal may also create confusion if there is a cross party motion.
 - The Director of Governance clarified that any motions that remain unheard at the end of a full council meeting will be considered to be moved and seconded without debate, and will move to the vote unless the proposer wishes to withdraw the motion for consideration at a future meeting.
- 8.3 Cllr Ben Price proposed a motion that the following changes to the proposed constitution should be recommended:

1. There should be 7 ordinary meetings of full council per municipal year.
2. Petitions to be validated by 1000 signatures.
3. Motions should be accepted on a first come first serviced basis with a limit of two motions per group.
4. Full council meeting length should be up to 4 hours with a 2 hour break if required.

The motion was seconded by Cllr Blundell.

The motion was **lost** on a show of hands.

- 8.4 The Select committee **agreed** to reaffirm support to the changes to the constitution as proposed.

A recorded vote was requested.

Cllr Adams	For
Cllr Birmingham	Abstain
Cllr Blundell	Against
Cllr G Carpenter	For
Cllr P Carpenter	For
Cllr Colman	For
Cllr Daubney	For

Cllr Duffin	For
Cllr Hempsall	For
Cllr Morphew	Abstain
Cllr B Price	Against
Cllr Thomson	For

The motion was **Carried**.

9. Communications Strategy 2022-2024

The committee received the annexed report (9) from the Executive Director of Strategy and Transformation and was presented by James Dunne, Head of Communications.

The report was provided for consideration and feedback and the version presented was also being considered in a range of forums concurrently before eventual sign off by the Executive Directors and Cabinet.

The council's priorities are guided by the corporate strategy, 'Better Together, for Norfolk' and the communications strategy is rooted in following those objectives. In communications much of the work of the past two years has been dictated by the council's response to Covid. The purpose moving forward was on how the Council joins up its communications and how the council effectively engages within the community. Monthly planner packs will be issued so that all members can see what campaigns and initiatives the council will be undertaking in the month ahead.

9.1 In response to member's questions the following was discussed and noted:

- The strategic communication groups were developed to work collaboratively, to break down silo working and to establish a connected and co-ordinated approach. The Head of Communications was chairing each group meeting to ensure consistency was achieved and action plans aligned.
- It was thought appropriate for the item to return to the committee in late Autumn 2022 so that the work in progress can be viewed and evaluated.
- The strategy produced did consider both in-house and external partners' developments with a view to working better together with other local and national authorities and organisations to promote common themes and thinking within communication delivery.

9.2 The committee **agreed**:

- a) to support the 'Better Together, for Norfolk' strategy
- b) that the strategy accurately reflects NCC's vision and direction of working effectively together both internally and with partners.

10 Commercialisation Update

10.1 The annexed report (10) by the Executive Director for Finance and Commercial Services was received.

The report provided the committee with an update of the council's commercial activities and also considered the scope for further commercial investment ideas to produce an income to contribute to the setting of a balanced budget.

The Cabinet Member for Commercial Services and Asset Management undertook a [presentation which is available on the committee's website pages](#) .

- 10.2 In response to questions asked the committee discussed and noted the following:
- Although profit and rebates from Norse Group were very low in comparison to turnover this was due to the fact that Norse entered in to joint venture partnership working with other local government organisations and any resulting profit was split 50:50 with partners. In addition, many of Norse's activities were in sectors of narrow margins such as facilities management.
 - Repton Property Developments added value to the land purchased from County Farms by engaging the process of farmland to residential house sales which often took a number of years to complete.
 - It was suggested that the Council's target of net zero carbon emissions by 2030 could be helped by Repton Property Services to build houses that meet the highest energy efficient levels.
 - It was suggested that Repton Property Services could look to the retro fit of energy efficiencies in housing to meet growing need both in social housing and the private sector.
 - The need to drive a profit from Council owned companies such as Repton was paramount and that caution needed to be applied to ensure tax payers money was not being invested in risky endeavours.
 - It was noted that Norwich City Council had lost money on some previous house building projects and this highlighted the risk involved.
 - Norfolk Futures Limited ceased trading as it had lost money. It had installed and managed wind turbines located on County Farms land. It was considered at the time of closure that the council did not have the expertise to manage such an activity.

- 10.3 Cllr Price tabled a motion which was seconded by Cllr Colman. The following motion was **agreed** by the committee:

Corporate Select Committee ask the Executive Director of Finance and Commercial Services, together with the Cabinet Member for Commercial Services and Assets and the Chairman of the Select Committee to explore the viability and feasibility of the below proposals and bring a report back to the committee.

- Consider investment in renewable energy technologies that can generate a financial return for the council either / or in partnership with community energy groups like Norwich Community Solar, this would also benefit the local economy.
- Repton Property Services Ltd to consider the benefits of entering the retrofit market and consider providing renewal energy source for new building.
- Packaging up the decarbonisation requirements for the county into a prospectus for investors. (This may take some of the financial burden off the council. Bristol City Council have done this through their City Leap programme.)
- Leveraging procurement spend to deliver social value and environmental improvements, eg using PPN06/20 and PPN06/21. (This is in line with the aim of smarter working as it uses existing council resources to deliver better value and support the council's corporate aims)
- Raise capital for investing in renewable energy and energy efficiency projects through Community Municipal Investment Bonds (investment-based crowdfunding). This can help benefit the local economy.

11. Internal Carbon Price Guidance

- 11.1 The annexed report (11) by the Executive Director for Finance and Commercial Services was received. The report appends guidance on how to apply an internal carbon price in the assessment of option appraisals and included an update to the financial framework to reflect the guidance.
- 11.2 Ailis Wood, Policy Officer presented the report and advised that by using a carbon pricing mechanism in to the decision making process, carbon emissions can be determined to help achieve low carbon investment, In addition, investment decisions using carbon pricing can help the Council protect itself against rising energy prices and off setting costs as well as reducing the liability to possible future taxation on carbon emissions. If renewable investments are promoted carbon pricing could help reduce the Council's dependency on fossil fuels as well.
- 11.3 In response to questions from members the following points were discussed and noted:
- The figures used to value carbon as £248 per tonne of CO₂ in 2022 rising to £378 per tonne of CO₂ in 2050 are taken from the Government's own Green Book figures and are considered to be the most reliable data available.
 - Norfolk County Council is one of the first local authorities to adopt carbon pricing guidance in its decision making processes.
 - It is hoped that the pricing mechanism will be embedded in all decisions so officers don't consider this a standalone exercise. It was acknowledged that there might be much to learn as the process develops over the coming months and years.
 - The guidance does not apply to transport projects as the Department for Transport (DfT) has its own guidance which is accepted to be the lead data in the sector as most of the projects undertaken are funded partly or completely by the DfT.
 - It was thought that clarity of communication for both members and the wider general public was required to ensure that the carbon pricing and its reasoning in decision making was understood to as many people as possible.
- 11.4 The committee **agreed** to:
1. Endorse the appended guidance from the Executive Director of Finance and Commercial Services on using an internal carbon price.
 2. Recommend to Full Council the insertion in the Financial Regulations (section 2.9.4) of a requirement that Executive Directors must ensure that proposals are prepared in accordance with the carbon pricing guidance published by the Executive Director of Finance and Commercial services when making revenue and capital investment decisions.¹
 3. Note the Capital bids scoring mechanism will be updated to include ecological priorities, including providing a higher weighting to bids that deliver a carbon reduction for Norfolk, which will be included within the proposed Capital Strategy taken to Full Council in February 2023.

12 Forward Work Programme 2022/23

- 12.1 The annexed note (12) by the Executive Director for Strategy and Transformation was received.
- 12.2 The committee **resolved to agree** the forward work programme. The Commercialisation item as agreed in item 10 will be placed on the programme once discussion with the relevant Executive Directors and Cabinet Member had taken place.

Meeting concluded at 3.52 pm

Corporate Select Committee

Item No:7

Report Title: Digital Strategy Update

Date of Meeting: 12 September 2022

Responsible Cabinet Member: Cllr Tom FitzPatrick (Cabinet Member for Innovation, Transformation & Performance)

Responsible Director: Simon George – Executive Director, Finance & Commercial Services

Executive Summary

The NCC Digital Strategy and Roadmap for the 2020s was approved by Cabinet in April 2021 and built upon the solid foundations established in the 2018-2021 Digital Strategy. This is the first update to the Corporate Select Committee and provides an overview of delivery of the strategy and also highlights some specific areas of likely interest.

Digital Connectivity across the County has continued to improve, with fixed broadband and IoT networks the highlights. Mobile coverage has made more modest improvements and the Shared Rural Network programme is disappointing, so NCC may need to do more here.

Delivery against internal corporate roadmap and capability improvement initiatives has progressed well and is covered through an accompanying presentation. This also includes examples of recently refreshed technology roadmaps.

Complementary digital programmes in Adults, Childrens, Transformation and Customer Services are all performing strongly in line with the Digital Strategy & Roadmaps.

NCC support for county wide partnership initiatives including the Shared Care Records Programme & Digital Inclusion are also performing well and are reported separately.

Action Required

The Select Committee is asked to:

1. Consider and comment on the updates contained in this report.
2. To advise whether the Committee would wish to consider any alterations or additions to the current plans.
3. To consider options to improve mobile coverage.

1. Background and Purpose

- 1.1 The purpose of the NCC Digital Strategy and Roadmap for the 2020s is to define how technology, digital infrastructure and digital services will be delivered and exploited to achieve the Council's strategic vision and objectives.

The two main objectives of the strategy are firstly to provide the platform to enable business growth and inclusive growth for the people of Norfolk, and secondly, to enable all areas of the County Council's operations to exploit digital, technological and data driven opportunities to achieve the best possible outcomes within our budget.

- 1.2 Digital Connectivity has continued to improve strongly in terms of fibre broadband (Superfast & Gigabit) with significant investment for ongoing improvements. Sensor networks deployment and fixed wireless (for hard-to-reach sites) are also progressing well under our direct supervision. Conversely, mobile improvements have been modest and remain a cause of frustration for residents, businesses, and visitors alike. The government and industry funded Shared Rural Network (SRN) Programme is not having the hoped-for impact in Norfolk as investment is primarily being focussed on levelling up coverage in Scotland and Wales.
- 1.3 Delivery of the Council's infrastructure improvements and technology enabled change projects progresses largely in line with targets. Nearly all initiatives are rated green or amber for delivery based on time, cost and benefits. The accompanying presentation will show current priority areas and how they have changed since the 2021/22 financial year.
- 1.4 Complimentary projects and programmes associated with the Digital Strategy are predominantly on track for time, cost and benefits. These are reported separately to Corporate Select Committee and other committees but should be considered in conjunction with the NCC overarching digital strategy. They include the Customer Experience Programme (for resident facing / supporting digital systems), Adults & Childrens Transformation Programmes, Smarter Working & My Oracle. Though the latter has experienced some difficulties bedding in since go live, this remains in my opinion a very successful

implementation of a massive new system which always takes time and by its nature tends to be high profile if it goes wrong.

- 1.5 Recruitment and retention of digital, data and technology staff is extremely difficult in the current marketplace and this has caused some challenges in delivering the breadth of the planned change initiatives. However, use of apprentices and strategic suppliers has enabled on-target delivery of all key priorities.
- 1.6 The plan to digitally up-skill staff outside the IMT team to improve the overall pace of technology adoption has been a highlight of the last year's activities. Use of low code systems, joint working on Robotic Process Automation and uptake of digital change training with Microsoft & Socitm are examples of leading practice by NCC.
- 1.7 Technical roadmaps have been refreshed for 2021/22 in conjunction with industry partners, most notably Gartner and examples are included in the presentation. All roadmaps will be published on the Council's website to enable transparency with our delivery partners and suppliers.

2. Proposal

- 2.1 Members will receive a presentation at the meeting from the Director IMT & Chief Digital Officer to provide further details including current priorities, examples of project and programme updates, roadmaps and dashboards to provide assurance of a well-managed delivery portfolio as well as stimulate discussion in shaping and directing ongoing efforts to improve the Council's effectiveness and efficiency through the use of digital, data and technology.
- 2.2 While NCC cannot directly fund Mobile coverage improvements in the way we have with Better Broadband for Norfolk (BBfN), there are some options for investment that could help stimulate improvements in coverage. These include (a) mapping coverage to lobby the mobile network operators (MNOs), (b) offering standard tariffs and agreements for access to our buildings and land, and (c) creating a council asset database for the MNOs to access. The committee's views on developing these approaches further would be welcomed.

3. Impact of the Proposal

- 3.1 The impact of the proposal will be the continuation and potential enhancement of a programme of work to ensure that council staff, our partners, residents, businesses, and visitors all have access to high quality connectivity, systems, and data as well as the skills needed to exploit them.

4. Evidence and Reasons for Decision

- 4.1 The proposals seek to achieve a balance between the rate and scope of improvement and the costs incurred by the Council.

5. Alternative Options

- 5.1 It could be decided to retain the current set of activities, or the committee may wish to further investigate alternatives.

6. Financial Implications

- 6.1 All current activities are funded. The costs are provided through Council budgets or from external organisations (DCMS, DLUHC, LGA, New Anglia LEP and BT Openreach through gainshare). Any additional activities considered would need to be costed.

7. Resource Implications

7.1 Staff:

The programme is delivered predominantly by permanent council staff, though apprentices, NHS/ICS staff and fixed term contractors and supplier all provide valuable contributions.

7.2 Property:

The Digital Strategy is supporting the transformation of the property portfolio in line with Smarter Working and green initiatives as well as ensuring high speed connectivity.

7.3 IT:

The provision of the Digital Connectivity is the primary function of the IMT service along with supporting and maintaining the existing equipment, infrastructure, data & staff.

8. Other Implications

8.1 Legal Implications:

None.

8.2 Human Rights Implications:

None.

8.3 Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) (this must be included):

None as this is an update report to an existing strategy.

8.4 Data Protection Impact Assessments (DPIA):

None.

8.5 Health and Safety implications (where appropriate):

None.

8.6 Sustainability implications (where appropriate):

The IMT strategy is contributing to the sustainability agenda by reducing the carbon footprint associated with the running of the Councils IT systems, as well as enabling wider reductions in the Council's overall carbon footprint.

8.7 Any Other Implications:

None.

9. Risk Implications / Assessment

9.1 There are no new risks associated with this update report.

10. Recommendations

The Select Committee is asked to:

1. Consider the progress made and prospects for further improvement.
2. Advise whether the Committee would wish to consider any alterations or additions to the current plans.
3. consider options to improve mobile coverage

11. Background Papers

11.1 Norfolk's Digital Strategy & Roadmap - <https://www.norfolk.gov.uk/what-we-do-and-how-we-work/campaigns/digital-connectivity/digital-strategy-and-roadmap>

Officer Contact

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

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Corporate Select Committee

Item No:8

Report Title: Policy for Parental Leave for Councillors

Date of Meeting: 12 September 2022

Responsible Cabinet Member: Cllr Andrew Proctor (Cabinet Member for Strategy & Governance)

Responsible Director: Director of Governance

Executive Summary

On 29th November 2021 full Council considered and agreed a report from the Council's Independent Remuneration Panel (IRP). As part of the work that the IRP were asked to report on, the Council asked for their views on parental leave for Councillors and cover during periods of extended leave.

Full Council agreed that the County Council should consider the adoption of a policy to support parental leave for Councillors which makes appropriate provision for the payment of allowances. As part of its remit to consider good governance for the Council, Corporate Select Committee is asked to consider this policy before it is taken for adoption at full Council on 11th October 2022.

Action Required

The Select Committee is asked to:

- 1. Consider the attached draft policy for parental leave, which includes cover for extended periods of leave for Councillors and recommend it to full Council for adoption on 11th October 2022.**
- 2. Recommend to Council that it agrees to authorise the Director of Governance (in consultation with the Leader of the Council) to make any minor or consequential amendments to the Constitution necessary for, or incidental to, the implementation of these proposals.**

1. Background and Purpose

- 1.1 On 29th November 2021 Council considered and agreed the report from the Independent Remuneration Panel (IRP). As part of the work that the IRP were asked to report on, the Council asked for the views of the IRP on arrangements**

for parental leave for Councillors and cover during periods of extended leave.

- 1.2 In considering this request the IRP were clear that it was not for them to determine what the County Council's parental leave policy should be however, they were asked to consider whether Councillors taking maternity, paternity or adoption leave should continue to receive their special responsibility allowance (SRA) in full for the period of the leave.
- 1.3 The County Council is keen to encourage and make it as easy as possible for as wide a range of people to stand as elected representatives. There is currently no legal right to parental leave for elected Councillors with any policies only implemented on a voluntary basis. The LGA has produced a Parental Leave Policy for Councils to use on a voluntary basis noting that improved provision for new parents, "... will contribute towards increasing the diversity of experience, age and background of local authority councillors. It will also assist with retaining experienced councillors - particularly women - and making public office more accessible to individuals who might otherwise feel excluded from it.". A copy can be viewed [here](#)¹.
- 1.4 In addition to taking periods of leave the IRP noted that Councillors may also need to have temporary cover for a variety of personal reasons. The Council has highlighted that there may be a need on occasions to ensure that adequate arrangements are in place to provide cover for any Cabinet Members or recipients of an SRA during this period. The IRP were asked to consider if in cases where the post holder is in receipt of an SRA and a replacement is appointed to cover the period of absence whether that person should receive an SRA on a pro rata basis for the period of the temporary appointment.
- 1.5 As part of the review the IRP spoke to political group leaders and from those that made representations there was broad agreement that the County Council should introduce a parental leave policy in accordance with the LGA's policy. The IRP were also supportive that all Members should receive their basic allowance and any SRAs in full whilst on maternity, paternity or adoption leave.
- 1.6 In considering proposals regarding Councillors in receipt of an SRA while on extended periods of leave, the IRP considered that this was difficult to determine due to the differing roles and responsibilities that the SRAs covered and the length of time that cover may be needed. They recognised that although it may be appropriate for someone to provide temporary cover unremunerated in the short term there was a need to determine what constituted 'long term' cover.
- 1.7 The IRP considered the draft parental leave policy which was due to be considered by Cambridgeshire County Council at their meeting on 9th November 2021 and noted their proposal that those Councillors entitled to an

¹ [LGA Parental Leave Policy for Councils](#)

SRA would continue to receive their allowance in full for a period of six months, 'if they were absent from their Councillor duties due to leave for maternity, paternity, adoption and shared parental leave'. Further guidance from the Council's Director of Governance supported this timescale as appropriate in that it would align with the requirement for Members of the Council to attend at least one meeting within a six-month consecutive period.

- 1.8 As part of the review representations were received that in considering a policy for Councillors requiring cover in cases of sickness or special leave of absence that any absence should be approved by the Monitoring Officer to ensure that the provision was applied correctly. This is reflected in the draft policy attached.

2. Proposal

- 2.1 It was agreed at full Council on 29th November 2021 that the County Council should consider the adoption of a policy to support Parental Leave for Councillors which makes appropriate provision for the payment of allowances. As part of its remit to consider the Council's governance arrangements Corporate Select Committee is asked to consider this policy and comment before it is taken for adoption at full Council on 11th October 2022.
- 2.2 Attached at Appendix A is a draft policy incorporating the guidelines proposed by the LGA on parental leave for Councillors. Having also been considered and recommended by the IRP the policy also includes guidance for those Councillors taking periods of long-term sickness or special leave of absence.

3. Impact of the Proposal

- 3.1 The objective of the policy is to ensure that as far as possible Members can take appropriate leave at the time of birth or adoption, that both parents are able to take leave, and that reasonable and adequate arrangements are in place to provide cover for councillors during any period of long-term sickness or special leave of absence.

4. Evidence and Reasons for Decision

- 4.1 County Councillors are not employees of the Council and are not entitled to the same rights as employees to parental or adoption leave. There is no legal right for Councillors to such leave and it is entirely at the discretion of the County Council to have such a policy in place.
- 4.2 The attached policy reflects best practice and is consistent with that agreed by the LGA to which all Councils are strongly suggested to adopt.

- 4.3 The policy will support those Councillors needing to take leave from their duties due to parental responsibilities or extended periods of absence due to ill health. It will ensure that appropriate cover is in place to endorse good governance in the Council.

5. Alternative Options

- 5.1 Corporate Select Committee could agree alternative proposals to those recommended by the IRP and LGA or recommend to Council that the Policy should not be adopted.
- 5.2 It is for full Council to adopt any change in policy relating to Members allowances.

6. Financial Implications

- 6.1 A basic allowance is currently paid to all County Councillors. It is proposed that Members continue to receive this in full during maternity, paternity and adoption leave and in full in cases of long-term sickness or special leave of absence for a period of up to six months. There are no additional financial implications arising from this.
- 6.2 Special responsibility allowances (SRA) are currently paid to those Councillors that undertake special responsibilities within the Council. Only a small proportion of Councillors currently receive an SRA. Details of those posts that receive an SRA can be found in the [County Council's Constitution](#). There are no additional financial implications arising from Members continuing to receive their SRA during maternity, paternity and adoption leave and in full in cases of long-term sickness or special leave of absence for a period of up to six months.
- 6.2 Where a replacement is appointed to cover the period of absence and that person receives an SRA on a pro rata basis for the period of the temporary appointment there would be an additional temporary financial implication for the Council. It is difficult to quantify the exact financial implication of this as it would depend on the position that temporary cover would be remunerated but it is expected that the cost would be minimal.

7. Resource Implications

- 7.1 **Staff:**None
- 7.2 **Property:** None
- 7.3 **IT:** None

8. Other Implications

- 8.1 **Legal Implications:**

There is no legal obligation for the County Council to have a policy in place to for maternity, paternity and adoption leave for Councillors. This is voluntary for the Council to adopt.

8.2 Human Rights Implications: None

8.3 Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA):

Improved provision for new parents will contribute towards increasing the diversity of experience, age and background of County Councillors. It will also assist with retaining experienced councillors, particularly women, and in making public office more accessible to individuals who might otherwise feel excluded from it.

8.4 Data Protection Impact Assessments (DPIA):

N/A

8.5 Health and Safety implications (where appropriate):

N/A

8.6 Sustainability implications (where appropriate):

N/A

8.7 Any Other Implications:

N/A

9. Risk Implications / Assessment

9.1 None.

10. Action required

The Select Committee is asked to:

- 1. Consider the attached draft policy for parental leave, which includes cover for extended periods of leave for Councillors and recommend it to full Council for adoption on 11th October 2022.**
- 2. Recommend to Council that it agrees to authorise the Director of Governance (in consultation with the Leader of the Council) to make any minor or consequential amendments to the Constitution necessary for, or incidental to, the implementation of these proposals.**

11. Background Papers

11.1 [Local Government Association Parental Leave Policy for Councillors](#)

11.2 [Independent Remuneration Panel report: County Council agenda and minutes from meeting held on 29th November 2021](#)

11.3 [Cambridgeshire County Council Parental Leave Policy](#)

Officer Contact

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

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Norfolk County Council

Policy for parental leave and extended periods of leave for Councillors

Introduction

Norfolk County Council aims to encourage and make it as easy as possible for as wide a range of people to stand as a Councillor. One of the ways in which we can do this is to ensure that as far as we can we make it possible for Members as parents to be able to take appropriate leave at the time of birth or adoption and to make sure that reasonable and adequate arrangements are in place to provide cover for portfolio-holders and those Members in receipt of a Special Responsibility Allowance (SRA) during any leave they take.

There is currently no legal right for Councillors to parental leave and any provision is voluntary on the part of the Council.

Maternity leave

Members giving birth will be entitled to up to 6 months maternity leave from the due date, with the option to extend up to 52 weeks by agreement if required. In addition, where the birth is premature, the Member is entitled to take leave during the period between the date of the birth and the due date in addition to the 6 months' period. In such cases any leave taken to cover prematurity of 28 days or less shall be deducted from any extension beyond the initial 6 months.

In exceptional circumstances, and only in cases of prematurity of 29 days or more, additional leave may be taken by agreement, and such exceptional leave shall not be deducted from the total 52-week entitlement.

Paternity leave

Members shall be entitled to take a minimum of 2 weeks paternity leave if they are the biological father or nominated carer of their partner/spouse following the birth of their child(ren). A Member who has made Shared Parental Leave arrangements through their employment is requested to advise the Council of these at the earliest possible opportunity. Every effort will be made to replicate such arrangements in terms of leave from the Council.

Where both parents are Members leave may be shared up to a maximum of 24 weeks for the first six months and 26 weeks for any leave agreed thereafter, up to a maximum of 50 weeks. Special and exceptional arrangements may be made in cases of prematurity.

Adoption Leave

A Member who adopts a child through an approved adoption agency shall be entitled to take up to six months adoption leave from the date of placement, with the option to extend up to 52

weeks by agreement with the Monitoring Officer if required.

Legal and procedural responsibilities

Any Member who takes maternity, shared parental or adoption leave retains their legal duty under the Local Government Act 1972 to attend a meeting of the Council within a six-month period unless the Council Meeting agrees to an extended leave of absence prior to the expiration of that six month period.

Any Member intending to take maternity, paternity, shared parental or adoption leave will be responsible for ensuring that they comply with the relevant notice requirements of the Council, both in terms of the point at which the leave starts and the point at which they return.

Any member taking leave should ensure that they respond to reasonable requests for information as promptly as possible, and that they keep officers and colleagues informed and updated in relation to intended dates of return and requests for extension of leave.

Allowances

Norfolk County Council have agreed that Members shall continue to receive their Basic Allowance in full whilst on maternity, paternity or adoption leave. Those Members entitled to a Special Responsibility Allowance (SRA) shall continue to receive their allowance in full in the case of maternity, paternity, shared parental or adoption leave.

Where a replacement is appointed to cover the period of absence that person shall receive an SRA on a pro rata basis for the period of the temporary appointment. The payment of Special Responsibility Allowances, whether to the primary SRA holder or a replacement, during a period of maternity, paternity, shared parental or adoption leave shall continue for a period of six months, or until the date of the next Annual Meeting of the Council, or until the date when the member taking leave is up for election (whichever is soonest). At such a point, the position will be reviewed, and will be subject to a possible extension for a further six-month period with the agreement of the Monitoring Officer.

Should a Member appointed to replace the member on maternity, paternity, shared parental or adoption leave already hold a remunerated position, the ordinary rules relating to payment of more than one Special Responsibility Allowances shall apply.

Unless the Member taking leave is removed from their post at an Annual General Meeting of the Council whilst on leave, or unless the Group to which they belong loses control of the Council during their leave period, they shall return at the end of their leave period to the same post, or to an alternative post with equivalent status and remuneration which they held before the leave began.

Resigning from Office and Elections

If a Member decides not to return at the end of their maternity, paternity, shared parental or adoption leave they must notify the Council at the earliest possible opportunity. All allowances will cease from the effective resignation date.

If an election is held during the Member's maternity, paternity, shared parental or adoption leave and they are not re-elected, or decide not to stand for re-election, their basic allowance and SRA if appropriate will cease from the Monday after the election date when they would technically leave office.

Extended periods of leave

In addition to taking periods of leave Councillors may also need to have temporary cover for a variety of personal reasons and adequate arrangements need to be in place to provide cover for any Cabinet Members or recipients of an SRA during this period.

Norfolk County Council have agreed that Members shall continue to receive their Basic Allowance in full in cases of long-term sickness or special leave of absence for a period of up to six months.

Those Members entitled to a Special Responsibility Allowance (SRA) shall continue to receive their allowance in full in the case of long-term sickness or special leave of absence for a period of up to six months.

Where a replacement is appointed to cover the period of absence that person shall receive an SRA on a pro rata basis for the period of the temporary appointment. The payment of Special Responsibility Allowances, whether to the primary SRA holder or a replacement, during a period of long term sickness or special leave of absence shall continue for a period of six months, or until the date of the next Annual Meeting of the Council, or until the date when the member taking leave is up for election (whichever is soonest). At such a point, the position will be reviewed, and will be subject to a possible extension for a further six-month period.

Should a Member appointed to replace the member on maternity, paternity, shared parental or adoption leave already hold a remunerated position, the ordinary rules relating to payment of more than one Special Responsibility Allowances shall apply.

Monitoring

In applying the provisions within this policy the County Council's Monitoring Officer will consider any absences and ensure that all provisions are applied correctly and any arrangements for remuneration are appropriate.

CORPORATE SELECT COMMITTEE – FORWARD WORKPLAN 2022

Corporate Select Committee	12 September 2022	14 November 2022	16 January 2023
	<p>Part A –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NCC Digital strategy progress report • Policy for Parental Leave for Councillors <p>Part B – Committee forward plan</p>	<p>Part A –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Smarter working progress report • The Council’s new EDI Plan 2023 to 2026 - emerging findings from public consultation and next steps • Staff survey 2022 • Budget planning 23-24 <p>Part B – Committee forward plan</p>	<p>Part A –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Smarter working progress report • Staff survey 2022 / Planning for 2023 <p>Part B – Committee forward plan</p>

To be allocated:

- NCC performance management framework