

Cabinet

Date: **Monday 4 April 2022**

Time: **10 am**

Venue: **Council Chamber, County Hall, Martineau Lane,
Norwich NR1 2DH**

Membership

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

Advice for members of the public:

This meeting will be held in public and in person.

It will be live streamed on YouTube and, in view of Covid-19 guidelines, we would encourage members of the public to watch remotely by clicking on the following link:

https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCdyUrFjYNPfPq5psa-LFIJA/videos?view=2&live_view=502

However, if you wish to attend in person it would be most helpful if, on this occasion, you could indicate in advance that it is your intention to do so. This can be done by emailing committees@norfolk.gov.uk where we will ask you to provide your name, address and details of how we can contact you (in the event of a Covid-19 outbreak). Please note that public seating will be limited.

Councillors and Officers attending the meeting will be taking a lateral flow test in advance. They will also be required to wear face masks when they are moving around the room but may remove them once seated. We would like to request that anyone attending the meeting does the same to help make the event safe for all those attending. Information about symptom-free testing is available [here](#).

A g e n d a

1 To receive any apologies.

2 Minutes

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To confirm the minutes from the Cabinet Meeting held on Monday 7 March 2021

3 Members to Declare any Interests

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Fostering Review

Recommendation from Scrutiny Committee

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

6 Public Question Time

Fifteen minutes for questions from members of the public of which due notice has been given. Please note that all questions must be received by the Committee Team (committees@norfolk.gov.uk) by 5pm on **Wednesday 30 March 2022**. For guidance on submitting a public question, view the Constitution at <https://www.norfolk.gov.uk/what-we-do-and-how-we-work/councillors-meetings-decisions-and-elections/committees-agendas-and-recent-decisions/ask-a-question-to-a-committee>.

Any public questions received by the deadline and the responses will be published on the website from 9.30am on the day of the meeting and can be viewed by clicking this link once uploaded: [Click here to view public questions and responses](#)

7 Local Member Issues/Questions

Fifteen minutes for local member to raise issues of concern of which due notice has been given. Please note that all questions must be received by the Committee Team (committees@norfolk.gov.uk) by 5pm on **Tuesday 29 March 2022**.

Please note the change in deadline for Local Member Questions.

8 Flourishing in Norfolk

Report by the Executive Director of Children's Services

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9 Trading Standards Service Plan 2022/23

Report by the Executive Director of Community & Environmental Services

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10 Changing Places

Report by the Executive Director of Community & Environmental Services

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11 Net Zero and Natural Norfolk Progress Update

Report by the Executive Director of Community & Environmental Services

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12 Strategic Review

Report by the Executive Director of Community & Environmental Services

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| 13 | <i>Better Together, for Norfolk 2021-2025 – delivering our strategy</i>
Report by the Executive Director of Strategy & Transformation | Page 322 |
| 14 | RIPA and IPA annual report to Cabinet
Report by the Executive Director of Community & Environmental Services | Page 386 |
| 15 | Strategic and financial planning 2023-24
Report by the Executive Director of Finance & Commercial Services | Page 428 |
| 16 | Finance Monitoring Report 2021-22 P11: February 2022
Report by the Executive Director of Finance and Commercial Services | Page 453 |
| 17 | Disposal, Acquisition & Exploitation of Property
Report by the Executive Director of Finance & Commercial Services | Page 495 |

- 18 Reports of the Cabinet Member and Officer Delegated Decisions made since the last Cabinet meeting:**
To note the delegated decisions made since the last Cabinet meeting.

Decisions made by the Cabinet Member for Infrastructure, Highways and Transport:

- [Norwich – Ipswich Road – Active Travel Fund](#)
- [Extension of the existing e-scooter trial in Norwich to November 2022](#)
- [Transport East Transport Strategy Consultation](#)

Decisions made by the Leader and Cabinet Member for Strategy and Governance:

- [Notice under the nplaw Stakeholder Agreement](#)

19 Exclusion of the Public

Cabinet is asked to consider excluding the public from the meeting under section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972 for consideration of the items below on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined by paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Act, and that the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

Cabinet will be presented with the conclusions of the public interest test carried out by the report author and is recommended to confirm the exclusion.

- 20 Disposal, Acquisition & Exploitation of Property: Exempt Annex**
Report by the Executive Director of Finance & Commercial Services

Tom McCabe
Head of Paid Service
Norfolk County Council
County Hall

Martineau Lane
Norwich
NR1 2DH

Date Agenda Published: 25 March 2022



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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 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

Agenda item 6	Public Question Time
6.1	<p>Question from Eleanor Laming 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>Response from the Cabinet Member for Highways, Infrastructure and Transport 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>

6.2	<p>Question from John Martin 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>Response from the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, Public Health and Prevention 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>Question from Phil Garnham 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>Response from the Cabinet Member for Environment and Waste 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>Supplementary Question from Phil Garnham 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>Response from the Cabinet Member for Environment and Waste 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>Question from Gaye de Leiros 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.

6.5	<p>Question from Sally Hook Regarding the scoring of a child, how can you possibly quantify a child's needs when you don't know them?</p> <p>Response from the Cabinet Member for Children's Services 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>Question from Lucille Omurcan 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>Response from the Cabinet Member for Children's Services 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>Supplementary question from Lucille Omurcan 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>Response from the Cabinet Member for Children's Services 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>Question from Darrell Roper 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>Response from the Cabinet Member for Children's Services 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>Question from Lucy Jones Could the cabinet explain how they will tell children in a way that builds their self</p>

	<p>esteem and self worth rather than re-traumatise them, that their cooperative 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>Response from the Cabinet Member for Children's Services 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>Question from Rosie Wright 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>Response from the Cabinet Member for Children's Services 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>Supplementary question from Rosie Wright Does the council accept this is a bullying tactic designed to stop carers speaking out?</p> <p>Response from the Cabinet Member for Children's Services 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>Question from Rachel Howard 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>Response from the Cabinet Member for Children's Services 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, 25th 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>Supplementary question from Rachel Howard 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 children's services and isn't used as a tool by children's 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>Response from the Cabinet Member for Children's Services The social workers for the children, who will complete the valuing care tool, will</p>

	<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>Question from Thomas Howard 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>Response from the Cabinet Member for Children's Services 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>Supplementary question from Thomas Howard 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>Response from the Cabinet Member for Children's Services 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>Question from Sharon Donoghue Would the councillors like to apologise to the most vulnerable children in Norfolk for the distress and anxiety this consultation has caused?</p> <p>Response from the Cabinet Member for Children's Services 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>Supplementary question from Sharon Donoghue 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>Response from the Cabinet Member for Children's Services 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>

6.13	<p>Question from Barbara Dickins 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>Response from the Cabinet Member for Children's Services 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>Supplementary question from Barbara Dickins 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>Response from the Cabinet Member for Children's Services 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>Question from Jason Donoghue Could the committee explain why the consultation started on 17th January, but it was not shared with carers until 26th January?</p> <p>Response from the Cabinet Member for Children's Services It is not clear where the date of 17th January came from. The proposal was shared with the Fostering Advisory Partnership on 18th January to seek their views, which were taken into account when writing the engagement document and sent on 25th January 2022.</p>
6.15	<p>Question from Andy Oakley 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>Response from the Cabinet Member for Children's Services 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 25th January 2022.</p>

	<p>Supplementary question from Andy Oakley 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>Response from the Cabinet Member for Children's Services 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>Question from Laura Oakley 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>Response from the Cabinet Member for Children's Services 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>Supplementary question from Laura Oakley 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>Response from the Cabinet Member for Children's Services Please see response given to first question at 6.11</p>
6.17	<p>Question from Yvonne Green 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>Response from the Cabinet Member for Children's Services 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>Supplementary question from Yvonne Green Is the recruitment and training of replacement carers built into the £700,000.00 increase in budget?</p> <p>Response from the Cabinet Member for Children's Services 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>

6.18	<p>Question from Ben Foster 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>Response from the Cabinet Member for Children's Services 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>Supplementary question from Ben Foster 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>Response from the Cabinet Member for Children's Services 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>Question from Rosie Smith 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>Response from the Cabinet Member for Children's Services 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 14th birthday), as well as annual payments of £500 for those who continue to care for children aged 14 and over.</p>
6.20	<p>Question from Susan Mayhew 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>Response from the Cabinet Member for Children's Services Please see the response given to the supplementary question at 6.18</p>
6.21	<p>Question from Lisa Mackenzie 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>Response from the Cabinet Member for Children's Services 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>Question from Jo Hacon Could the council explain why the Norfolk in care council were not aware of this consultation over a week after it opened?</p> <p>Response from the Cabinet Member for Children's Services Please see the response given to the supplementary question at 6.6</p>
6.23	<p>Question from Elizabeth Martin 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>Response from the Cabinet Member for Children's Services We have a recruitment strategy for foster carers which we continue to review and update to maximise efficacy. 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>Supplementary question from Elizabeth Martin 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>Response from the Cabinet Member for Children's Services 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>

6.24	<p>Question from Kerry Burnett 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>Response from the Cabinet Member for Children's Services It is the decision of foster carers how they use the 'fee' element of the allowances paid to them.</p>
6.25	<p>Question from Paul Hammond 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>Response from the Cabinet Member for Children's Services 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>Question from Elisa Hammond 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>Response from the Cabinet Member for Children's Services Please see response given to first question at 6.23</p>
6.27	<p>Question from Debbie Burrell 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>Response from the Cabinet Member for Children's Services 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>

	case basis.
6.28	<p>Question from Martin Dickins 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>Response from the Cabinet Member for Children's Services 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>Supplementary question from Martin Dickins 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>Response from the Cabinet Member for Children's Services 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>Question from Jackie Venables 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>Response from the Cabinet Member for Children's Services 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>Supplementary question from Jackie Venables Have the In Care Council members been consulted?</p> <p>Response from the Cabinet Member for Children's Services 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>Question from Annette Clarke 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>

	<p>Response from the Cabinet Member for Children's Services 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>Supplementary question from Annette Clarke 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>Response from the Cabinet Member for Children's Services 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>Question from Beccy Emptage 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>Response from the Cabinet Member for Children's Services 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>Supplementary question from Beccy Emptage 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>Response from the Cabinet Member for Children's Services The mandatory savings should be taken from the basic maintenance allowance.</p>
6.32	<p>Question from Leanne Roper 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>Response from the Cabinet Member for Children's Services 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>

6.33	<p>Question from Mark Emptage 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>Response from the Cabinet Member for Children's Services Please see response given to first question at 6.23</p> <p>Supplementary question from Mark Emptage 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>Response from the Cabinet Member for Children's Services Please see response given to first question at 6.23</p>
6.34	<p>Question from Michael Jones 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>Response from the Cabinet Member for Children's Services 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>Supplementary question from Michael Jones 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>Response from the Cabinet Member for Children's Services 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>Question from Sarah Butterfield 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>

	<p>Response from the Cabinet Member for Children's Services 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>Supplementary question from Sarah Butterfield Do the new proposed allowances include holiday, birthday and Christmas elements or will these be paid separately or alternatively stopped completely?</p> <p>Response from the Cabinet Member for Children's Services These will continue to be paid as they are now, with no changes proposed.</p>
6.36	<p>Question from Julie Pyatt 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>Response from the Cabinet Member for Children's Services 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>Supplementary question from Julie Pyatt 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>Response from the Cabinet Member for Children's Services 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>Question from Sarah Mayes 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? I am in Norfolk</p> <p>Response from the Cabinet Member for Children's Services 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>

	<p>Supplementary question from Sarah Mayes 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>Response from the Cabinet Member for Children's Services 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>Question from Susan Madden 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>Response from the Cabinet Member for Children's Services 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>Supplementary question from Susan Madden 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>Response from the Cabinet Member for Children's Services Please see response given to first question at 6.16</p>
6.39	<p>Question from David Hughes 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>Response from the Cabinet Member for Children's Services The purpose of the 6 monthly review is to consider the needs of the child and how</p>

	<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>Question from Emma Stannard 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>Response from the Cabinet Member for Children's Services 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>Question from Clare Gasson 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>Response from the Cabinet Member for Children's Services Please see response given to question at 6.40</p> <p>Supplementary question from Clare Gasson 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>Response from the Cabinet Member for Children's Services 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>Question from Martyn Stannard 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>Response from the Cabinet Member for Children's Services 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 norfolk.gov.uk website. All children in care have a valuing care assessment as one is</p>

	required prior to a child being placed in care.
6.43	<p>Question from Roni Kingston-miles 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>Response from the Cabinet Member for Children's Services 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>Question from Chris Smith 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>Response from the Cabinet Member for Children's Services 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 14th birthday), as well as annual payments of £500 for those who continue to care for children aged 14 and over.</p>
6.45	<p>Question from Desiree Pennington 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>Response from the Cabinet Member for Children's Services 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>

	<p>and we hope that this will take precedence over any resentment.</p> <p>Supplementary question from Desiree Pennington 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>Response from the Cabinet Member for Children's Services 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>Question from Samantha Adcock 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>Response from the Cabinet Member for Children's Services 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>Supplementary question from Samantha Adcock 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>Response from the Cabinet Member for Children's Services 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>Question from Dawn Prideaux 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>Response from the Cabinet Member for Children's Services 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>Supplementary question from Dawn Prideaux 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>

	<p>Response from the Cabinet Member for Children's Services This will depend on the assessed needs of the children in placement.</p>
6.48	<p>Question from Natasha Potter 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>Response from the Cabinet Member for Children's Services 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>Supplementary Question from Natasha Potter 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>Response from the Cabinet Member for Children's Services 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>Question from Francis Pennington 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>Response from the Cabinet Member for Children's Services 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>Supplementary question from Francis Pennington 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>

	<p>Response from the Cabinet Member for Children's Services</p> <p>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>Question from Hannah Roach</p> <p>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>Response from the Cabinet Member for Children's Services</p> <p>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>Supplementary question from Hannah Roach</p> <p>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>Response from the Cabinet Member for Children's Services</p> <p>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>Question from Sean Collins</p> <p>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>Response from the Cabinet Member for Highways, Infrastructure and Transport</p> <p>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>

	<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>Question from Alex Catt</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>Response from the Cabinet Member for Children’s Services:</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>

	<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>Supplementary question from Alex Catt 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>Response from the Cabinet Member for Children's Services 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>Question from Caroline Sykes 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>Response from the Cabinet Member for Children's Services 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>

	<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>Question from Dennis English</p> <p>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>Response from the Cabinet Member for Highways, Infrastructure and Transport</p> <p>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**

Agenda item 7	Local Member Issues/Questions
7.1	<p>Question from Cllr Paul Neale 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>Response from the Cabinet Member for Highways, Infrastructure and Transport 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>Second question from Cllr Paul Neale 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>Response from the Leader and Cabinet Member for Governance and Strategy 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>Question from Cllr Ben Price 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>Response from the Cabinet Member for Highways, Infrastructure and Transport 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>

	<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>Question from Cllr Jamie Osborn</p> <p>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>Response from the Cabinet Member for Highways, Infrastructure and Transport</p> <p>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>Question from Alexandra Kemp</p> <p>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>Response from the Cabinet Member for Highways, Infrastructure and Transport</p> <p>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>

	<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&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>Question from Cllr Brenda Jones</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>Response from the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, Public Health and Prevention</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>

7.6	<p>Question from Cllr Mike Smith-Clare 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>Response from the Cabinet Member for Children's Services 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>Question from Cllr Emma Corlett 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>Response from the Cabinet Member for Highways, Infrastructure and Transport 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>Question from Cllr Maxine Webb 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 24th January 2022?</p> <p>Response from the Cabinet Member for Children's Services 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>

	<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>Question from Cllr Terry Jermy 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>Response from the Cabinet Member for Highways, Infrastructure and Transport 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>Question from Cllr Brian Watkins 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>Response from the Leader and Cabinet Member for Governance and Strategy 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>

	recruitment campaign is already under way.
7.11	<p>Question from Cllr Sharon Blundell 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>Response from the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, Public Health and Prevention 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>Question from Cllr Tim Adams How many people are using the Council's Adult Social Services compared to this date 4 years ago?</p> <p>Response from the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, Public Health and Prevention Thank you for your question.</p> <p>In 2017/18 we had 25,162 requests for support. In 2020/21 (latest full year information), we had 41,412 requests for support. In 2017/8 we had 2203 new requests for short-term reablement support. In 2020/21 (latest full year information) we had 6705 new requests for short-term reablement support. In 2017/18 we had 16,817 people accessing long-term support. 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>Second Question from Cllr Tim Adams 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>Response from the Cabinet Member for Finance 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"> • District Councils agreeing to charge a premium, and at what rate (evidence)

	<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"> • 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). • Whether the introduction of a premium would result in behaviour change (i.e. a reduction in the number of second homes). • Whether any second homes were eligible for other discounts or exemptions which would reduce their liability to pay council tax. <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. https://www.gov.uk/government/news/gove-closes-tax-loophole-on-second-homes Work continues in this area.</p> <p>However, 2021 council tax statistics 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>Question from Cllr Steffan Aquarone 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>Response from the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, Public Health and Prevention 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>Second question from Cllr Steffan Aquarone 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>

	<p>Response from Commercial Services and Asset Management</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>Question from Cllr Saul Penfold</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>Response from the Cabinet Member for Growing the Economy</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"> 1. Hornsea Project Three (Orsted) – 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; 2. Norfolk Vanguard (Vattenfall) – 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; 3. Norfolk Boreas (Vattenfall) – determined by Secretary of State in December 2021. This project shares most of its onshore infrastructure with the Vanguard project above. <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>

	<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>Question from Cllr Rob Colwell</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>Response from the Leader and Cabinet Member for Governance and Strategy</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>Second question from Cllr Rob Colwell</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>Response from the Leader and Cabinet Member for Governance and Strategy</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>Question from Cllr Lucy Shires</p> <p>How much exposure does the County Council have due to treasury investments in Russia and Belarus?</p> <p>Response from the Cabinet Member for Finance</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**

	<p>Agenda item 7</p> <p>Local Member questions</p>
	<p>Supplementary question from Cllr Jamie Osborn</p> <p>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>Response from the Cabinet Member for Highways, Infrastructure and Transport</p> <p>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>Supplementary question from Cllr Mike Smith-Clare</p> <p>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>Response from the Cabinet Member for Children’s Services</p> <p>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>

Cabinet

Item No: 4

Report Title: Fostering Review

Date of Meeting: 4th April 2022

Responsible Cabinet Member: Cllr John Fisher (Cabinet Member for Children's Services)

Responsible Director: Sara Tough, Executive Director of Children's Services

Is this a Key Decision? N/A

Executive Summary

On 23rd March 2022 Scrutiny Committee considered a call in of the Cabinet decision of 7th March relating to the Fostering Review.

This report outlines the recommendations from Scrutiny Committee to Cabinet arising from this call in.

Recommendations:

That Cabinet receive the recommendation from Scrutiny Committee referring the decision on the Fostering Review for further consideration regarding the following advisory points:

1. Any reassessment of a child's needs should not adversely affect the payments to the foster carer by reduction of need.
2. All existing placements that would be adversely impacted by the new policy should continue at the same level of payment until the placement ends to provide certainty for the foster carer.
3. The new proposals should be re-examined by either an in house or independent legal team to ensure nothing has been missed or overlooked to ensure Norfolk County Council's position as an innovator of progressive change is robust.
4. To consider an informal peer review by other relevant local authorities to help spot or advise on unforeseen consequences or changes that would need to be addressed.

5. To establish a rolling programme of review so that fosters carers are aware of when and how changes to fees and allowances are considered and implemented. The programme should also address the governance framework of the review and clearly set out the consultation process and the governance components that would be involved.

1. Background and Purpose

- 1.1 On 23rd March 2022 Scrutiny Committee considered a call in of the Cabinet decision of 7th March relating to the Fostering Review. A copy of the call-in report considered by Scrutiny Committee is attached [here](#). The original report considered by Cabinet on 7th March is attached at Appendix A.
- 1.2 The Scrutiny Committee agreed to refer the decision back to Cabinet and in doing so agreed that the following advisory points be considered:
 1. Any reassessment of a child's needs should not adversely affect the payments to the foster carer by reduction of need.
 2. All existing placements that would be adversely impacted by the new policy should continue at the same level of payment until the placement ends to provide certainty for the foster carer.
 3. The new proposals should be re-examined by **either** an in house **or** independent legal team to ensure nothing has been missed or overlooked to ensure Norfolk County Council's position as an innovator of progressive change is robust.
 4. To consider an informal peer review by other relevant local authorities to help spot or advise on unforeseen consequences or changes that would need to be addressed.
 5. To establish a rolling programme of review so that fosters carers are aware of when and how changes to fees and allowances are considered and implemented. The programme should also address the governance framework of the review and clearly set out the consultation process and the governance components that would be involved.
- 1.3 The draft unconfirmed minutes from the Scrutiny Committee meeting are below:

"8 **Call-In of Cabinet Decision of Fostering Review.**

- 8.1 The annexed report (8) related to the call-in of the Cabinet decision of 7 March 2022: Fostering Review.

- 8.2 The Chair explained the way in which he would handle this item to best ensure a fair and balanced scrutiny process and to decide what (if any) issues the Committee would refer to the Cabinet. The options that were available to the Committee were set out in the report.
- 8.3 The Chair welcomed to the meeting, Cllr Mike Smith Clare, Cllr Emma Corlett, Cllr Colleen Walker and Cllr Maxine Webb the Councillors who had called in the item who explained the reasons for having done so. They asked questions of Cllr John Fisher (Cabinet Member for Children's Services) and of the officers that were present for the consideration of this item.
- 8.4 Those Cllrs who had called in the item asked the Committee to consider their concerns around the consultation process and the mechanisms of the underlying strategy. Cllr Mike Smith Clare introduced Susan Madden, a Norfolk Foster Carer who advised the committee of the following:
- There was disappointment from foster carers that the consultation process had not been properly constituted and as a result, foster carers had felt undervalued and poorly treated.
 - Foster carers undertook their role to look after children but to do so they should not be financially disadvantaged in any way.
 - Work was in progress nationally to propose that foster carers were recognised as employees rather than being considered self-employed. This would enable them to receive the national living wage.
 - The foster carers' home was considered a workplace as various Health and Safety checks and other inspections had to take place on a regular basis.
 - The Covid 19 pandemic had brought about many extra challenges for foster carers who had coped well, despite the additional pressures and no extra finance.
 - Foster Carers were experiencing spiralling living costs which was impacting the need to provide a stable home and environment for children to recover and progress in their lives. The new proposals were considered to be a risk for carers to enable them to provide the security and stability required for fostered children. It was thought inappropriate to suggest to foster carers that they should claim benefits to make up any shortfall in income following the introduction of the new payment structure.
 - The proposals were thought to be risky as some foster carers may be forced to withdraw their services or consider early retirement. Others may transfer to foster agencies (Independent Fostering Agency – IFA) which will increase the cost of fostering children to Children's Services.
 - Those carers leaving the system would need to be replaced and recruitment was difficult, with training taking many months. The shortfall

of carers could be met from IFAs but the increased costs to the department would also leave more children in undesirable situations such as children's homes.

- If numbers of foster carers fell due to the proposals this would also place a strain on the respite care service which could in turn push more carers into caring fatigue and possible withdrawal from the sector.
- Eight carers had already expressed a wish to transfer to an IFA since the announcement of the proposals, some carers had already left the sector, although this number was very small, it was thought others were considering their options.
- The new pay proposals did not accurately reflect the withdrawal of a payment for the first child, if additional children were placed. This means foster carers would see a drop in income of £6,000 a year, regardless of whether more than 1 child was fostered.
- Foster carers had budgeted their current placements based on the existing payment system (level 5 fee income) and reductions in income had not been anticipated. Over 50% of foster carers would see a reduction in their income under the new proposals.
- Only 5% of placements would be eligible for the level 5 fee income as only 5% of children are in the higher needs category.
- Kinship carers had remained on the same payment level for the past 18 months and have been advised that they would not be able to progress beyond level 3.
- Current advertising of foster carers from the County Council was still reflecting the existing income structure despite the Council knowing these changes were about to be implemented.

- 8.5
- Following the evidence provided by the call-in author, supporting members and Mrs Madden, the Chair introduced the Cabinet Member and Officers to respond. The Cabinet Member for Children's Services and Executive Director thanked Mrs Madden for her comments and these had been noted. In addition, they advised that the new proposals were designed to provide a more fair and equitable fee structure to all foster carers and that consultation had taken place and was extended by a further two weeks.
 - A presentation was undertaken ([available on the committee's website pages](#)) by the Director and Assistant Director of Children's Social Care to respond to issues raised.

- 8.6
- In reply to questions from both the members that had called the decision in, and the wider committee, the Cabinet Member and the officers present advised:

- Consultation had taken place, although a response as to whether this met the national guidelines of consultation with foster carers would be provided after the meeting.

- Evidence had been gathered that the new proposals were both competitive and attractive and that this should aid recruitment of foster carers. The new package available also concentrated on support, learning and training, as well as pay and was considered a valuable resource to encourage more people to foster.
- It was not intended for carers to rely on benefits, the proposals highlighted the support that could be given to ensure all appropriate benefits were considered and received. The service would work with the Department for Work and Pensions to ensure that any foster carer would not be subject to job search reviews. This was enshrined in law for foster carers.
- The co-production of the proposals with foster carers was something that was desirable, although it was regrettable that the foster carers advisory panel had declined to be involved. The panel had indicated that there was some confusion as to what was going to be discussed. The department was, and always has been keen to work closely with foster carers.
- The consultation period had been extended by a further 2 weeks, although how this extension was communicated was unclear and details would be made available after the meeting.
- The review of the fee scales and payments for foster carers had been started in 2018, although no formal proposals arose and any further work was subsequently delayed by the arrival of the Covid 19 pandemic. Once pressures had eased from the pandemic the review work continued.
- The proposals were not considered by the People and Communities committee as there was insufficient time to ensure momentum was maintained, but instead were placed on the agenda for Corporate Board, although it was acknowledged that members do not see the minutes of the Board.
- The last review was undertaken in 1993 and it had been the department's desire to undertake a review for some time. Some adjustments over the subsequent period would have been necessary due to legislative and guideline changes.
- The use of the Value Care Tool (VCT) was to establish the needs of the child and not to establish the payment structure for the foster carer. All local authorities undertake a review of a child's needs using the same or similar tools.
- The department was keen to establish the new proposals so that urgent and complex needs arising could be addressed as quickly as possible. It was acknowledged that the pandemic had created pressures which needed to be addressed.
- Initially, responses from the new proposals had been encouraging with many more carers thinking about additional placements and new

recruitment had not seen any impact in terms of a reduction of numbers coming forward.

- Risk assessments had been undertaken with regard to the new proposals, however, early indications did not show a significant number wishing to resign or transfer to an IFA.

8.7 It was then moved and duly seconded that the Committee refer the decision back to Cabinet and in doing so recommended the following advisory points were considered:

6. Any reassessment of a child's needs should not adversely affect the payments to the foster carer by reduction of need.
7. All existing placements that would be adversely impacted by the new policy should continue at the same level of payment until the placement ends to provide certainty for the foster carer.
8. The new proposals should be re-examined by **either** an in house **or** independent legal team to ensure nothing has been missed or overlooked to ensure Norfolk County Council's position as an innovator of progressive change is robust.
9. To consider an informal peer review by other relevant local authorities to help spot or advise on unforeseen consequences or changes that would need to be addressed.
10. To establish a rolling programme of review so that fosters carers are aware of when and how changes to fees and allowances are considered and implemented. The programme should also address the governance framework of the review and clearly set out the consultation process and the governance components that would be involved.

On being put to the vote the motion was unanimously CARRIED on a show of hands"

2. Proposal

Cabinet is asked to consider the recommendation from Scrutiny Committee.

3. Financial Implications

3.1 Refer to Cabinet report from 7th March 2022 at Appendix A.

4. Resource Implications

4.1 Staff: Refer to Cabinet report from 7th March 2022 at Appendix A

4.2 Property: Refer to Cabinet report from 7th March 2022 at Appendix A

4.3 IT: Refer to Cabinet report from 7th March 2022 at Appendix A

5. Other Implications

Refer to Cabinet report from 7th March 2022 at Appendix A

6. Risk Implications / Assessment

Refer to Cabinet report from 7th March 2022 at Appendix A

7. Recommendations

That Cabinet receive the recommendation from Scrutiny Committee referring the decision on the Fostering Review for further consideration regarding the following advisory points:

1. Any reassessment of a child's needs should not adversely affect the payments to the foster carer by reduction of need.
2. All existing placements that would be adversely impacted by the new policy should continue at the same level of payment until the placement ends to provide certainty for the foster carer.
3. The new proposals should be re-examined by either an in house or independent legal team to ensure nothing has been missed or overlooked to ensure Norfolk County Council's position as an innovator of progressive change is robust.
4. To consider an informal peer review by other relevant local authorities to help spot or advise on unforeseen consequences or changes that would need to be addressed.
5. To establish a rolling programme of review so that fosters carers are aware of when and how changes to fees and allowances are considered and implemented. The programme should also address the governance framework of the review and clearly set out the consultation process and the governance components that would be involved.

8. Background Papers

8.1 [Cabinet agenda and minutes from 7th March 2022](#)

8.2 [Scrutiny Committee agenda and draft minutes from 23rd March 2022](#)

Officer Contact

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Cabinet

Item No: 14

Report Title: Fostering Review

Date of Meeting: 07/03/2022

Responsible Cabinet Member: Cllr John Fisher (Cabinet Member for Children's Services)

Responsible Director: Sara Tough, Executive Director Children's Services

Is this a Key Decision? Yes

If this is a Key Decision, date added to the Forward Plan of Key Decisions: [Please see general exception to 28 days notice on 22 February 2022](#)

Executive Summary / Introduction from Cabinet Member

We are seeking to change the way we remunerate in-house foster carers. This is 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 are within the context of and aligned to the wider fostering transformation work which focuses a new service delivery model alongside a practice development and training framework for all Fostering Service staff and foster carers.

The key aims will be to:

- a) Provide foster placements to children and young people that are consistent in quality and expectations
- b) Positively impact on sufficiency, increasing in-house capacity as more carers seek to take on second and subsequent child

- c) Bring the focus back to the needs of the child, providing adequate remuneration for carers who look after our more complex children and young people, regardless of who provides the placement

The proposal sets out the new suggested fee structure for in-house placements, based on Valuing Care scores (a codified way to measure a child's needs) and regular review. It suggests a new way to pay Linked Families (providing short breaks for children with disabilities) and proposes a recognition scheme that supports the placement of 'harder to place' young people.

We also propose to bring into policy the best practice guidance we have provided to Foster Carers in respect of savings for Looked After Children in their care.

Recommendations:

- 1. That Cabinet approves the proposal for fostering allowances and fees paid to foster carers, including the increased fee for placements for enhanced needs**
- 2. That Cabinet approves the savings scheme**

1. Background and Purpose

- 1.1 In December 2020 and January 2021, papers were considered in respect of changing our fee framework for our in-house Fostering Service. It was not, however, considered appropriate to continue with changes at that time, so the project was placed on hold.
- 1.2 In the interim period, our fostering fees structure has been reconsidered and a new approach proposed which places the child at the centre of decision making and enhances the resilience of our foster carers.
- 1.3 The proposed approach is for the cost of each placement to be dictated by the Valuing Care score of the young person, and therefore based on the needs of child, rather than on the carer's perceived skills. It will bring greater clarity and equity to payment for foster placements, reward and incentivise the meeting of more complex needs, and release capacity, which is essential in addressing the current sufficiency challenges.

1.4 Rationale for the changes:

- We want to shift to basing payments on the needs of child (as denoted by their Valuing Care score) rather than the skills and experience of the carer, aligning with our wider transformation strategic approach to the care market
- We want to develop a fee system that reflects the changing needs of children in care, with increasing remuneration paid to carers when they care for more complex children
- There is a desire to create consistency across payments, expectations, quality and stability for in-house carers, given that this is essential to our sufficiency strategy
- There are currently multiple different placement categories which need greater transparency and simplification to enable a clear and consistent strategy
- A significant number of foster placements break down for young people around the age of 14, resulting in multiple placements and non-family-based care, and there is a need to ensure carers are appropriately remunerated for the more complex needs of this age group
- In-house fees have not been updated since 1993, when they were designed to encourage take up of skills training
- Many carers are currently paid the maximum fee that does not reflect their skills or placement choices with lower paid carers caring for some of our most complex children which is neither equitable nor incentivising
- Fairly remunerating in-house foster carers is a key factor in our ability to recruit and retain them (alongside providing appropriate support and training which we will address further through our wider fostering transformation programme)
- In-house and IFA fees are not currently in-line meaning in-house carers will sometimes transfer to IFAs in order to earn more
- There is currently unused capacity in the system as the reduction in fee for second and subsequent children discourages carers from looking after multiple children

- The current payment system for Linked Families is expensive and encourages carers to take children on short break basis only, with children with disabilities (CWD) respite carers often choosing Linked Family placements as remuneration is not in line with other fostering fees. As a result of this we are not utilising capacity effectively, with some children attending residential short breaks and respite unnecessarily.
- We want to develop a responsive system where fees change every 6 months in line with Looked After Children Review process and children's changing needs
- We need to create incentive for carers to consider providing specialist placements for PACE (alternative to police custody), emergencies, CWD and New Roads young people
- In respect of the savings policy, we received feedback from both foster carers and older Looked After Children that it is important to ensure all children have savings and know how to save money prior to reaching independence

2. Proposal

The key changes proposed to in-house fostering fees are:

2.1 **Altering payment categories from levels 1-5 (based on accreditation level of the carer) to fee structure based on the young person's Valuing Care score**

2.1.1 Currently there is no clear definition for each of the different categories 1-5 and the majority of our carers sit at level 5 without clear justification as to why. In late 2020, it was therefore proposed that fees were updated to be based on the young person's Valuing Care Score and on a Foster Carer skills score. Recent work, however, identified that a key risk of this approach was that carers would see it as a progression scheme and over time would migrate towards the higher categories of payments without any incentive to widen their offer to children with more complex needs. This would therefore not support our strategy to support more young people in family-based care.

2.1.2 The model proposed today therefore aims to distance itself from payment linked to carer training and skills, but rather focuses on payment defined by the need of the child as set out by their Valuing Care score and on the carer's capacity to meet that individual children's needs.

2.1.3 The proposed new categories for fees are as follows:

Category	Valuing Care score and comments
Standard Fee	Band A and B, no more than 2 areas in Band C, nothing in Band D
Enhanced	Band C – 3 areas or more in Band C <u>and/or</u> no more than one band D
Complex	Band D – 2 or more scores in Band D
Parent/Child	Where parent is over 18, flat rate paid. Where parent is under 18 and is a Looked After Child in their own right, 2 placement fees will be paid based on VC score of parent and child
Connected Carers	Temporarily approved connected carers will be paid the child Basic Maintenance Allowance only, regardless of length of placement. Fully approved connected carers will be paid according to Valuing Care Score of the child(ren)
Linked Families	Move to simplified payment system with flat overnight rate based on Enhanced fee and flat rate for day care and additional night carer payment (max 7 hours in 24 hour period)

2.2 Moving from four to two age categories

2.2.1 In January 2020, a proposal to move to two age categories was agreed by Children's Services Leadership Team. The proposal aimed to achieve a simplified pricing structure and to maintain parity with IFA fees frameworks which had also proposed to move to two age categories. The two age bands are maintained in the framework proposed today.

2.2.2 Current and proposed fees

The current fee structure is as follows:

Accreditation Level	1 (Temporarily Approved)	2	3	4	5 - First Child	5- Further Children
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	Connected Carers)					
Fee	£0	£34	£61	£106	£336	£223

Age of Child	Basic Maintenance Allowance	Combined totals				
0 – 4	£143	£177	£204	£249	£479	£366
5 – 10	£158	£192	£219	£264	£494	£381
11 – 15	£180	£214	£241	£286	£516	£403
16 – 17	£210	£244	£271	£316	£546	£433

2.2.3 The proposed future fee structure is as follows:

	Temporarily Approved Connected Carers	Standard	Enhanced	Complex	Parent and child
Fee	£0	£223	£336	£602	£707

Age of Child	Basic Maintenance Allowance	Combined totals			
0 – 10	£152	£375	£488	n/a	n/a
11 – 17	£202	£425	£538	£804	£909

2.3 Alternative discounted options

2.3.1 As we are aware that the preferred proposal has cost implications, we have also considered alternative arrangements to either reduce or remove the potential cost increases:

Option	Other implications (strengths and weaknesses)
Option 1 – Continue with current fees, do not implement new approach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No need for any system change or change to foster carer development Allows carers to receive same payments as now Placement sufficiency will continue to deteriorate Capacity within fostering service not effectively utilised as there is little incentive for carers to take second and subsequent placements Carers will continue to decline placements for adolescents and complex children Expensive scheme that does not effectively utilise VC scores

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some carers currently paid low fees for some of the most complex children • Continues to impact on PACE Bed, Emergency placement and New Roads carers capacity and sufficiency • Will prevent us from increasing CWD beds, both long term and emergency/task centred • Continued agency 'hopping' by carers – they leave NCC knowing that when they return they will automatically be paid at level 5 • Does not place focus on needs of the child and so out of step with the fostering transformation which focuses on the needs of the child at the centre of practice and care
Option 2 – Reduce all new proposed fees to deliver a cost neutral position	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increases the reduction in fees for level 5 carers who have children with low VC scores in placement - risk of resignation from many Level 5 carers • Does not make us as competitive and does not fully future proof fees • Brings fees down to cost neutral position • Brings greatest risk to sufficiency, and likely will impact on our ability to transition current placements to new fees • We would not be as competitive as IFAs and risk losing in-house carers to alternative providers • Carers are not encouraged to care for most complex young people • Carers less likely to accept increased expectations leading to further resignations

2.4 Implementation Options

2.4.1 There are multiple ways that we could move to the new in-house fees; their impacts are analysed below. Calculations below assume a turnover of 95 cases per year.

Option	Predicted cost implication	Other implications (strengths and weaknesses)
Option 1 (Preferred option) – keep all current placements on existing fees for 18 months and put	£110k pa more than current cohort at current rates (i.e. £165k one-off cost over the 18 month period), increasing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Would provide time for Supervising SWs to work with carers to allow them to accept changes • Gives carers good time to review finances

new placements onto new fees from April 2022	to £513k after 18 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Would encourage carers to consider additional placements they have been reticent to consider • Allows us to promote new culture of focusing on needs of child • Allows Support for Success to work with carers where placements are more challenging to promote stability • Reduces cost of change significantly, whilst still allowing us to begin culture change within foster carer cohort
Option 2 – move all placements to new fees from April 2022	£513k more than current cohort at current rates (as per financial modelling above)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Risk carers giving notice on placements causing instability to children • No current sufficiency so would likely see numerous children escalate into IFA or Children's Home care with significant increased cost to LA • Some children may not be able to be matched/placed • Many carers may resign, complain and potentially try to instigate legal challenge
Option 3 – protect the current fee for existing placements for the longevity of the placement; all new placements made from April 2022 attract new fee	£110k more than current cohort at current rates	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduced costs as more carers on current lower rates for longer • Does not allow us to promote positive change in culture • Carers may be reluctant to accept new placements when current placements come to an end • Still promotes an increase in sufficiency as new placement fee will promote second and subsequent placements

2.5 Financial Implications

2.5.1 The following assumptions have been used to cost the new model:

- Assumes that new placements will move to the new fees from April 2022 (go-live)
- Existing placements will only be moved to the new framework until after 18 months
- Assumes that number and complexity of placements remains as now in future years

	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27
Current spend assuming current cohort at current rates	£9.463m	£9.463m	£9.463m	£9.463m	£9.463m
Predicted Future spend assuming current cohort at new rate and existing placements remain at current rates for 18 months	£9.724m	£9.926m	£10.127m	£10.127m	£10.127m
Predicted Additional Spend	£0.279m	£0.463m	£0.664m	£0.664m	£0.664m

2.5.2 The improved outcomes from this proposal are:

1. Improved stability of placement for children as carers feel more valued and less likely to give notice
2. Use capacity efficiently where carers are approved for more than one placement as carers will now be properly recognised for the impact of caring for two or more Looked After Children
3. Reduced escalation to residential placements when carers are struggling
4. Carers will be more willing to support adolescents, maintaining current and accepting new placements
5. We will be applying similar principles to Independent Fostering Agencies (IFAs), which will reduce the cost of agency placements, also preventing breakdown of children placed with IFA carers
6. Children will experience family-based care with foster carers who commit to them until they reach independence and beyond
7. Children will experience better stability in education and can remain in local placements close to their own families and community networks

2.6 Mitigation for increased cost

2.6.1 Whilst this proposal suggests there will be additional costs incurred for the Local Authority, it is expected that the overall impact will not create a cost pressure in future years:

- > The costings above are based on the current cohort of children in care, which includes a significant percentage of adolescents and children with complex needs.
- > By optimising the foster beds available through this proposal, particularly for adolescents and other complex cohorts, we would not require as many children's home placements.
- > Children's home placements are costing on average £4,200pw (although this figure continues to rapidly increase due to the national sufficiency challenges) so the increased cost of this proposal would likely be covered by only 2 or 3 placements changing from children's home placements to foster placements.
- > The data shows us that at least 10 children this year have been placed in a children's home where the required placement was a foster bed – based on 10 children being placed in foster care rather than children's homes, the reduction in cost would be in excess of £2m per year
- > The plan to approach Independent Fostering Agency placements in the same way as this proposal will likely promote many more children remaining in foster care rather than moving to children's home placements
- > More carers from agencies may choose to move to our In-House fostering service due to the improved offer to our carers, not just with this proposal but also the wider fostering transformation which provides a much improved package of support and training
- > We expect to see the number of indigenous CLA reduce as the pressures of the Pandemic recede, with the percentage of older young people in care expected to reduce year on year

2.7 Linked Family Scheme

2.7.1 *Why do we need to change Linked Family scheme?*

The current system has a number of complexities that need to be addressed:

1. The payments for contracted carers are significantly higher than for non-contracted carers

2. The payments to Linked Families are not in line with fostering fees, causing carers, particularly CWD carers, to choose to look after Linked Family children as they are paid more
3. There is significant capacity within the Linked Family scheme, however this is currently underutilised, with a number of linked families providing care to the same children
4. The Linked Family scheme is out of step with the fostering service, having been attached to Marshfields Short Breaks residential provision until October 2021

2.7.2 Key changes

The key changes proposed to linked family fees are:

- Remove contracted carer option
- Regularise payments for Link Families with Complex Category of fostering fees
- Provide simplified payment scheme with simplified expectations, aligned with other in-house fostering rates

Current and proposed fees

	Contracted carers	Non contracted carers
Current payment and expectations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • £16K per year retainer paid per household • Available 48 weeks per year • Minimum provision 4 nights per year • Additional nightly fee of £84 • If 2:1 care required, £84 pn paid to second carer (even if same household) • Additional payments of £6 per hour for reviews, Network meetings etc • Day care fee of £9.20 per hour 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No retainer paid • No availability expectation • No minimum provision expectation • Nightly fee of £73.57 • If 2:1 care required, flat rate of £9.20 paid to second carer • Day care fee of £9.20 per hour
Proposed payment and expectations	No contracted carers – current ‘contract’ is actually non legally binding agreement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flat rate of £115 per night for all carers (in line with new-in

		house Complex Placement fee) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flat rate of £75 per night if 2:1 care is needed (i.e. approximately equivalent to 8 hours @£9.20 per hour) • One hourly rate of £10 per hour for day care • Day care provision limited to 10 hours per day
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2.8 Recognition Scheme

Why is a recognition scheme needed?

- 2.8.1 Almost all foster carers provide placements to children not because of the financial reward but because they want to offer children a safe and loving home when they are unable to live with their families. However, we know that carers respond well to being recognised and valued, particularly when they are experiencing challenging situations. Financial incentives would also allow us to celebrate their commitment to building relationships with young people that others do not want to care for.
- 2.8.2 We have a number of harder to place young people, particularly 14 years and above and children with disabilities, and Valuing Care data shows that many foster placements, even those that have been stable for many years, tend to break down when children reach this age.
- 2.8.3 Whilst we have plans to support carers to provide trauma informed, effective care to teenagers (discussed in more detail in the fostering transformation business case), and further development for those who seek to care for children with disabilities, it is important to provide further incentive to encourage carers to accept placements within this cohort. This will prevent escalation to more expensive placements, reduce the number of placement moves for children and prevent unnecessary escalation into children's home placements because foster carers have not come forward.

2.8.4 A good example of this is a 14-year-old young man who has only ever been placed in children's homes with a number of placement breakdowns, despite them being solo placements at significant cost. An in-house emergency carer agreed to take him for a couple of nights when his placement gave immediate notice, however this extended to a week, then a month – he has now been with the carer since July. Both he and the carer are fully committed to him remaining there until independence. To celebrate the carer's commitment and the much-improved outcome for this young man, we paid the carer a small thank you payment. She was overwhelmed and so pleased, it gave her renewed energy and positivity despite caring for him being hard work sometimes.

2.8.5 *Proposed recognition scheme*

Some initiatives are already in place for in-house foster carers. These would be maintained going forward. These are:

- Annual birthday voucher for carers' own children - £10
- Every 5 years of service – certificate of thanks + £10 Amazon voucher
- 25 years of service – celebratory hamper

Additionally, we could provide extra payments to support carers, as set out above.

2.8.6 *Proposed payments*

- 3 months of placement – voucher for family activity, max. value £100 to recognise the new and positive relationship they have built as a family unit
- 1 year of placement -- £500
- Annual going forward -- £500

2.8.7 *Costs*

Looking at new entrants in 2020/21, 63 new placements can be identified in the 14+ age group (including both in-house and IFA), of which:

1. 16 ended in under 13 weeks
2. 19 ended between 13 weeks and 1 year
3. 5 ended after 1 year

4. 23 remain ongoing (ranging from 7 months to just under 18 months).

2.8.8 An estimate of cost based on the 2020/21 entrants is c. £27k, presuming that all 'ongoing' placements remain for 2 years (average age of placement start was 15.4 years); this is likely to be an overestimate of the cost of the scheme.

2.8.9 One consideration is whether the recognition payments are made for existing placements once they enter the 14+ age group, where it can often be difficult to maintain stability. A review of the entrants to placements age 12 and 13 (where experience shows that there may be a risk of de-stabilisation around the age of 14), shows that if children remained with their foster carers for an average of 3 years then the cost would build up to c. £50k pa. Again, this is likely to be an overestimate of the cost of the scheme.

2.8.10 Whilst the proposal of recognition payments does incur additional cost, this is relatively low per placement and will only be incurred if placements remain stable. The mitigated costs (both staff time and placement costs) of sourcing new placements will be far greater so this should be financially beneficial.

2.9 Looked After Children Savings Scheme

2.9.1 This scheme is designed to ensure that all Looked After Children are in receipt of savings when they leave a Norfolk Fostering Service placement. This will provide them with a sum to support them when they are setting up their first independent tenancy, when they commence a Further or Higher Education course at College or University, or to help them with their first big purchase such as a car or bike. This scheme is needed to bring Norfolk Fostering Service in line with all Independent Fostering Agencies and other Local Authority Fostering Services. We are one of the last fostering services to introduce an expectation of savings for our Foster Carers.

2.9.2 There is no cost implication to this policy – all fostering fees comprise of a Basic Maintenance Allowance and a fee for the foster carer. We are proposing that every child should receive a minimum of £5 savings per week to be saved

from the Basic Maintenance Allowance. We already have a process in place, supported by our Looked After Child Quality Assurance Hub, to ensure that savings for children are 'joined up' should the placement for the child or young person end.

2.9.3 We strongly encouraged Foster Carers to begin saving in this way in June 2021, and the response has been good. The best practice guidance has been incredibly well received with only one fostering household raising concerns regarding this scheme.

3. Impact of the Proposal

3.1 Consultation with foster carers

3.1.1 We made the decision to consult with Foster Carers for a formal period of two weeks as this is a significant change including a reduction in weekly payments for some carers, and we wanted to know what our carers thought, both positive and negative views. However, given the level of feeling regarding the proposal, we have continued to take into account the views of all foster carers past the original end date, as such the consultation was for a total of four weeks in total, 25th January 2022 – 22nd February 2022. We had sought to work more collaboratively with Foster Carers, seeking to design the new fee structure together. However, they were clear in their feedback in a number of forums over the past few months that they wanted the department to develop a proposal which Foster Carers could then review and give their view, stating it is for the Council to decide what they want to do.

3.1.2 We received a range of feedback, and the key themes were:

- a) Many carers support the increase in fees they will receive for every placement, irrespective of the needs of the child
- b) Many carers have had conversations with their Supervising Social Workers about how they can develop further to offer more specialist placements such as PACE beds and parent/child placements

- c) Carers are united in their view that they have felt supported by Norfolk Fostering Service and their Supervising Social Workers
- d) The increased support to Foster Carers is well received, and carers are in favour of maintaining the relationship between the Supervising Social Worker and the carer no matter what placement they take
- e) The increased financial reward for those looking after children with the most complex needs is welcomed by all
- f) Carers welcome the introduction of paying the same fee for second and subsequent children, rather than receiving a reduced fee as they do now
- g) Many are of the view that the new proposal is a fairer system and reflects the impact on foster carers of caring for children of differing needs; some acknowledge that there are carers that are both underpaid and overpaid
- h) Carers recognise the benefit of using the Valuing Care tool to define the care needs of children, but worry that the assessment will not always be accurate
- i) Connected Carers welcome the change to the fees, particularly when caring for children with complex needs
- j) Carers worry that some carers will move to Independent Fostering Agencies due to the reduction in the fees paid to them
- k) Carers welcome the aspirations and aims of the new structure, although some worry about the timing of this change due to the changes we are seeing within the economy as a result of the pandemic
- l) Carers who will receive a higher fee in the proposed structure want to move to that higher fee sooner than 18 months' time, with the majority wanting to move to higher fees from April 2022
- m) Carers are worried that if children stabilise over time, the fee will reduce as they believe the needs of the children will reduce when stability in placement is achieved
- n) Level 5 accredited carers (highest level of accreditation in current fee model) foster carers support the increase in fees for those who are currently paid less, but believe this is 'at their expense' where they choose to look after children who do not have additional needs; some, who are approved for two or more placements, are unwilling to consider caring for more than one child
- o) Some Level 5 accredited carers think that they should receive a higher payment regardless of the needs of the child because they have completed

more training and development or have moved to Norfolk Fostering Service from an Independent Fostering Agency due to the higher fee paid by Norfolk County Council

3.1.3 Some of the highest paid carers feel they are not valued by Norfolk County Council due to the proposed changes to fees. Many of these are clear that they expected to receive a pay rise with the new proposal.

3.1.4 Foster carers have resoundingly welcomed the savings scheme we are proposing.

3.2 Response to feedback received

3.2.1 We have carefully considered the responses received from carers, and we are disappointed that some carers perceive that they are not valued by Norfolk Fostering Service, as this is not the case and is not the intention. We greatly value the care our Foster Carers provide to Norfolk children and we recognise the very precious gift of a family that they offer to the children they care for. Whilst we would want to maintain all payments at least at their current level, financially this would place significant pressure on public funds (given the very high level of fees paid for Level 5 accredited carers) and undermine the child-based incentives inherent in the new payment structure in the longer term.

3.2.2 The proposal already represents a significant investment in our in-house foster carers as it provides a higher rate of pay for the vast majority of carers when compared with Independent Fostering Agencies, whilst also investing in the support, training and development of all in-house Foster Carers. It is important to say that whilst the fees could reduce for a minority of carers, Norfolk Fostering Service remains highly competitive, and opportunities to increase income will be all the greater for all through willingness to take children with greater needs, fill bed spaces they are approved for and longevity of placement.

3.2.3 Some Level 5 carers are understandably worried about a reduction in payments, however this will not affect a significant proportion of Level 5 carers who will see their payments either remain the same or increase. We recognise

that for this minority of carers, they will feel they are unable to effectively 'choose' who they care for due to their personal circumstances. For those carers, we will offer additional support and will consider the situation on a case by case basis to support those who may experience hardship should their payments drop. Foster carers are also able to claim benefits alongside their fostering work.

3.2.4 We have calculated that those who may receive a reduction in payments are likely to experience up to 20% reduction in payments.

3.2.5 An example of this is a Level 5 carer looking after one 11 yr old child with no additional needs. Currently they receive £516 per week, or £26,832 per annum, although it is important to note that foster carers receive significant tax and national insurance relief whilst they are approved as foster carers. As such, £26,832 annual fostering allowance would equate to approx. £31,200 annual salary for someone who is not a foster carer.

3.2.6 With the reduction in allowances as proposed, the foster carer would receive £22100 per annum fostering allowance, which is an 18% reduction in income. The reduction in fostering allowances will also mean that the foster carer would no longer be required to pay any income tax as their earnings will be below the £25000 threshold for foster carers.

3.3 Possible changes to the original proposal

3.3.1 However, there are key elements of the feedback that we have considered at length, along with the cost implications of both proposals:

1. Those receiving a lower payment currently would like to move to the new higher rate for fees in April 2022 should the proposal be agreed

We had considered this approach when we designed the above proposal, however it incurs substantial additional costs for the Local Authority, and as such, we made the decision to move all existing placements onto the new fee structure 18 months after implementation.

2. Level 5 carers are telling us that the reduction in fees for placements attracting the standard fee is too great. They are also telling us that they would want the enhanced fee to match the current Level 5 fee

3.3.2 In light of this, we have explored a small increase in the standard fee to at least ensure it is in line with the fees paid by the higher paying Independent Fostering Agencies. The suggested increased fees are demonstrated below:

	Temporarily Approved Connected Carers	Standard	Enhanced	Complex	Parent and child
Fee	£0	£223	£336	£602	£707
Rate following feedback		£247	£344	n/a	n/a

Age of Child	Basic Maintenance Allowance	Combined totals			
0 – 10	£152	£375	£488	n/a	n/a
After feedback		£399	£494	n/a	n/a
11 – 17	£202	£425	£538	£804	£909
After feedback		£451	£546	n/a	n/a

3.4 Financial implications

3.4.1 The below table evidences the additional costs should either or both of the changes above be incorporated:

	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27
Predicted Additional Spend of proposal prior to feedback	£0.279m	£0.463m	£0.664m	£0.664m	£0.664m

Predicted Additional Spend if new fees are introduced at April 2022 for those who will receive more	£1.5m	£0.75m	£0	£0	£0
Predicted Additional Spend for increases in fees for standard and enhanced placements	£0.43m (Standard) £0.032m (Enhanced) Total: £0.462m	£0.462m	£0.462m	£0.462m	£0.462m
Predicted Additional Spend for increased in fees for standard and enhanced and introducing new fees in April 2022 for those who would receive more	£1.962m	£1.212m	£0.462m	£0.462m	£0.462m
Current spend assuming current cohort at current rates	£9.463m	£9.463m	£9.463m	£9.463m	£9.463m
Predicted Future spend assuming current cohort at original proposal rate and existing placements remain at current rates for 18 months	£9.724m	£9.926m	£10.127m	£10.127m	£10.127m
Total predicted spend	£10.186m	£10.388m	£10.589m	£10.589m	£10.589m

incorporating new fee rates following feedback					
Total predicted spend	£11.224m	£10.676m	£10.127m	£10.127m	£10.127m
Incorporating increased fees for existing placements at April 2022					
Total predicted spend incorporating both changes to the original proposal	£11.686m	£11.138m	£10.589m	£10.589m	£10.589m

In the above table, the green highlighted rows demonstrate the cost of the original proposal and the total cost of incorporating the two changes based on the feedback from carers.

The orange row is the cost of introducing a higher fee for standard and enhanced placements.

The yellow row is the cost of introducing increased fees for existing placements in April 2022.

3.4.2 We recognise the benefits that both these changes will bring to carers, however we cannot be as confident that we will be able to account for these costs through cost avoidance routes when compared with the costs already factored into the proposal. However, we do know that avoiding a residential placement for one child brings avoided costs of approximately £0.15m - £0.2m per annum.

3.5 Increased support for Foster Carers

3.5.1 The change in fostering fees is being introduced at the same time as the Fostering Service is being transformed. The Transformation programme incorporates additional support for Foster Carers:

a) Therapeutic support for all carers

As part of the changes to the service, we are planning to set up a Supporting Resilience Team which is overseen by a Clinical Psychologist. The team includes Supporting Resilience Practitioners as well as the Enhanced Fostering Practitioner. The Supporting Resilience Practitioners will be available to any Foster Carer requiring additional support, either due to their own circumstances or in caring for the child(ren) in their care. The Supporting Resilience Team will work closely with the Support for Success Service to ensure that placements receive wrap around support when needed.

b) CWD Intensive Outreach

Currently the CWD Intensive Outreach Service has only been available to families to support them whilst a placement is found for their child or to prevent a young person from becoming Looked After. However, we recognise that foster placements also need additional support when looking after children with a disability. As such, we will be making the CWD Intensive Outreach Service available to all in-house foster carers to promote stability of placement. The service works with families to develop new strategies and interventions to effectively and safely manage challenging behaviour.

c) Occupational Therapist Assistant Practitioner

In addition to the support that can be offered by the CWD Intensive Outreach Service, we know that carers may require advice and guidance on a range of challenges faced by disabled children and those who care for them. The Occupational Therapist Assistant Practitioner will work closely with the Occupational Therapists in the Children with Disabilities Service and the Adoption Service to provide a range of support to foster carers.

d) Prioritising relationships

The changes in the Fostering Service include the plan for all Foster Carers to be held within the Fostering Supervision Teams. This is to ensure that carers and their Supervising Social Workers can build long-lasting, safe and resilient relationships. Additional support will still be available for all carers who are providing specialist care, for example, step down or PACE, but this support will be provided on a 'call-in' basis, enabling all carers to access specialist advice when they need it.

e) Enhanced offer

The enhanced offer will continue as it does now for carers who accept children who are stepping down from Children's Home care. The main difference will be that this will be provided on a call-in basis to protect the carer's relationship with their Supervising Social Worker. What this means is that rather than the Foster Carer having to move from team to team, the right support is offered to them from the enhanced service, but they continue to be supervised by the same Supervising Social Worker. Support will be provided by the Enhanced Team Manager, Social Worker and Enhanced Fostering Practitioner.

f) Duty Team

There will be a dedicated team who will provide support to Foster Carers at the point that they take on new placements, as well as overseeing on call support to carers outside of normal office hours when their Supervising Social Worker may not be available.

g) Training and development

We continue to develop our training and development programme for carers and have plans to strengthen the offer from April 2022. This will continue include a Mandatory, Core and Specialist offer, although all courses will be available to all carers. There will be a particular focus on training to support carers to develop new strategies to care for more complex and harder to place young people, and will draw upon expertise across Children's Social Care to promote relationships between carers and different parts of the service.

4. Evidence and Reasons for Decision

- 4.1 We have considered at length the feedback from carers, and we recognise their commitment to children and the excellent care they provide. Carers are clear that they welcome the new proposals in principle but remain worried about the reduction in fees. For some, this is due to concerns regarding their own financial need, for others, they feel that the care they provide is not valued.

- 4.2 We have explored financial modelling for the original proposal we consulted on, which, whilst increases the total amount paid to Norfolk foster carers each year, will be balanced by the likely savings in our new approach to Independent Fostering Agencies; it is important to ensure we continue to recognise the great work our foster carers do and investing a further £0.696m directly into our payments to them.
- 4.3 We have also explored modelling to make changes based on the feedback provided by foster carers, focusing on increasing the minimum payment paid to carers for standard and enhanced placement and introducing the increased fees immediately, whilst continuing to protect the pay of those whose fees will reduce.

5. Alternative Options

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

6. Financial Implications

- 6.1 The financial implications have been discussed in the proposal and implications sections (Sections 2 and 3) due to the complexity of the proposal.
The financial implications of the original proposal are reflected in the 2022-23 Budget.
- 6.2 The tables evidence the likely impact for carers on their annual fostering income, based on 52 weeks' payments:

Current annual payments

Current Accreditation	One child	Two Children	Three Children

Level 3	£10,608 - £14,092	£21,216 – £28,184	£31,824 £42,276
Level 4	£12,948 – £16,432	£25,896 – £32,864	£38,844 – £49,296
Level 5	£24,908 - £28,392	£43,940 – £50,908	£62,972 – £73,424

Future annual payments including difference between old payments and new

	One child	Two children	Three children
Standard	£19,500 – £22,100	£39,000 - £44,200	£58,500 – £66,300
Enhanced	£25,688 - £28,392	£51,376 - £56,784	
Complex	£41,808		
STANDARD Increase/Decrease			
Level 3	£8,008 - £8,892	£16,016 - £17,784	£24,024 - £26,676
Level 4	£5,668 - £6,188	£11,336 – 13,104	£17,004 - £19,656
Level 5	£5,408 - £6,292	£4,940 - £6,708	£4,472 - £7,124
ENHANCED Increase/Decrease			
Level 3	£14,300 - £15,080	£28,600 - £30,160	
Level 4	£11,960 - £12,740	£23,920 - £25,480	
Level 5	£0 - £780	£5,876 - £7,436	
COMPLEX Increase/Decrease			
Level 3	£27,716 - £31,200		
Level 4	£25,376 - £28,860		
Level 5	£13,416 - £16,900		

6.3 Whilst this shows that some carers may lose up to £7,124 per annum, in reality we do not expect any carers to lose more than £6,300 per annum if they

continue with the same placements as they had in January 2022. However, the new fee structure will provide, and incentivises, opportunities for all to maximise their income. We only have one level of allowance for complex children irrespective of age. It is unlikely that carers would look after more than one or two children with an enhanced level of need, however they may care for a combination, such as one child with a standard level of need and one or two children with an enhanced level of need. Whilst it is unlikely that a carer would look after more than one child with complex needs, if the children are siblings (particularly identical twins) carers may still care for more than one.

7. Resource Implications

7.1 Staff: There are no staffing implications within Children's Services over and above usual duties.

7.2 Property: There are no implications

7.3 IT: We have been working with the wider team to ensure all IT and associated systems work has been anticipated and accounted for; we are on track for all IT work to be completed ready for implementation on 4th April 2022

8. Other Implications

8.1 Legal Implications: Fostering payments are regulated by the:

- i. Care Planning, Placement and Case Review and Fostering Services (Miscellaneous Amendments) Regulations 2010
- ii. National Minimum Standards for Fostering Services 2011
- iii. Fostering Services Regulations 2011
- iv. Care Planning, Placement and Case Review Regulations and Guidance 2015
- v. Fostering Regulations 2013
- vi. Children Act 1989 and 2004
- vii. Children and Families Act 2014

Full regard has been had to all guidance and legislation, and the minimum payments

as published by the government have been considered in the development of this scheme.

8.2 Human Rights Implications: There are no Human Rights implications

8.3 Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) (this must be included): This has been completed. The outcome of this assessment is that there is no obvious legal impediment to making this decision. Please see assessment submitted with this paper

8.4 Data Protection Impact Assessments (DPIA): There is no need to complete a DPIA as this has no data protection implications

8.5 Health and Safety implications (where appropriate): There are no health and safety implications

8.6 Sustainability implications (where appropriate): There are no sustainability implications

8.7 Any Other Implications: There are no other implications identified

9. Risk Implications / Assessment

9.1 Foster carers may resign as a result of the changes. This is mitigated by the 18 month lead in, the development of additional support, training and development for carers and the review of fees every 6 months. This is further mitigated by the consultation, the support of supervising social workers and managers and the review of individuals' circumstances to ensure they are able to manage financially. Some carers who will see a decreased payment were expected to retire in the coming years.

9.2 Carers may choose to move to IFAs. Whilst it is not ideal, the primary strategy is to increase the availability and flexibility of family based placements

provided by carers. To mitigate, we have ensured that IFAs will be required to work to the new fees structure, reducing the risk of carers moving to agencies and to ensure family based placements remain available. We also believe that once the new fees are launched and widely publicised, we will see an increase in the number of new potential foster carers coming forward

- 9.3 **Carers may be disincentivised to support young people to have stable placements.** It is a common misconception that should children experience stability, that their needs will reduce. Through studying the data, we have established that for many children, their needs increase as they get older; others' needs do not decrease when the placement stabilises, however the improved opportunities and outcomes for children do. We do not believe that our foster carers will jeopardise improving outcomes for children despite the change in fees.

10. Select Committee Comments

- 10.1 We had hoped to present the Paper to Select Committee but due to the timings of meetings over the Christmas period, this was not possible. It has been considered at Corporate Board

11. Recommendations

- 1) **We propose that Cabinet approves the original proposal** as cost can be managed through reductions in spending on external foster placements and the new payments represent a generous, fair and consistent approach. The fees proposed are in step and compare well to fees paid by other Local Authorities and Independent Fostering Agencies. The payments reflect an increase of up to £26,000 per year more for some carers, and less than £7000 reduction for those carers most affected. The reduction in payments to some carers can be mitigated by supporting them to take a second placement or care for children with some additional needs.

- 2) **We propose that Cabinet approves the Savings scheme** as this brings us in line with other fostering agencies and Local Authorities and represents best practice
- 3) **We propose that Cabinet approves the increase in fees for enhanced placements only** to bring them in line with current Level 5 payments. The cost is small (£32k per year) but recognises the synergy between Level 5 accreditation and the skills needed to provide care to children with enhanced needs.
- 4) **We do not recommend that Cabinet approves the increase in the proposed standard fee payment.** Whilst the gap in reduction for some carers will be reduced by approx. £1,500 per year, the cost to the Local Authority is prohibitive as we are unable to confidently mitigate the cost of £430,000 per year in addition to the expected cost of the new model of approx. £0.664m
- 5) **We do not propose that we increase fees at April 22 to those who will receive more** as this will create a new cost pressure for 2022/23 of £1.5m and £0.75m for 2023/24. We recognise that those who will receive more will be very disappointed that they have to wait for 18 months, this is the only option to ensure we can protect the income for 18 months of those who will experience a decrease in fees.

12. Background Papers

- 12.1 Feedback to foster carers document which was sent to foster carers following the close of the consultation.

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

Fostering Review

Equality Impact Assessment – Findings and Recommendations

15th February 2022

Kate Dexter
Assistant Director Children's Social Care

Equality impact assessments enable decision-makers to consider the impact of proposals on people with protected characteristics.

See Annex 1 for information about the different protected characteristics.

An assessment can be updated at any time to inform service planning and commissioning. For help or information please contact equalities@norfolk.gov.uk

Overview

1. This proposal seeks to change the way we remunerate in-house foster carers.
2. Norfolk foster carers are exceptional people who support children and young people in Norfolk and really make a difference to their lives. Foster care requires skill, patience and understanding, and each case is different because each child who requires care is unique.
3. Our foster carers are a valuable asset, because children in home-based placements benefit from a wide range of support and advantages. However, some of our children looked after with protected characteristics, particularly teenagers, some disabled children and children with complex needs, are less likely than others to secure an in-house foster placement. 20% of all current children looked after have been identified by Children's Services as having some form of disability need.
4. In view of this, careful consideration has been given to developing a remuneration proposal for our in-house foster carers that takes every opportunity to maximise the opportunities for as many children as possible to secure placements.
5. This equality impact assessment sets out the positive and adverse impacts arising from this proposal for people with protected characteristics and the mitigating actions in place to address any adverse impacts.

About the Fostering Review

6. The technical detail of the proposal is set out in the report to Cabinet, and therefore is not replicated again here.
7. In summary, the proposal aims to change the way we calculate the fees paid to in-house foster carers, basing payments on the needs of the child rather than on the skills and experience of foster carers. The proposal includes new fees based on categories of need which will represent an increase in fees paid to the majority of carers and a reduction for some; increased fees where foster carers have two or more children in placement; a recognition scheme for those looked after harder to place young people; and simplification of the Linked Family Scheme to bring it in line with the new fee structure.
8. The proposal also includes an expectation that foster carers provide modest savings for children in their care of £5pw.

Legal context

9. Public authorities are required by the Equality Act 2010 to give due regard to equality when exercising public functions¹. This is called the 'Public Sector Equality Duty'.
10. The purpose of an equality impact assessment is to consider the potential impact of a proposed change or issue on people with protected characteristics.
11. If the assessment identifies any detrimental impact, this enables mitigating actions to be developed.

12. It is not always possible to adopt the course of action that will best promote the interests of people with protected characteristics. However, equality assessments enable informed decisions to be made that take every opportunity to minimise disadvantage.

Information about the people affected by the proposal

13. This proposal will impact on all foster carers working with Norfolk County Council (they are not employees), and all children looked after. There are approximately 360 fostering households supported. Not all Norfolk County Council foster carers live in Norfolk. They care predominantly for Norfolk Looked After Children.
14. This includes foster carers and children with a range of protected characteristics, in relation to disability, sex, gender reassignment, marital or civil partner status, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion/belief, age and sexual orientation.
15. According to the most recent data (23/02/22) the Council currently supports more than 600 foster carers, of whom 53% are primary carers (working within a joint fostering arrangement). 13% are single carers.
16. 96% of primary carers are female. 91.5% of foster carers self-define as White British with 4% defining as White Other. 2% self-define as being from another ethnic background, with 1.3% as being from a Black African / Black Caribbean background. The data shows that Black and Asian foster carers are most likely under-represented in Norfolk, as is likely the case elsewhere across the UK.
17. The largest proportion of primary carers (joint and single) are aged between 50-59 years, accounting for 35% of all foster carers. There are slightly more single carers aged 60 to 64 years (24%) than joint carers (19%) but similar proportions of carers aged 65+ years (12-15%). 20- to 29-year-olds make up 3.5% of single carers and less than 2% of joint carers and are the smallest age cohort overall.
18. The Council is currently the corporate parent to 1081 Looked After Children (CLA). 39% of this group are aged between 14-17 years old and 24% are aged 10-13 years. Children aged 0-5 make up 14% of all LAC. 57% of all LAC are male.
19. 76% of these children and young people are defined as being White British, and 7.1% White Other. 4.5% of CLA are from Mixed / Multiple heritage backgrounds; 4% are from Black backgrounds; 4% are from Other ethnic minority backgrounds, and 2.5% are from Asian backgrounds. Gypsy Roma & Traveller children make up 0.7% of the cohort. Taking into consideration that the 2018 Norfolk School Census found between 14-15% of primary & secondary school pupils were from diverse ethnic minority backgrounds, it is important to reflect that children from Black, Mixed / Multiple, and Asian backgrounds are all likely significantly disproportionately represented within the cohort. This is the case elsewhere across the UK and this pattern has been seen for many years. Unaccompanied asylum seeker children account for around 7% of the whole CLA cohort so this cohort would not fully account for this disproportionality.
20. Of the 1081 children and young people, 427 are currently being cared for in-house (39%). Of these 25.5% are aged 14-17 years and 24% are aged 10-13 years. 15% of these young people are 14 years and are the group at highest risk of placement break down in Norfolk. Of the 14-year-olds, 41% are placed with in-house foster carers while the rest are in private provision, including some in residential settings.

21. Of the UASC, only 7% have been placed with in-house carers and it should be noted that a significant proportion of this group are considered the most difficult to place due to their age / complex needs.

Potential impact

22. Based on the evidence available, there will be a range of significant **positive** impacts for foster carers and children looked after with protected characteristics. This particularly relates to:

The protected characteristic of age:

- Support as many children looked after as possible to benefit from the support and advantages of placement in family-based care. Increase capacity to enable the right support to be provided to as many young people as possible.
- Focus resources and support on the needs of young people around the age of 14, to address the fact that a significant number of foster placements break down for young people at this age.
- Enable foster carers to care for multiple children, where this is in the best interests of the children.
- Encourage placements for the correct length of time in accordance with the needs of the child - because some children are currently attending residential short breaks and respite unnecessarily.

The protected characteristic of disability:

- Incentivising foster carers to care for children who have complex needs, particularly disabled young people, to maximise the chances of disabled young people to find a successful foster placement. This is a particularly important point to note, as a significant number of existing and potential foster carers do not feel confident to foster a disabled child or a child with complex needs, and these children miss out on the opportunity, security and support that a foster placement brings. Caring and supporting a disabled child is often more expensive than caring for and supporting children who are not disabled. Increasing remuneration paid to carers when they care for more complex children recognises this issue.
 - Creating capacity for young people requiring specialist placements for PACE (alternative to police custody), emergencies, CWD and New Roads young people. Mental health disability or other complex needs may be a factor in the need for some placements.
23. Inevitably, any changes to a long-standing remuneration process will potentially trigger some potentially adverse impacts to mitigate – so it is important to keep a clear focus on the fundamental goals - **the imperative to ensure that as many young people as possible, and disabled young people with complex needs, are able to benefit from family-based foster placements in the same way that other young people can.**
24. The section below seeks to examine in detail the different ways in which the proposal may impact on foster carers and children looked after, based on the available data:

Potential Impact	Potential mitigation
<p>That the Valuing Care scoring matrix may not recognise the needs of children and young people with protected characteristics including those with multiple protected characteristics.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • That a monetary value is being attached to disabled and non-disabled children. • That some disabled children may be advantaged at the expense/detriment of others or the scoring matrix creates an unfair hierarchy valuing some aspects of disability over another. • Whether the matrix and / or the assessors could be subjective or influenced by other bias. For example, could judgements be made about the needs of ethnically diverse, disabled or LGBTQ+ young people that doesn't fully take account of their needs based on a lack of knowledge or understanding of diverse needs 	<p>The Valuing Care Score (VCS) matrix has been developed to take account and balance the holistic needs of children and young people. This approach has been fully adopted and embedded by several local authorities to robustly assess the needs of children and young people. Foster carers are also assessed using the VCS.</p> <p>The VCS takes account of a broad range of factors including physical / learning disabilities and organic (basic physical, social and environmental) needs. These organic needs do not tend to change significantly over time when assessed with respect to disability.</p> <p>A higher VCS is not solely dependent on whether a child or young person has a particular disability. It also considers needs in terms of; risk of exploitation; education and learning, risk of drug and alcohol misuse; managing and self-regulating emotions; setting boundaries; personal self-care; independent living; developing self-identity; maintaining and developing safe relationships; and support to verbalise emotions.</p> <p>In principle children and young people with the highest level of need, including because of a physical or learning disability will likely retain a higher VCS. Foster carers supporting these children will also be able to access additional financial support for any adjustments required for day-to-day activities and will be supported by a number of professionals including Occupational Therapy Assistant Practitioners, Occupational Therapists and others.</p> <p>All qualified social workers working with CLA are fully conversant with the VCS and are skilled at undertaking assessments to determine an appropriate score. All social workers are bound by stringent professional standards and a code of ethics. Assessments are completed in collaboration with supervising social workers and scrutinised and signed off by Team</p>

Potential Impact	Potential mitigation
	<p>Managers. VCS scores are regularly reviewed through the LAC review process by the Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO) with input from the whole professional team working around the child, including the foster carer, and their supervising social worker. At each LAC review the IRO is responsible for ensuring that the voice of the child / young person is also taken into consideration. This process recognises that diverse holistic needs may rise or fall over time.</p>
<p>That potential or existing foster carers with protected characteristics may be more likely to be on a lower income (e.g., older, disabled or diverse ethnic minority) and could experience greater uncertainty with respect to changes to their fostering income as a result of the proposal.</p>	<p>The data currently shows that most primary in-house foster carers are female and more foster carers are in a joint arrangement than single carers. There are more older carers (50+) in this group. There are several diverse ethnic minority and LGBT foster carers, and there will be some foster carers who are disabled.</p> <p>Once approved, foster carers will choose if they wish to accept a placement, depending on their own circumstances and wishes, taking into account they understand the financial implications of the placement.</p> <p>Financially, Norfolk continues to be highly competitive with respect fostering allowances, providing one of the highest rates of pay made to Local Authority foster carers in England and Wales (to the best of our knowledge). The rates of pay are also competitive when compared with Independent Fostering Agencies across the UK.</p> <p>Where foster carers experience any financial difficulties because of the placement, they will continue to be able to access support from their supervising social worker, including, if necessary, ad-hoc payments to alleviate any pressing difficulty. This is the case in other authorities as well.</p> <p>The latest modelling data (Jan 22) shows that of the 388 children in placements in Norfolk at this time, 74% were deemed to be on standard rate, 21% were on the enhanced rate and 5% were deemed to</p>

Potential Impact	Potential mitigation
	<p>be complex rate. The evidence does not currently indicate that there is likely to be a substantial change in the size of these cohorts.</p> <p>If the proposed change is implemented, the % of CLA cohorts by need will continue to be closely monitored, and changes proposed to Cabinet if needed.</p>
<p>Given that foster carers must register to be self-employed to declare their fostering income and claim tax allowances they are not legally employees.</p> <p>Taking account of the Council's commitment to equality of opportunity in principle, does the VCS demonstrate that caring for a child with a higher score will require substantially more work for a foster carer.</p>	<p>Overwhelmingly primary foster carers are female and therefore are unlikely to experience a substantial disadvantage in comparison to male foster carers.</p> <p>The underpinning principle of the VCS is to match the child or young person, based on their level of need, with a foster carer who has the right skills and experience. This process recognises that children and young people with the most complex needs will most likely require more time attention and support from their foster carer. It should be considered that a foster carer's skills and knowledge are not necessarily related to their length of fostering experience. For example, a new foster care with previous experience of working with children with disabilities may be a more suitable long-term placement for a child with a disability.</p> <p>There is no evidence at present to show that joint foster carers (where they have two incomes to rely on and greater flexibility) may be at greater advantage than single parent foster carers (including LGBTQ+ carers). This is because matching is done based on both the child and foster carer's VCS. In some circumstances, a single foster carer may be able to give more time and attention to a child or young person where they do not have their own children or other familial / work commitments.</p> <p>There is likely a small cohort of fosters carers who due to their age and personal circumstances will likely not be able to care for children and young people with specific needs, but their placements will continue to be monitored to ensure that</p>

Potential Impact	Potential mitigation
	they continue to be supported with suitable placements and opportunities to continue to foster children as before.
<p>Foster carers with protected characteristics may terminate a placement or decide to no longer foster on the basis that they are unwilling or unable to accept the new payment terms.</p>	<p>Foster carers are not motivated to care for children and young people based on the financial incentive, however the Council recognises and respects that foster carers will always have a choice with regards whether they wish to continue to foster children and young people.</p> <p>The proposal recognises that the existing fee structure may be unfair and seeks to provide a robust financial structure to address this and aims to ensure that foster carers supporting the most vulnerable and complex children and young people are compensated appropriately.</p> <p>The proposal has taken account of measures already in place to ensure that where possible individual foster carers and their families do not suffer a financial detriment.</p> <p>All in-house foster carers have been consulted about the proposal and their views and wishes will be considered with respect to any decisions taken.</p> <p>Placements with foster carers are never terminated without good reason and must follow due process. Children and young people will only be removed from a foster carer if this is the express wish of the foster carer or if there is evidence of immediate/imminent risk of harm. As with all processes the wishes and feelings of both the child / young person and the foster carer are carefully considered. Placements may also come to an end in a planned way if the care plan changes, this will be discussed and agreed with all in the child's network, including the foster carer</p>
<p>Are some foster carers with protected characteristics likely to be disadvantaged if they are deemed unsuitable to match with higher needs</p>	<p>The current payment structure does not recognise the skills and experiences of diverse foster carers</p>

Potential Impact	Potential mitigation
<p>children because they are unable to access the training available</p>	<p>Every foster carer has their own supervising social worker within the Fostering Service who they meet with regularly for supervision and support.</p> <p>A significant amount of work has been undertaken to ensure that every foster carer is able to access training and support to develop their resilience and upskill. This process also recognises that individual foster carers will continue to have preferences with respect which children and young people they will be able to support.</p>
<p>If scores change at every LAC review does that mean greater income uncertainty for some foster carers with protected characteristics thus de-incentivising the desire for longer term / stable placements. This could be an issue for single, older, disabled or diverse ethnic minority foster carers, who may be more likely to be on a lower income and may have greater reliance on the foster carer income to plan ahead.</p>	<p>The VCS would be reviewed on a six-monthly basis at each LAC review, and the foster carer will input into this process. Foster carers may perceive that the VCS reflects a child or young person's behaviour at the time of the review, but this is not the case. It should also be considered that it is unlikely that a child or young person's organic needs will substantially reduce in period between review.</p> <p>There is evidence to show that as children develop their needs many become increasing complex (which is why many placements break down at age 14). Children with SEN, learning disabilities, physical disabilities and neurodiverse conditions are likely to always score more highly and, in some cases, may be at greater risk of exploitation or have increased emotional / social support needs.</p> <p>In exceptional cases, where the VCS falls but the foster carer is struggling financially a case can be made by their supervising social worker for additional financial support on an ad-hoc basis.</p> <p>Again, the Council recognises and respects that fostering is a personal choice that each foster carer must make, based on their own circumstances (including their understanding of the financial implications).</p> <p>There is a recognised shortage of foster carers from some diverse backgrounds</p>

Potential Impact	Potential mitigation
	<p>which is one reason why rates have been set competitively in Norfolk, and why significant investment has been made into transforming the fostering service to ensure existing foster carers feel valued and supported, and new foster carers can be recruited.</p> <p>It is recognised that many foster carers chose to take breaks from fostering for different reasons and as a result there is often unused capacity in the in-house service. There is an opportunity to explore this capacity with foster carers to identify how they can maximise their opportunities to take on new placements.</p>
<p>Additional “expense” payments may not take account of the current financial climate and “hardship” – including the rising cost of living and the associated impacts (e.g., escalation of mental health issues)</p>	<p>All expense payments are linked to HMRC so are automatically adjusted to take account of the current financial situation.</p> <p>As above, supervising social workers will continue to take account of the foster carer’s individual circumstances and provide tailored support to ensure that foster carers are able to continue to provide high quality care and support, including to children who are extremely vulnerable and have a high level of need.</p>
<p>Payments may not take account of the cost implications for having a disabled child in the household, where we know costs are likely to be significantly higher (e.g., travel, accessing local leisure, lack of changing places toilets etc) which makes it more expensive to engage in day-to-day activities</p>	<p>As above, in addition to raising the level of payment in accordance with the VCS, foster carers can access additional support through the Children with Disabilities Team (including a new specialist OT Assistant Practitioner) to advise them on making reasonable adjustments and adaptations for disabled children and young people.</p> <p>Disabled children and young people may also be eligible for DLA and their foster carers may qualify for Carer’s Allowance as well (where they are looking after a child or young person for more than 35 hours per week).</p>
<p>Evidence shows that placements are most likely to break down at age 14. The risk is that some young people’s needs may go unrecognised at this time or earlier (e.g., due to bias in system)</p>	<p>This has been a recognised issue for some time across children’s social care which the proposal is seeking to help address.</p> <p>The VCS takes account of the emerging needs of young people at this life-stage through the holistic assessment process</p>

Potential Impact	Potential mitigation
<p>There may be higher proportions of children in this cohort from diverse ethnic minority backgrounds, including UASC or neurodiverse children with SEN.</p>	<p>and directly links needs with the payment framework to ensure an appropriate level of financial support for young people and their foster carers.</p> <p>In Norfolk, as is the case across the UK, young people from diverse ethnic backgrounds, (and specifically those from Black and Mixed / Multiple heritage backgrounds) are over-represented within the system and generally experience poorer outcomes. The Children's Services Anti-Racist Practice group is exploring this to identify what further steps can be taken to address this. The Service recognises that all vulnerable children and young people must be safeguarded and supported in accordance with legal obligations, and every at-risk child or young person is carefully assessed by qualified professionals. Ensuring long-term stable placements for these young people is essential to improve outcomes.</p> <p>While there is currently not specific evidence to show that young people with mental health difficulties, SEN or neurodiverse young people are reflected in this cohort, it should be considered possible that this may be another contributing factor to placement breakdown at this age.</p> <p>There are fewer UASC in this cohort as most of these young people in Norfolk are post 16, however this group are amongst the most difficult to place with only 6 UASC currently placed in-house.</p> <p>In addition to the other support available, these young people and their carers also have access to the Targeted Youth Support Service which offers direct support to young people where there is a concern or risk which is predominantly extra familial and where the young person would benefit from developing a trusted relationship with a youth support worker to achieve safety and wellbeing outcome.</p>

Potential Impact	Potential mitigation
	A new Missing from Care strategy, which looks at early intervention and support can be effectively utilised will go live from April 2022.
There may be evidence to show that some children and young people with protected characteristics may be subject to Provision of specialist placements for PACE (alternative to police custody), emergency placements, CWD and New Roads young people.	<p>See above – it is recognised that diverse ethnic minority children and young people are over-represented in all LAC cohorts and is a focus for the Anti-Racist Practice group.</p> <p>It should be considered that foster carers providing emergency placements will not see a reduction in payments as a result of this proposal. VCS cannot be provided for these placements for obvious reasons. Foster carers who provide emergency placements do not routinely take on longer term foster placements on the basis that they have a very specific set of skills and expertise.</p>
<p>Incentivisation payments and awards may not reflect the diverse needs of foster carers with protected characteristics and their families</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If foster carers don't have children • If foster carers of diverse faiths do not celebrate birthdays and Christmas • Do hampers cater for all needs • Will vouchers cover the costs for disabled children to participate in family activities • Payment of £500 may disadvantage people who can only foster for a short term. 	<p>Some of the incentives and recognition awards (the first three) are already on offer to all foster carers and their families and are in-line with those offered by other authorities and IFAs.</p> <p>The aim of the additional awards is not to enhance payment rates, but rather to demonstrate that the contribution of foster carers and their families, particularly the children of foster carers are valued and appreciated. Feedback from foster carers and their families is sought on a regular basis to ensure that all needs are catered for</p> <p>Supervising social workers work closely with the foster carer and their family to ensure that awards are appropriate to the family and where necessary culturally sensitive.</p> <p>Again, where there may be a specific hardship because of fostering, the supervising social worker can access a range of support, including where necessary ad-hoc financial support.</p>
Norfolk's drive is to have more children fostered within their networks by Connected Carers. This is recognised to particularly benefit children from diverse ethnic minority backgrounds. Consultation feedback	Connected Carers are always approved based on the understanding of their assessed suitability to care in the longer term for a child in their network. They are not approved as foster carers for all CLA children, although once approved many

Potential Impact	Potential mitigation
shows that Connected carers welcome the change to recognise the impact of taking into their home children or young people with higher / more complex needs but there is a long period for them to become approved and more may be likely to become Special Guardians in which case they may not benefit financially from the proposal.	<p>do choose to become approved as foster carers, based on their own experiences.</p> <p>Connected Carers will receive the payment rate determined by the connected child's VCS, so where the child has significant complex disabilities or other needs, they will receive the highest rate of payment (which has not previously been the case). If Connected Carers wish to then be approved as foster carers, they will undertake the same assessment and training to become fully approved. Connected Carers are supported in the same way as other foster carers and have the same access to a supervising social worker.</p> <p>All foster carers have the same opportunities to become Special Guardians on the understanding that they will become responsible for a child / young person until they reach 18 years. Special Guardians for CLA will be supported with a support plan for the child, and which considers financial implications for this arrangement.</p>

Conclusion

Currently, we believe there is **no obvious legal impediment** to going ahead with the proposal. It would be implemented in full accordance with due process, national guidance and policy. Other local authorities set fostering fees based on needs of the children so there is a precedent for this.

It is possible to conclude that the proposal may have a positive impact on some people with protected characteristics, for the reasons set out in this assessment. It may also have some detrimental impacts, also set out in the assessment.

Decision-makers are therefore advised to take these impacts into account when deciding whether the proposal should go ahead, in addition to the mitigating actions recommended below.

Some of the actions will address the potential detrimental impacts identified in this assessment, but it is not possible to address all the potential impacts. Ultimately, the task for decision-makers is to balance these impacts alongside the need to manage resources and target support to enable as many children as possible, including those with protected characteristics, to benefit from home-based foster care.

Recommended actions

	Action	Lead	Date
1.	We have put in place a process to ensure that any carer who is affected is able to speak to their supervising social worker regarding their individual needs. The social worker will be able to support them with additional training, development and support to build their own network of support and in exceptional cases, a case can be made for additional financial support.	Head of Fostering	Jan 2022
2.	Carers are aware that they can speak with their supervising social workers, the team managers and senior managers about any worries. Supervising social workers know their carers well, they will be able to reach out and connect with carers they may be worried about to support them to consider their personal situations. The policies and procedures within the fostering service are inclusive.	Head of Fostering	Jan 2022
3.	The cohorts of LAC children and young people by level of need will continue to be monitored to ensure that the proposal (if implemented) is fair and foster carers with protected characteristics are not being disadvantaged by changes to payment structures. This monitoring should include short and longer term placements by foster carer's protected characteristics.	Assistant Director CSC – Corporate Parenting	Review every 3 months commencing April 2022
4.	Further targeted work is required to understand the experiences of young diverse ethnic minority people and disabled young people who may be at greater risk of placement breakdowns and may require specific interventions.	Participation Service and EDI workstream	Ongoing
5.	This EqIA will remain open as a live document to ensure that if any further impacts are identified on the basis of new evidence not currently available, this will be subject to an equality assessment/development of mitigating actions and reported to decision makers for determination. Any new impacts to emerge will be documented in this assessment and kept under review, to ensure that individuals with protected characteristics are not disproportionately adversely affected.	Assistant Director CSC – Corporate Parenting	Ongoing

Evidence used to inform this assessment

- [Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy](#)
- Demographic factors set out in [Norfolk's Story 2021](#)
- [Digital Inclusion and COVID-19](#) equality impact assessments
- Norfolk County Council [Area Reports](#) on Norfolk's JSNA relating to protected characteristics
- Business intelligence and management data, as quoted in this report
- Equality Act 2010 and Public Sector Equality Duty codes of practice

Further information

For further information about this equality impact assessment contact:

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If you need this document in large print, audio, Braille, alternative format or in a different language please contact 01603 973232 or 18001 0344 800 8020 (Text relay).

Annex 1 – table of protected characteristics

The following table sets out details of each protected characteristic. Remember that people with multiple characteristics may face the most barriers:

Characteristic	Who this covers
Age	Adults and children etc, or specific/different age groups
Disability	<p>A person has a disability if they have a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.</p> <p>This may include but is not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People with mobility issues (eg wheelchair or cane users, people of short stature, people who do not have mobility in a limb etc) • Blind and partially sighted people • People who are D/deaf or hearing impaired • People with learning disabilities • People who have mental health issues • People who identify as neurodiverse (this refers to neurological differences including, for example, dyspraxia, dyslexia, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder, the autistic spectrum and others) • People with some long-term health conditions which meet the criteria of a disability.
People with a long-term health condition	People with long-term health conditions which meet the criteria of a disability.
Gender reassignment	<p>People who identify as transgender (defined as someone who is proposing to undergo, is undergoing, or has undergone a process or part of a process to reassign their sex. It is not necessary for the person to be under medical supervision or undergoing surgery).</p> <p>You may want to consider the needs of people who identify as non-binary (a spectrum of gender identities that are not exclusively masculine or feminine).</p>
Marriage/civil partnerships	People who are married or in a civil partnership. They may be of the opposite or same sex.
Pregnancy and maternity	Maternity refers to the period after birth and is linked to maternity leave in the employment context. In the non-work context, protection against maternity discrimination

Characteristic	Who this covers
	is for 26 weeks after giving birth, and this includes treating a woman unfavourably because she is breastfeeding.
Race	<p>Race refers to a group of people defined by their race, colour, or nationality (including citizenship) ethnic or national origins.</p> <p>A racial group can be made up of two or more distinct racial groups, for example a person may identify as Black British, British Asian, British Sikh, British Jew, Romany Gypsy or Irish Traveller.</p>
Religion/belief	<p>Belief means any religious or philosophical belief or no belief. To be protected, a belief must satisfy various criteria, including that it is a weighty and substantial aspect of human life and behaviour. Denominations or sects within a religion can be considered a protected religion or religious belief.</p>
Sex	<p>This covers men and women. Also consider the needs of people who identify as intersex (people who have variations in sex characteristics) and non-binary (a spectrum of gender identities that are not exclusively masculine or feminine).</p>
Sexual orientation	<p>People who identify as straight/heterosexual, lesbian, gay or bisexual.</p>

¹ The Act states that public bodies must pay due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Act;
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a relevant protected characteristic¹ and people who do not share it;
- Foster good relations between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and people who do not share it.

[The Equality Act 2010 is available on legislation.gov.uk.](https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15)



Implementing our Vital Signs for Children Vision in Social Care: Fostering Fees

Our response to your feedback

February 2022

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Feedback & Responses

Summary

Firstly, we would like to thank you again for taking the time to respond to the engagement document. We know the original timeframe for responses was short, so we have continued to collate all feedback received up to 22nd February 2022. We were very pleased to have received responses from over 100 fostering households. We also know that many of you contacted your Supervising Social Workers and their Team Managers to have follow up conversations on what the proposals might mean for you and we hope that these were helpful in giving you as much clarity as we can at this time.

We were pleased to see that there was lots of positivity for elements of the new approach in your responses. Many carers told us that they were supportive of the changes in principle and could fully understand the reasons behind the proposals. People liked the fact that the model was very focused on children and that it looks to place more complex young people with local authority carers wherever possible. There was lots of support for kinship and connected carers being paid in the same way as other carers, with many people feeling this had previously been unfair. People also liked the idea of ceasing reduced rates for further children.

Additionally, we received positive comments on the increased support that will be available to carers. The introduction of the clinical psychologist post for all carers and the Supporting Resilience Team were welcomed, as were the CWD Intensive Outreach Service and the Occupational Therapist Assistant Practitioner for those who are supporting children with disabilities. There was also positivity around the enhanced training offer that will be available moving forward.

That said, we also recognise that the engagement document has raised a number of questions and concerns for carers and that many are feeling worried as a result of the proposals. The remainder of this document aims to alleviate some of the worries by answering your questions where we are able, correcting some misunderstandings around the proposal and responding to some of the key themes that have emerged. We have not sought to respond to individual circumstances, but we hope the themes we have pulled out reflect the main concerns we have heard.

Now as much as ever, we encourage you to keep speaking to your Supervising Social Worker or to contact us for a one-to-one conversation with a Team Manager if this document raises any further questions for you.

Your Responses

Feedback has been grouped into themes and key points where possible. Where feedback has been received that relates to someone's personal situation, this has been discussed separately with the person who raised the question(s).

	You said ...	Our response ...
General responses to the model		
1.1	<p>I am delighted that the focus will be on the children, looking to avoid, wherever possible, placement breakdowns and placing the more complex young people with local authority carers.</p> <p>I believe the concept will work and agree with many of the aspirations of the new framework.</p> <p>We agree that children should be placed on the basis of their needs and that the remuneration should reflect this.</p> <p>We agree that many aspects of the current system are unfair; I feel confident the new system will work and will be much fairer.</p> <p>We agree there should be no difference between payments to first and second children in placements.</p> <p>We fully agree there is a need for additional payments for the highest need cases and for kinship carers.</p> <p>I welcome the proposal of ensuring connected carers are paid in line with mainstream carers, similarly the simplified and fairer system of payments to linked family carers is a great improvement.</p> <p>The sections showing all the fantastic support and valuing of carers was encouraging. The idea of a Supporting Resilience Team sounds</p>	<p>We were so pleased to receive many positive comments on the new model, such as those listed here. It was great to hear that many people are in agreement with the principles of the model and moving towards a fairer payment system. It was also great to hear that you believe the additional support and training we will be putting in place as part of the model will support you and the young people you care for.</p>

	You said ...	Our response ...
	<p>very positive and something that will be very helpful to anyone going through the difficulties of looking after teens. The CWD Intensive Outreach Service sounds great The Occupational Therapist AP will surely be helpful also to those carers with disabled children. The possibility of support by a psychologist for carers will be very good.</p> <p>We see that you are considering improved training for harder to care for children so that is really good to see.</p>	
1.2	As carers we feel saddened and undervalued after seeing the new proposal. We do not feel that it recognises all the hard work and dedication that we put in. It has had a drastic impact on our morale.	This was definitely not our intention! We really value the excellent care you provide! We know you all work hard and care about Norfolk children.
1.3	The proposed changes do not take account of the skills, experience and training that Foster Carers have. They do not incentivise carers to embark on further training to further their skills and knowledge.	The new proposed allowances are designed very much to recognise the skills and knowledge you develop as Foster Carers, ensuring that you are paid an allowance that reflects the care you provide. Your skills, knowledge and experience will help you to provide excellent care to children.
1.4	The review feels poorly timed. The last two years of the pandemic have been very difficult for Foster Carers, with home schooling and the risk of loved ones becoming ill. Additionally, household costs such as energy, food and petrol are all rapidly increasing for Foster Carers. The proposals do not reflect this these challenging times.	We recognise that there are worries regarding the financial situation, however, planning for this proposal has been ongoing for many months prior to the recent increase in costs. We are committed to working with individuals who are worried that they will experience financial hardship as a result of these changes to support them. The changes, if approved, would not take effect for 18 months, allowing time for us to work with carers to find appropriate solutions.
1.5	We agree that improving outcomes for children needs to be at the heart of what we do. We are unsure how the proposals will achieve this.	<p>We know that children have improved outcomes when they experience family-based care, this is the same for Looked After Children who cannot live with their families.</p> <p>At present, we are unable to find family-based placements for a number of children, particularly children with additional and complex needs. We need to support and encourage Foster Carers to consider caring for children with additional needs, utilising the support, training and development available.</p>

	You said ...	Our response ...
		<p>Our current system does not encourage this approach as carers deemed to be the most skilled and experienced are choosing to care for children with few additional needs as they receive the same allowance. Other carers who may be willing to care for children with additional needs do not receive the right payments because of their accreditation meaning they are put off.</p> <p>Our current system provides a lower rate of pay for second and subsequent children in placement. At this time, we have more than 300 approved placements that are not being used. By paying the same amount for second and subsequent placements, Foster Carers will no longer be disincentivised to care for more than one child.</p>
1.6	We are concerned that the proposals will result in a loss of good Foster Carers with a wealth of experience.	So far this has not happened, and current placement payments are protected for 18 months, giving us, and carers, time to work through individual situations and provide additional support, training and development.
1.7	We have found it difficult to properly comment on the proposal as we have not seen the full schedule of rates with the exact amounts. The table of examples does not give sufficient detail and so the process does not feel transparent.	We have focused on giving lots of detail about the ethos of the proposal, the impact of the proposal and the foundation on which allowances will be made. Foster carers have also been able to speak to their Supervising Social Workers in respect of their individual circumstances.
Changes to the payment structure		
2.1	Currently carers are paid a maintenance payment and a fostering allowance – will both payments exist in future? Which part of the payment will be changing?	Maintenance payments will remain as they are now, including an uprate each year which is built into the new structure. The allowance for Foster Carers (also known as their fees) will change.
2.2	The document states that the maintenance allowance will be that recommended by the Fostering Network. However, their website says they have stopped doing this. Could you clarify what the basic maintenance allowance will be for 0-11 and 11-17?	At the time of developing this proposal, the Fostering Network were still recommending what the maintenance allowance should be for each age group and this is what we have based the payments on. For 0 – 10 years, this would be £152 per week and for 11 – 17 years this would be £202 per week

	You said ...	Our response ...
2.3	Under the new proposal would holiday, birthday and Christmas monies still be paid in addition to the allowances?	Yes, these will continue.
2.4	How will those on SGO no detriment will be impacted?	We are working through SGO support plans now. Where the payments were stipulated within the plan, these will not change. Where they were not, the Special
2.5	How will staying put and adoption payments be impacted?	Staying put payments will not be impacted – there is separate national guidance on staying put. Adoption payments will not be affected by this proposal
2.6	Is the proposed £100pw reduction a total amount, not affecting additional children in placement, or per child in placement?	The reduction will only relate to the ‘first’ child in placement. We have proposed that Foster Carers who have second and subsequent children in placement should receive the full fee. In reality, this means that carers will receive slightly more than they do now for additional children they care for.
2.7	Could all existing carers remain on the current fee structure until their placements end, rather than for only 18 months? It would seem fairer to uphold the current fees agreed to when children were placed.	This is not possible due to the financial constraints. We are asking the Council to agree to an additional £700,000 in payments to be made to carers and in the current financial climate it would be very difficult to ask them to agree to further costs.
2.8	Could the new payment structure be brought in earlier for those whose payments will increase? It does not seem fair that they have to wait, particularly with a freeze on changes to accreditation rate.	We recognise that carers who would receive more in proposed fee structure would want their fees to increase in April 2022, however, the cost of this would be more than £2.25million in addition to the current proposal, which, in the current financial climate, is not possible.
2.9	Could you consider a remuneration structure that reflects both the needs of the child and the skills of carers? Having a combination of both child's needs and Foster Carers skillset would be a more balanced approach.	We did explore whether it would be possible to consider both, but unfortunately, we could not find a model that worked. Part of the purpose of the proposed restructure of fostering allowances is to streamline payments, making it clearer for carers, but considering both created significant complexities.
2.10	We are not in control of which children are placed with us, we are called and sent a form about them and say yes or no. This means we are not able to easily influence which young people we are matched with or the payments we receive.	We have been reviewing our processes as part of the wider transformation of the Norfolk Fostering Service. We are creating a dedicated Duty Team who will be responsible for supporting placements, working alongside Foster Carers and their Supervising Social Workers when seeking placements.

	You said ...	Our response ...
2.11	The retention payments and voucher for keeping a child in placement when aged 14 or over feel insulting – these small gestures will not prevent placement breakdown.	We recognise that the gestures suggested within the proposal would not prevent placement breakdown. We also recognise that money is seldom a factor in a successful placement. However, we believe it is so important to recognise the efforts of carers and to say thank you. The family activity voucher is designed to celebrate the family unit– this includes the carers, their children (if they have children) and the Looked After Children they are caring for.
Valuing Care and payment bands		
3.1	Could we see the Valuing Care score criteria on which the structure is based? We need a clearer understanding of the domains of need.	<p>For those who have not yet seen it, please see the below document which gives additional information on the Valuing Care tool, domains of need and scoring. This was also shared with carers via email on 28 January 2022.</p> <div> </div> <p>Valuing Care Needs measurement tool g</p>
3.2	How was the Valuing Care tool created?	The Valuing Care tool was developed in 2019 in order to give social work teams a methodology for understanding levels of needs in key areas for children and young people. It also allows us to track over time whether these needs are being met. There are a number of local authorities nationally using this tool and NCC were supported to implement this tool by the developers. Social Workers, Team Managers, Access to Resources Team and the IRO Team worked collaboratively with the developers to test the tool in Norfolk and to integrate it into our processes.
3.3	<p>Who will be responsible for completing the Valuing Care tool?</p> <p>We are worried that Children’s Social Workers change too frequently and do not see young people often enough to score them accurately.</p> <p>Will the Foster Carer be involved in the completing of the tool as we spend most time with them?</p>	Whilst the Social Worker for the child is responsible for completing the Valuing Care assessment, we have been clear that we expect the child’s Social Worker and the Supervising Social Worker to work together to ensure the assessment accurately reflects the child’s needs. We would expect that the Social Workers from both services consider the input from Foster Carers, their own observations and the Foster Carers’ log when completing the tool.

	You said ...	Our response ...
	<p>How can we be sure the tool is being completed consistently across the service?</p> <p>The Valuing Care tool will need to be embedded in practice and training provided for carers and social work staff on how to use the tool.</p>	<p>All assessments are overseen by the Team Manager who will review the assessment to ensure quality. Social workers have been working with the Valuing Care tool for a number of years now and it has embedded well. For new staff, Valuing Care is part of their initial training and will take place within the first few months of them joining NCC.</p>
3.4	Will there be a way to appeal the score if the Foster Carer does not agree?	The Foster Carer will be able to discuss their view with their Supervising Social Worker who can work with the child's Social Worker to ensure the assessment is accurate.
3.5	We feel that the reduction in payments when a Valuing Care score reduces creates a perverse incentive in which carers are penalised for being more effective and supporting a young person's needs to reduce	We know that most children do not experience a significant reduction in Valuing Care scoring. Whilst many children will settle and begin to see positive outcomes as a result of the care afforded to them by their Foster Carer, this does not mean that needs will significantly change. For many children, their needs increase as they grow and develop, we also know that even if children present with less challenging behaviour, their needs do not necessarily change.
3.6	Is it planned that the Valuing Care score and subsequent banding will be discussed in the young person's LAC review? If so, it likely to be difficult to have these conversations in front of the young person and their family, as the Foster Carer will need to highlight the young person's needs, rather than their strengths, in order to continue to receive the same level of payment. The relationship between Social Workers and Foster Carers is also likely to be negatively affected if connected to pay.	<p>There is no plan for this to be discussed at the child's review, it would not be appropriate. We would expect that the Social Workers from both services consider the input from Foster Carers, their own observations and the Foster Carers' log when completing the Valuing Care tool prior to each LAC Review. The Foster Carer will be able to discuss their view with their Supervising Social Worker who can work with the child's Social Worker to ensure the assessment is accurate.</p> <p>Foster Carers should always have seen the previous Valuing Care assessment as it is included in the Combined Assessment and Progress Report for Reviews and also within the placement matching paperwork.</p>
3.7	When children enter the care system there may be limited information to identify any immediate, ongoing or future needs. How will these young people be assessed using the Valuing Care tool?	Children who are placed in care for the first time will have a placement matching form which includes an assessment of need using the Valuing Care tool. For UASC and emergency placements, payments will be made at

	You said ...	Our response ...
	What will happen in the case of emergency placements, or unaccompanied asylum-seeking children?	the enhanced rate (equivalent to current level 5 payments) until the Social Worker has been able to assess the child's level of need.
3.8	The child we see on paper is quite often different to the one who comes through the door and additional needs often become evident quickly. Will there be mechanism to change scores quickly when this is the case?	Yes, children will have a review within 20 works days of their placement, the Valuing Care assessment will be considered at that point via the Combined Assessment and Progress Report.
3.9	Carers could be tempted to exaggerate difficulties which in turn would impact on the perceived adoptability of children	This is unlikely as Foster Carers are great advocates for children and want the best outcomes for them. The Social Worker for the child and the Supervising Social Worker will have observed the child when visiting and considered all information available when completing their assessments, providing a helpful balance to any assessment. In addition, the Supervising Social Worker will be exploring with Foster Carers why they view the situation as they do as part of their regular supervision.
3.10	Every child coming into care has experienced some degree of trauma, even if only being moved to a totally alien environment. How do you propose to overcome this issue when using the Valuing Care tool?	This is specifically assessed within the Valuing Care tool and will therefore be considered.
Rationale for changing the model		
4.1	Could you explain what research you undertook when designing the model? Has a similar structure been tried successfully elsewhere in the country?	We looked at many different Local Authority fostering services as well as many independent fostering agencies. We have also discussed our thoughts with a number of leaders across the country. We know, for example, that the new proposed allowances at every level represent some of the highest in England and Wales.
4.2	Is the change in fees to enable the Council to save money? It feels like a cost saving exercise.	The change in fees represents an investment of approximately £700,000 in the amount we pay carers overall per annum. Whilst some carers will receive less, we will be paying more to carers who look after young people with additional and complex needs as recognition of their hard work and we will also be removing the reduced fee for second children.
4.3	You state that IFAs care for more children with complex needs than Norfolk Fostering Service Foster Carers. How do you know this?	We review our Valuing Care assessments for all looked after Norfolk children on a routine basis. This identifies that the total score of children cared for by in house carers is much lower than for children cared for by IFAs. For example, in January 2022, the average Valuing Care score for

	You said ...	Our response ...
		children placed with Norfolk Fostering Service Foster Carers was 20, it was 31 for IFAs.
4.4	Based on your current cohort of children in foster care, what are your estimated numbers of children in each of the 3 levels (Standard, Enhanced and Complex)?	When modelling for the proposal, we determined that approximately 75% of children fall within the standard category, 20% within the enhanced category and 5% within the complex category.
4.5	Please provide your modelling for the anticipated costs of the proposed new regime and how they compare to the existing one.	The modelling will be included in the cabinet paper which will be published 24 th February 2022. Please let us know if you have not been able to access the Cabinet report and we can send it to you
4.6	What local research has been undertaken into why placement breakdown at age 14? Have steps been put in place to respond to this research?	<p>We completed a survey in 2021 to understand better why placements break down at 14, which has identified some key themes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Carers feel unprepared to manage adolescents, both in terms of training and support • Both carers and young people sometimes have unrealistic expectations regarding behaviour, in particular regarding family time, free time without supervision and routines • Matching information is not always fully shared with carers prior to placement • Young people sometimes experience escalating mental health difficulties • Exploitation and other situations where young people present as a risk to themselves or others • Carers often take on adolescents in an emergency and so both carers and young people struggle to invest in the placement <p>We have put steps in place to try to resolve this which include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Additional support, including therapeutic support will be available to all carers • Significantly improved training offer in respect of trauma informed foster care, caring for adolescents and other more specialist training

	You said ...	Our response ...
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support for Success Service to support both young people and carers more effectively, including supporting their mental health and emotional wellbeing • Introduction of placement planning review meetings in between Reviews, to support carers and young people and identify any new or emerging needs early • Targeted Youth Support Service, supporting young people who may be experiencing exploitation or where the risk that they might has been identified.
Impacts of the changes		
5.1	We are worried that a reduction of this scale each month may send some carers and their young people into poverty.	Where there is genuine risk of hardship, we will work with Carers to ensure they do not experience hardship, also offering advice on benefits claims and tax relief to maximise income. Due to the tax and NI relief available to Carers, we think the standard fee for one child under the age of 10 would equate to a salary of approx. £27,000 per year, which is just below the average salary in Norfolk.
5.2	As a result of the reduction in fees, we would need to make cutbacks in daily life, activities for young people, holidays and other expenses. It feels unfair that the changes to fees would negatively impact on the day-to-day life of the child.	As Carers, you will receive additional allowances for holidays, birthdays and Christmas/religious festival for looked after children, as well as some financial support in respect of activities for children. The maintenance allowance paid in respect of children is remaining the same for some children in placement and increasing for others, dependent on their age. We hope that Foster Carers will continue to maximise the maintenance allowance in meeting the needs of the looked after children they care for.
5.3	It is unrealistic to expect a carer to provide appropriate care with the possibility of income fluctuating. For example, it will make it very difficult for carers to know if they can take on purchases such as a larger car, or improvements to their homes (to support young people in their care) without a stable income.	We recognise that this can be a challenge. Currently a number of Foster Carers experience a reduction in allowances for the children they care for once children settle. Carers also experience fluctuating income as placements are never guaranteed and many choose to take breaks, particularly if they have had to give notice on a placement. This would be no different. However, if a Carer is experiencing financial hardship as a result of a change in allowance, we will work with them on a case-by-case basis to ensure they will not experience significant difficulty.

	You said ...	Our response ...
5.4	<p>We are concerned that moving forward, Foster Carers will only be financially rewarded if they accept the most challenging cases. This does not reflect the fact that there are many reasons that Foster Carers do not fill their spare beds, often because introducing an additional young person into the family would be detrimental to existing placements or birth children.</p> <p>We are worried that people will feel pressured to accept cases of higher need than they can realistically manage and that this will lead to an increase in placement breakdowns.</p>	We want to support carers to make positive choices that work for them and their family. The relationship between carers and their Supervising Social Workers is critical – both can be wholly honest and open when considering placement choices.
5.6	Have you considered the fact that in-house carers may move to agencies as a result of the proposal as they will receive much higher payment there?	We do not believe the fees will be higher in IFAs as they will pay in accordance with child's need in the same way that we are proposing. The fees set are deliberately competitive with IFA payments.
5.7	In the current accreditation matrix, there is an expectation that level 5 carers make an active contribution to supporting development of other carers and are ambassadors for fostering. Who will undertake tasks such as buddies, FAP, task and finish groups in future as current level 5 carers who will be paid less may no longer be inclined to undertake these roles?	We will be encouraging and supporting all carers to consider these roles.
The engagement process		
6.1	Why were no Foster Carers involved in the development of the proposal or task and finish groups set up to work on it?	The idea of changes to the accreditation matrix and related fees was raised with the task and finish group 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 have therefore worked up a proposal for comment by carers.
6.2	How were you able to include an FAQs section when Foster Carers had not seen the document prior to its publication?	The FAQs section was added based on questions received when presenting the proposals to our staff and to the Fostering Advisory Partnership in the few days before the document was shared with all Foster Carers.
6.3	Why were group zoom meetings not offered where we could ask questions on the proposal? It is surely more time consuming to only offer 1:1 meetings, answering the same questions multiple times.	Whilst it is more time consuming to offer one-to-one meetings, we felt this was more appropriate on this occasion. Every Foster Carer's situation is different, and we felt that people may not be comfortable sharing their

	You said ...	Our response ...
		personal situation in a larger forum. We thought that individual conversations would be more effective in alleviating people's worries and helping people to understand what the changes might mean for them personally. It was important to us that carers felt able to share their views in full.
6.4	Have you consulted with young people on how they feel about the banding process?	<p>We have not consulted children and young people as it would be inappropriate to do so. In consultation with the Head of the Participation service, we concluded it would be very upsetting to ask children what we should be paying their carers.</p> <p>Children and young people have been involved in the development of the Valuing Care tool, they welcomed it as they hoped it would more accurately reflect their situation, their needs and ensure that carers would be able to meet their needs.</p>
Support and training for Foster Carers		
7.1	We feel that the reason Foster Carers often turn down more complex placements is that they don't feel they would get sufficient support. There should be extra support for families taking these types of placements, so they feel more able to take them on. It would be particularly useful to have training and support for PACE, Asylum, disabilities etc.	<p>We have developed a significant support offer to Foster Carers which will be implemented in April 2022. We have also strengthened our training and development offer. A number of changes have been made which include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of the Support for Success service (went live April 2021) • Development of the Targeted Youth Support Service (went live February 2021) • Development of the Supporting Resilience Team in the fostering service – goes live April 2022 • Enhanced support for children who 'step-down' from a children's home to foster care – this has been in place since 2019 and will be retained • Creation of the Children With Disability Outreach service which from April 2022 will be available to carers • Creation of an Occupational Therapist Assistant Practitioner role

	You said ...	Our response ...
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prioritising relationships by ensuring Foster Carers retain their Supervising Social Worker irrespective of the type of placement – specialist support will be available on a ‘call-in’ basis • Development of a duty team to support the setting up of a new placement, ensuring needs are clearly identified and support to manage those needs put in place • Improved training and development package for Supervising Social Workers so they are better able to support carers • Improved training and development package for Foster Carers that draws upon the best knowledge within Children’s Services to support carers
7.2	You mention placement breakdowns for age 14+. Could training have an emphasis on attachment theory and the teenage brain so Foster Carers understand more of what is going on for these children at this age?	This is one of the improved training offers for Foster Carers, with a focus on development, attachment, trauma and adolescence.
7.3	Have you considered standby payment for short-term carers to provide them security between placements?	This is already in place, there is no plan to change this.
7.4	How will the new Duty Team differ from the existing Duty Team?	We currently do not have a standalone duty team – we wanted to create a new team so that the manager can focus fully on planning and support for new placements.
7.5	We are concerned about the possibility of not having the consistent support from the Enhanced Fostering Team as it currently is.	The support will be more consistent. Currently, the Foster Carer has to move to a different Supervising Social Worker a year after the placement is made, whereas in the new model, carers will remain with their long-term Supervising Social Worker. All other aspects of support will remain as now, but with improved support available throughout the placement, rather than just for the first year.
7.6	Other Local Authorities offer paid annual respite, is this something you are able to offer?	We are not aware of this offer, however, we support Carers with respite when it is deemed to be in the best interests of the child and Carers
Other questions and comments		
8.1	Is there a planned timescale for when the new model will be reviewed? How do you plan to measure if it has been successful?	We will be regularly reviewing the new model for some time. We have identified a number of key areas that we must focus on to ensure the model is successful, which will be reviewed in detail every three months.

	You said ...	Our response ...
		Should it become clear that the new model is not quite right, we will consider the best way to address any concerns, including seeking a change at Cabinet should that be needed.
8.2	Were consultants engaged to design the new model and how much have they been paid?	Consultants were not engaged to design the new model. It has been designed by members of the service with support from our internal transformation team.
8.3	This consultation is open from 17 th January until 8 th February. The consultation was only shared with all Norfolk Carers as a finalised document on 26 th January.	We have not been able to find a date of 17 th January in any documents, the consultation was published on 25 th January 2021
8.4	Are NCC looking at recruiting carers for specific shortfall areas; older, more complex children, CWD, specialist placements etc.?	We have a fostering recruitment strategy which focuses on a number of different areas including these.

Next Steps

The consultation period closed on 22nd February 2022. We have incorporated your feedback and some of your suggestions into the final paper which is due to be presented to Norfolk County Council Cabinet on 7 March 2022. We will write to you again in week commencing 14 March to notify you of the decision made by Cabinet. If the proposal is approved by Cabinet, the changes to fees would be introduced from 6 April 2022.

Cabinet

Item No: 8

Report Title: Flourishing in Norfolk

Date of Meeting: 04 April 2022

Responsible Cabinet Member: Cllr John Fisher (Cabinet Member for Children's Services)

Responsible Director: Sara Tough, Executive Director, Children's Services

Is this a Key Decision? Yes

If this is a Key Decision, date added to the Forward Plan of Key Decisions: 15 February 2022

Executive Summary / Introduction from Cabinet Member

I am excited to be able to introduce Flourish as the shared ambition of Norfolk's Children and Young People Strategic Alliance, together with the Strategic Alliance's partnership strategy 'Flourishing in Norfolk'.

We all know that Norfolk is a fantastic place to grow up, and we want it to be a county where every child and young person can flourish. This is also reflected as part of our strategic priority *Creating better opportunities for children and young people* as set out in 'Better Together for Norfolk', the County Council's strategy for 2021-25.

We have a strong track record of working in partnership, evidenced more than ever by our response to the pandemic, and I commend the way in which our local agencies and services have come together, through the Children and Young People Strategic Alliance to work as one system. Never has this been more important given the impact of the pandemic on children's lives and how it has affected them in terms of their education, opportunities, and emotional wellbeing.

Flourish reflects what young people have told us is most important to them: their family and friends, access to learning, opportunities to lead a good life, being understood, building resilience, respect for their individuality, feeling safe and being healthy.

Recommendations:

1. **Cabinet formally commits to adopt the Children and Young People Strategic Alliance's shared ambition that Norfolk is a place where all children and young people can flourish.**
2. **Cabinet endorses departments embedding Flourish within the County Council's activities where these impact on children and young people and requests an annual update on progress.**
3. **Cabinet commends the progress made through the Children and Young People Strategic Alliance to develop a children and young people's partnership strategy: Flourishing in Norfolk.**

1. Background and Purpose

- 1.1 Norfolk's Children and Young People Strategic Alliance has the shared ambition that Norfolk is a place where all children and young people can flourish. The Strategic Alliance is holding an event on 11 May to launch Flourish as our shared ambition with key partners across Norfolk and partners will be asked to make a flourish pledge as part of making children and young people a significant priority for Norfolk.
- 1.2 The Children and Young People Strategic Alliance enables collaborative working across the children and young people's system, with membership including senior representatives from Children's Services and Adult Services; Health including the Norfolk and Waveney Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG), Public Health, key community health providers and hospitals; Education including early years schools and post-16 provision; Criminal Justice sector including Norfolk Constabulary, Office of Police & Crime Commissioner, Probation Service and prisons; Children's and Adult's Safeguarding Partnerships; Community sector including district councils, housing providers, VCSE sector and the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP); and service user groups.
- 1.3 The Children and Young People Strategic Alliance feeds into Norfolk's Health and Wellbeing Board. The ambition that all children and young people in Norfolk will flourish supports the vision of the Joint Health and Wellbeing Board Strategy 2018 – 2022 of a *single sustainable system* and the key priorities of *prioritising prevention*, *tackling inequalities in communities* and *integrated ways of working*. The Strategic Alliance will also have key links to the emerging Integrated Care System arrangements, with a role to advocate on behalf of children and young people within these wider partnerships and boards.

- 1.4 Flourish has been developed and co-produced by the partnership as an outcomes framework that enables the Children and Young People Strategic Alliance to monitor how, as a system, we are securing the impact and outcomes we want to see, developing and agreeing strategic commissioning and transformation priorities and processes to ensure the best use of resources.
- 1.5 The partnership has used the flourish outcomes framework to develop the Children and Young People Partnership Strategy and Plan for 2021-25: Flourishing in Norfolk.
- 1.6 Member organisations of the Children and Young People Strategic Alliance have committed to secure commitment to Flourish from their own internal governance bodies, hence we are bringing this report to Cabinet.

2. Proposal

- 2.1 Norfolk County Council is asked to adopt the shared ambition of the Children and Young People Strategic Alliance that Norfolk is place where all children and young people can flourish.
- 2.2 Flourish has been developed and co-produced as an outcomes framework where each letter reflects an aspect of children and young people's lives that they have told us is important to them:



- 2.3 It is proposed that departments across Norfolk County Council embed Flourish within their activities where these impact on children and young people, through focusing on:
- Flourish impact statements – the long-term sustainable change we want to secure for children and young people, through working together as a system
 - Flourish outcomes - the differences we want to make for children and young people, which if achieved, will lead to the impacts being secured
 - Flourish determinants - the things that we need to focus on and secure if we want to achieve the outcomes (and thereby the impacts), often determined by research, professional knowledge, and evidence
 - Flourish measures - a set of 'proxy' measures which help evidence whether the outcomes (and thereby the impacts) are being achieved and enable us to know we are making a positive difference.
- 2.4 *Flourishing in Norfolk* is the Children and Young People Strategic Alliance's partnership strategy for 2021 – 2025. The strategy document sets out the role and purpose of the Children and Young People Strategic Alliance. It provides a picture of Norfolk as a county, our children and young people, and what children, young people and families have told us about their lives and what they want to see. It explains what 'Flourishing in Norfolk' means and how well Norfolk's children and young people are currently flourishing.
- 2.5 *Flourishing in Norfolk* sets out the Children and Young People Strategic Alliance's current priorities which include:
- Strengthening our shared focus and approach on Prevention and Early Help
 - Working together to support children and young people's Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing
 - Improving support for children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)
 - Addressing gaps in Learning following the pandemic

3. Impact of the Proposal

- 3.1 Given the important role and reach of Norfolk County Council in the lives of children and young people the formal adoption of the Strategic Alliance's shared ambition will contribute significantly to help ensure that Norfolk is place where all children and young people can flourish.
- 3.2 All representatives of the Children and Young People Strategic Alliance have committed to sign up to flourish. Endorsing flourish will help enable us fulfil our leadership role both within the Strategic Alliance and more widely across Norfolk.

- 3.3 Cabinet's endorsement for Norfolk County Council departments to embed Flourish within their activities where these impact on children and young people will enable the County Council to understand how its activity is contributing to children and young people flourishing.

4. Evidence and Reasons for Decision

- 4.1 Creating better opportunities for children and young people is a strategic priority for Norfolk County Council as set out in 'Better Together for Norfolk', the County Council's strategy for 2021-25.
- 4.2 This includes wanting all children and young people in Norfolk to flourish, to have a safe and supportive home, high aspirations, better educational outcomes and access to well-paid jobs.
- 4.3 Better Together for Norfolk recognises the importance of investing in children and young people so that they can achieve their full potential and develop skills which prepare them for life and work, as part of laying the foundations for a more resilient future for them and for our county.
- 4.4 Whilst there is much to be proud of about the strength of our partnership working in Norfolk, we know there are continued and emerging challenges which drive the need for all organisations working with children, young people, and families to come together to find solutions.
- 4.5 There are also legislative duties, policies and priorities which drive both our overall approach and day to day work. These include the Children Act 2004 which requires Norfolk County Council to make arrangements to promote co-operation between the authority, each of the authority's relevant partners, and other people and organisations working with Norfolk's children and young people, and 'Working Together to Safeguard Children' (2018) which requires local agencies to have in place effective ways of identifying emerging problems and potential unmet needs for children and their families.
- 4.6 Our shared responsibilities to adopt a collaborative approach towards children and young people are also reflected in the 'Working Together to Improve Health and Social Care for All' white paper published in February 2021, which sets out legislative proposals for a Health and Care Bill. This aims to build on the incredible collaboration seen through the pandemic and shape a system that is better able to serve people in a fast-changing world.
- 4.7 The shared commitment to enabling all children and young people in Norfolk to flourish supports the Council's strategic goals and priorities, and the embedding of FLOURISH as an outcome framework:

- Enables us to agree and use a common language to define our aims and the outcomes we want to achieve.
- Helps everyone think about their contribution, as part of a wider set of services and agencies, to enable children and young people to flourish.
- Informs how we best use our collective resources to achieve the impact we need to see for children, young people, and families.
- Helps us understand the impact of our services and work together – so that we know what difference we are making and what else we need to do.

5. Alternative Options

5.1 None are being proposed.

6. Financial Implications

6.1 There are no financial implications beyond the support Children's Services already provides to support our strategic partnership arrangements.

7. Resource Implications

7.1 Staff: None

7.2 Property: None

7.3 IT: None

8. Other Implications

8.1 Legal Implications: None

8.2 Human Rights Implications: None

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

8.4 Data Protection Impact Assessments (DPIA): N/A

8.5 Health and Safety implications (where appropriate): None

8.6 Sustainability implications (where appropriate): None

8.7 Any Other Implications: None

9. Risk Implications / Assessment

- 9.1 Given the leadership role that Children's Services holds within the Children and Young People Strategic Alliance, not endorsing flourish as a shared ambition would limit the effectiveness of the strategic partnership and more importantly hinder progress in improving outcomes for children and young people.

10. Select Committee Comments

10.1 N/A

11. Recommendations

- 1. Cabinet formally commits to adopt the Children and Young People Strategic Alliance's shared ambition that Norfolk is a place where all children and young people can flourish.**
- 2. Cabinet endorses departments embedding Flourish within the County Council's activities where these impact on children and young people.**
- 3. Cabinet notes the progress made through the Children and Young People Strategic Alliance to develop a children and young people's partnership strategy: Flourishing in Norfolk.**

12. Background Papers

12.1 Flourishing in Norfolk – Executive Summary

12.2 Flourishing in Norfolk Strategy

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Flourishing in Norfolk

A Children and Young
People Partnership Strategy
2021 – 2025

Executive Summary

Introduction

Agencies working with children, young people and families across Norfolk have come together to form the Children and Young People Strategic Alliance, with the shared ambition that Norfolk is a county where every child and young person can flourish.

The Strategic Alliance has produced Flourishing in Norfolk as our partnership strategy and plan for how we will work together to achieve this ambition over the next four years.

Each letter of flourish reflects an aspect of children and young people's lives and what they have told us is most important to them: their family and friends, access to learning, opportunities to lead a good life, being understood, building resilience, respect for their individuality, feeling safe and being healthy.



We want Norfolk to be a county where every child can flourish:

family and friends

Children and young people are safe, connected and supported through positive relationships and networks

learning

Children and young people are achieving their full potential and developing skills which prepare them for life

opportunity

Children and young people develop as well-rounded individuals through access to a wide range of opportunities which nurture their interests and talents

understood

Children and young people feel listened to, understood and part of decision-making processes

resilience

Children and young people have the confidence and skills to make their own decisions and take on life's challenges

individual

Children and young people are respected as individuals, confident in their own identity and appreciate and value their own and others' uniqueness

safe and secure

Children and young people are supported to understand risk and make safe decisions by the actions that adults and children and young people themselves take to keep them safe and secure

healthy

Children and young people have the support, knowledge and opportunity to lead their happiest and healthiest lives

How well our children and young people are currently flourishing

Family life

Most Norfolk children and young people are able to live safely within loving and supportive families, and the number coming into care is reducing steadily. We know, however, that we need to work closely together to help identify those in need of support at the earliest possible stage to reduce neglect and adverse childhood experiences.

Learning and opportunities

Norfolk's young people's achievement at GCSEs and the number remaining in education post-16 are around national averages, but there is a more mixed picture in earlier years and an attainment gap for disadvantaged groups. The pandemic has also had an adverse effect on learning and opportunities that we need to help our children and young people recover from.

Health and wellbeing

Overall health outcomes for children and young people in Norfolk are similar to those for England. There are, however, differences based on where children live and for some groups of children. Helping our children and young people achieve good mental health and emotional wellbeing is an area both they and our data have told us is really important.

Safety and security

We are seeing the number of social care cases at high risk of exploitation reducing, alongside re-offending rates and the number of first-time entrants into the criminal justice system. Referrals to family support services have, however, increased significantly, reflecting the increased strain on families and the disruption to their usual support and early help networks.

The voice of children, young people and families

There are a growing number of ways children and young people can make their voices heard and have influence over decisions affecting their lives. Young people's and parent carer groups are active across the county, but there is still more work to be done in this area to ensure the voice of all children and young people is at the heart of decision making at all levels.

Our priorities as a partnership

Over the coming years, Children and Young People Strategic Alliance partners will be focusing on four specific areas of work that we have identified as particularly important, based on what children, young people and families and the information we have about them has told us.



1

Strengthening our shared focus and approach on Prevention and Early Help

- Getting the right help and support to children, young people and families when they need it, no matter who they ask.

- ***What success will look like***

- Children and young people's needs will be collectively understood and identified earlier and the right help will be put in place before problems escalate, with greater numbers of children, young people and families accessing early help and support. Positive outcomes will increase including improved school attendance, increased numbers of parents and carers in employment and reduced risks of homelessness and financial exclusion.



2

Working together to support children and young people's **Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing**

- Ensuring all children and young people with an emotional or mental health need have easy access to appropriate and effective support at the earliest opportunity.

- ***What success will look like***

- Children and young people will have access to increased information, advice, help and support at the earliest stages and that meets their needs throughout their journey. Experiences of treatment and support services will improve and children, young people and families will feel better supported by mental health services.

3

Improving support for children and young people with **Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)**

Ensuring that we continue to improve services for children with SEND and their families, including improved support for families and professionals, better communication and enhanced help to prepare young people for adult life.

What success will look like

Children and young people with SEND will be supported locally, ready for education, training and/or employment and feel confident to aim high and have ownership of their futures. Additional places in specialist schools and resource bases will be created, Education, Health and Care Plans will be high quality and timely and information will be co-produced, accurate and reliable.

4

Addressing gaps in **Learning**

Bring together those working across education to support learning recovery following the pandemic, with a focus on inclusion for disadvantaged children and young people and transitions between key stages.

What success will look like

Overall academic achievement will return to at least pre-pandemic levels and school exclusions will reduce. Attainment gaps for disadvantaged learners will narrow and a higher proportion of disadvantaged two year olds will benefit from high quality early education. Children and young people will receive education in settings with increasingly positive Ofsted ratings.



How we are working together to achieve our priorities

Alongside working together to achieve our four identified priorities, our Strategic Alliance partners each have strategies and plans which they have developed in order to deliver our wider responsibilities and ambitions for children, young people and families.

Our Flourishing in Norfolk strategy complements and adds value to these individual agency plans through identifying how we can work better together to help every child and young person to flourish. We have identified a number of common areas that, through working together, we know will make a difference for children, young people and families. These include:

- Effective early identification and interventions
- A skilled and understanding workforce
- Choice and control for children, young people and families
- Effective, accessible information, advice and guidance
- Aligned, easy pathways into, through and out of services
- Targeted support for those who need it most
- Integrated working across everyone supporting children, young people and families
- Accessible, engaging opportunities for all
- Sufficient, effective support networks through families, communities and services

How we will know we are succeeding

In delivering our strategy, we are able to call on a wide range of data and information from across our Strategic Alliance partnership to focus on outcomes for children and young people and how well they are flourishing, how well we are addressing the factors that affect these outcomes, and the impact of the support we provide, so that as the Strategic Alliance, we can track our progress.

For more information about the work of the Children and Young People Strategic Alliance and our partnership strategy: *Flourishing in Norfolk*

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Flourishing in Norfolk

A Children and Young
People Partnership Strategy
2021 – 2025

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Foreword and introduction

I am excited to be able to introduce our four-year partnership strategy for children and young people in Norfolk.

This strategy marks the formal beginning of our collective journey to make Norfolk the very best place to grow up – a county where every child can flourish.

And it comes at a critical time.

The pandemic has affected children's education, opportunities and emotional wellbeing, causing real uncertainty for the future. In addition, services for children and young people face significant pressures, with growing demand, greater complexity and increased financial constraints.

It is only by working together that we can help to ensure that this generation does not become defined by the pandemic and that Norfolk's children can **flourish**.

The Children and Young People's Strategic Alliance was established in April 2021, reflecting our shared commitment to Norfolk's children and young people and bringing us formally together as one system.

Young people have told us that what is most important to them is their **family and friends**, access to **learning, opportunities** to lead a good life, being **understood**, building **resilience**, respect for their **individuality**, feeling **safe** and being **healthy**. The first letters of these words spell out **flourish** and have inspired our partnership vision and this strategy.

Whether it is in enabling children and young people to live safely at home, to thrive in education or be valued members of their communities, we are committed to prioritising the voices, needs and ambitions of children and young people so they can live their happiest, most rewarding lives and meet their potential.

We have a strong track record of working in partnership, evidenced more than ever by our response to the pandemic, which saw a huge number of organisations come together to support our communities at a time of great need. We must now galvanise that energy and commitment as we begin to rebuild

As a partnership, we have identified four key priorities – prevention and early help; mental health and emotional well-being; special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) and addressing gaps in learning. This builds on the work already happening before the pandemic as well as responding to needs that have emerged over the last 18 months.

We are united in delivering in these areas and will share expertise and resources, identify and develop opportunities together and jointly problem-solve. Using our collective skills, knowledge and resources we can achieve more for our children and families, understand needs better and prevent children being moved around the system and between agencies.

We know that there is tremendous work happening every day across our services and communities, changing children's lives for the better. The passion, care and dedication of the children's workforce is our strongest asset and will help us to deliver on our strategic ambitions.

This strategy details what needs to happen next and what success looks like for our children and young people. By working together, as a county and a system, I am confident that we can achieve our ambition and help every child to **flourish**.

Sara Tough

Executive Director of Children's Services,
Norfolk County Council

Chair of the Children and Young People Strategic Alliance



The Children and Young People Strategic Alliance

Alongside the key persistent and emerging challenges which drive the need for all organisations working with children, young people and families to come together to find solutions, there are legislative duties, government policies and strategic priorities which drive both our overall approach and day to day work. This includes the Children Act 2004 which requires Norfolk County Council to make arrangements to promote co-operation between the authority, each of the authority's relevant partners, and other people and organisations working with Norfolk's children and young people, and Working Together to Safeguard Children (2018) which requires local agencies to have in place effective ways of identifying emerging problems and potential unmet needs for children and their families.

Our shared responsibilities are also reflected in the new 'Working Together to Improve Health and Social Care for All' policy paper, which sets out legislative proposals for a Health and Care Bill which aims to build on the incredible collaborations seen through COVID and shape a system that is better able to serve people in a fast-changing world.

In April 2021, the Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership Board and the Children's Alliance Board (which had a primary focus on mental health, supporting system-wide transformation) amalgamated into the Children and Young People Strategic Alliance.



The Strategic Alliance (CYPSA) brings together senior representatives from the following sectors* to collaborate and respond to the needs of children, young people and families, via regular meetings and the delivery of a shared Children and Young People Partnership Strategy built on the FLOURISH outcomes framework.

- Social Care
- Health – including Public Health, CCG, key providers and hospitals
- Education – including schools and post-16 provision
- Criminal Justice – including police, OPCC, probation and prisons
- Safeguarding partnerships – Adults and Children
- Communities – including districts, housing providers, VCSE sector and DWP
- Service User representation

The purpose of the group is to provide system leadership so that all children and young people in Norfolk can flourish.



The benefits of an Alliance approach

By coming together in a collaborative way to respond to key issues and opportunities across the children and young people's system, the Strategic Alliance seeks to be so much more than 'a sum of its parts', through realising the following benefits:

1. Obtaining a wider view of problems, challenges and opportunities informed by children, young people, families and partner agencies' experiences and insight, and using this to prioritise areas for action and monitor progress
2. Collaborating around problem-solving through bringing together a wide range of knowledge and expertise
3. Agreeing key decisions and providing a 'critical friend' function across partner agencies and organisations
4. Sharing resources to provide joined-up solutions which improve outcomes and provide best value for money for Norfolk's children, young people, families and their communities
5. Using a common language across the system to improve understanding and collaboration, including our shared ambition that children and young people in Norfolk can FLOURISH
6. Disseminating information, opportunities and best practice across the children and young people's system to ensure we are working collaboratively at every level

Core functions of the Children and Young People Strategic Alliance

- To fulfil a leadership role for enabling collaborative working across the children and young people's system.
- To develop and agree strategic priorities and ensure delivery of a Children and Young People Partnership Plan.
- To monitor system performance in relation to securing impact and outcomes.
- To develop and agree strategic commissioning and transformation priorities and processes to ensure best use of resources.
- To ensure and promote co-production with service users and stakeholders.
- To advocate on behalf of children and young people within wider partnerships and boards.

In addition to delivering its core functions, CYPSA has a Commissioning Executive (Part B) function. The responsibilities of the Commissioning Executive include:

- To act as the Executive Group overseeing any Section 75 Agreements and other arrangements for pooling and sharing resources.
- To identify and oversee the development of collaborative commissioning opportunities.

- To take or oversee joint commissioning/contractual action in order to promote improvement of existing services, including consideration of alternative providers.
- To make recommendations on the further development, or conduct, of any procurement within the market for children and young people's services in Norfolk.
- To oversee the development of the Alliance Contract and agreements (commissioner only aspects).

Reporting to the Norfolk Health and Wellbeing Board, CYPsA will be supported to deliver its purpose and functions by four specialist, targeted subgroups working on the four key priorities of:

- Prevention and early help
- Mental health and emotional wellbeing
- Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)
- Addressing gaps in learning following the pandemic

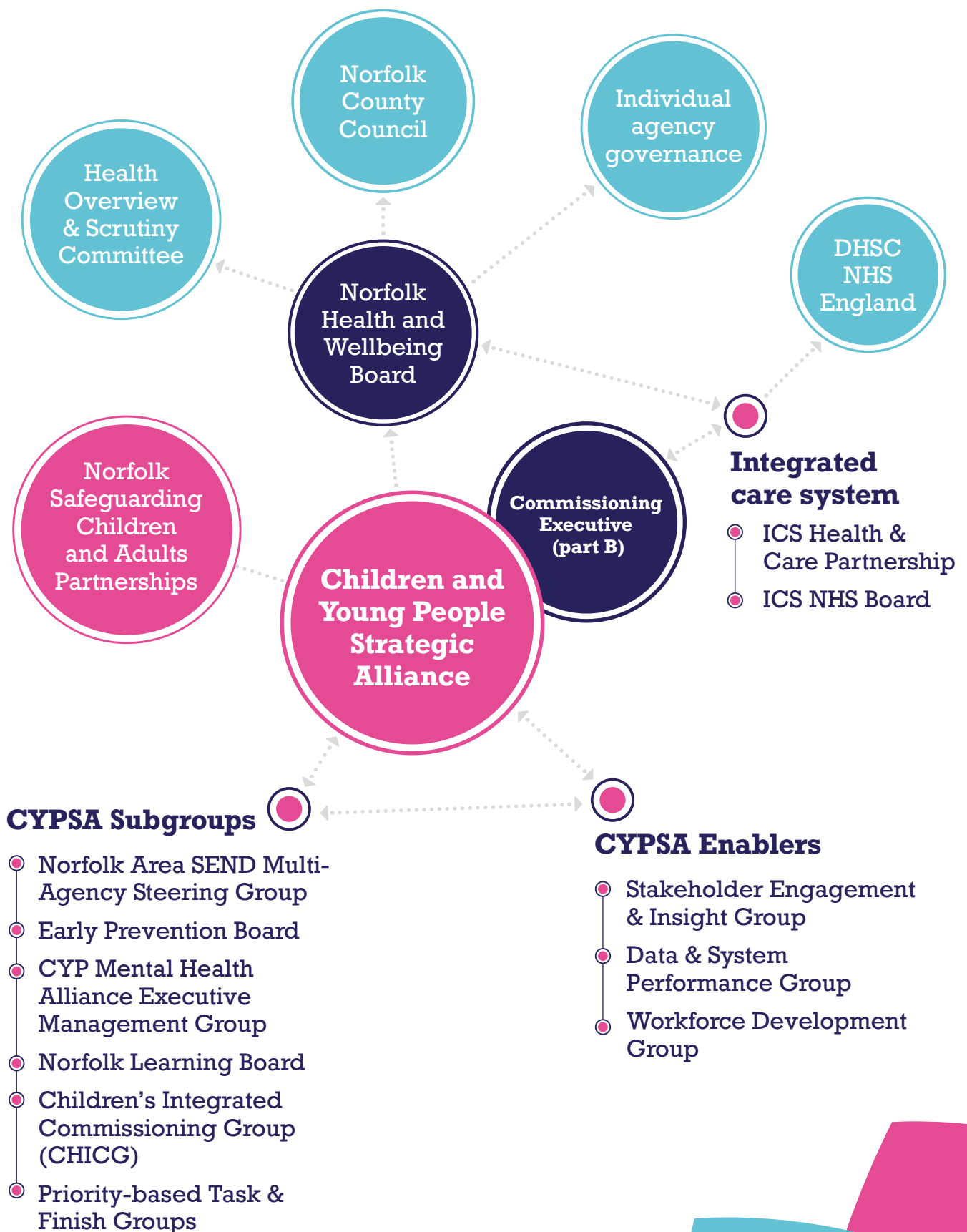
Other groups will be established as required to tackle emerging priorities.

CYPsA will also have three enabling groups, shared with the Norfolk Safeguarding Children Partnership (NSCP). These will provide vital support in specific areas to enable both boards to carry out their functions:

- Data and System Performance Group
- Workforce Development Group
- Stakeholder Engagement and Insight Group



Children and Young people Strategic Alliance Governance



Norfolk – our county

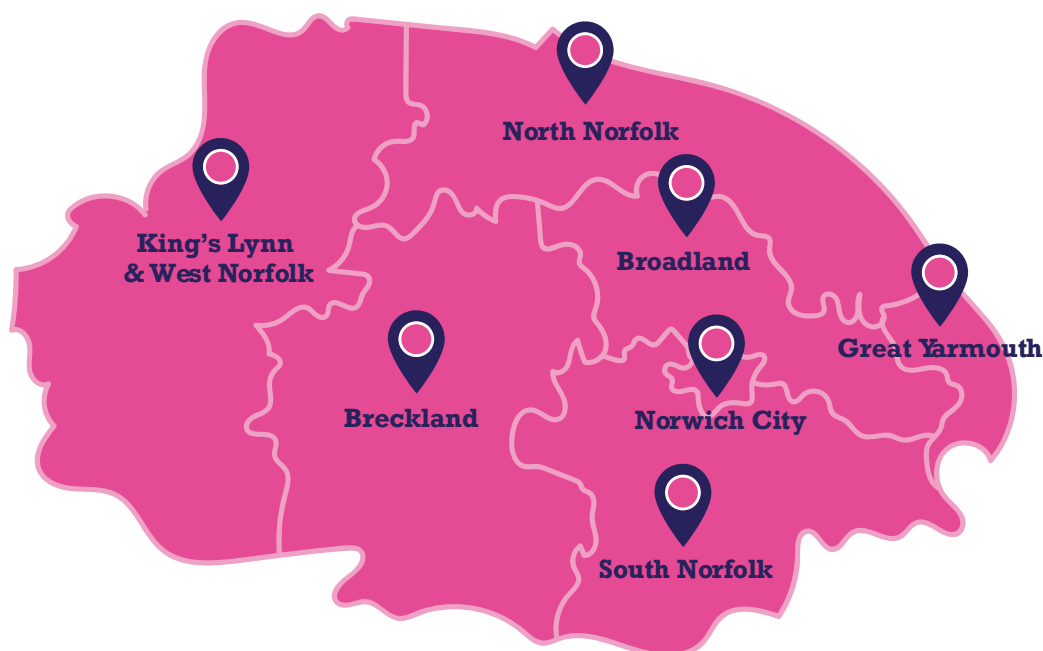
Norfolk is the ninth largest local authority area in England, with a population of just over 914,000 people. Just over a quarter of the population is aged 0-24 (around 243,000).

Norfolk's families live in one of seven districts: Breckland, Broadland, Great Yarmouth, King's Lynn and West Norfolk, North Norfolk, Norwich and South Norfolk. Norfolk has a balance of urban, coastal and rural districts with Norwich the most urban and North Norfolk the most rural.

Although Norfolk has a wide range of opportunities available and many children, young people, and families access these with few problems, deprivation and poverty does influence the health and wellbeing of our population. Currently more than **140,000** people in Norfolk live in areas categorised as the most deprived **20%** in England. These are mainly located in the urban areas of Norwich, Great Yarmouth and King's Lynn, but also some rural areas, coastal villages and market towns, where rural life can make accessing services and opportunities more difficult. The life expectancy gap between the most deprived areas of Norfolk and the least deprived areas is **7.4 years** for men and **4.4 years** for women.

The pandemic has also greatly affected Norfolk, as it has the whole of the UK and indeed the world. For everyone, access to opportunities and normal avenues of support and fulfilment has been disrupted and many people's lives have changed significantly, with additional challenges being particularly felt by our more vulnerable residents.

One of the challenges of helping Norfolk's children, young people to flourish is that their needs are very different, so the way we meet them also needs to be varied, flexible and built around our children and young people as individuals.



A picture of our children and young people

If Norfolk had just **100 children** and young people

- 51 would be boys
- 49 would be girls
- 83 would be white/British
- 7 would be from ethnic minorities
- 9 would have English as a second language
- 14 would have mothers who smoked while there were pregnant
- 3 would have low birth weight
- 86 would have reached all developmental milestones at age 2 and 72 would have reached a good level of development at age 5
- 49 would be physically active (over 60 mins per day)
- 20 would be classed as obese in Year 6
- 17 would have dental decay at age 5
- 4 would start smoking before they are 18
- 1 would be open to Family Support
- 2 would have a social worker
- 1 would be in care or have a Child Protection Plan
- 18 would be living in poverty
- 13 would have free school meals
- 6 secondary school students would be a Young Carer
- 16 would have a Special Educational Need or Disability (SEND)
- 95 would be learning in 'Good' or 'Outstanding' rated Early Years settings and 83 in 'Good' or 'Outstanding' rated schools
- 9 students would be persistently absent from Primary education
- 16 would be persistently absent from Secondary education
- 63 would achieve the expected standard in GCSE English and Maths
- 78 would stay in education, apprenticeships or employment for at least 6 months after leaving school, but 4 would not be in Education, Employment or Training at 16
- Most young adults would be in Education, Employment or Training, but 6 18-24 year olds would be claiming unemployment assistance

What children, young people and families have told us about their lives during the last two years

Parent carers (those who provide support to their children, including grown up children who could not manage without their help)

- **Half** want support to have a break from their caring role
- Over a **third** would like someone to talk to
- Only a **third** feel they have good support from family, friends and community
- Nearly **half** don't feel able to cope
- Over **three quarters** said their own mental health is negatively affected
- Only a **third** of families know where to go for support

Young people on mental health concerns

- The stigma around mental health means people are hesitant to get help
- Exams being cancelled and changed causing stress
- Variable support through schools and colleges
- Worried about health, including catching and passing on Covid
- Not knowing who to go to for help and support
- Depression caused by social isolation and anxiety about re-integration
- Fear of the unknown - what's going to happen next

Young people on opportunities

- Worried about struggling to find jobs
- Concerned about being the 'covid cohort' – being seen as less qualified or experienced than others
- Worried how missing out on large chunks of education might affect our future.
- Worried about grades
- If you have a disability or additional needs you're often not included
- Uncertain about the future

This section will be updated regularly through ongoing work with children, young people and families.

Flourishing in Norfolk – what does it mean?

Produced with children, young people and families, FLOURISH is our shared ambition for Norfolk's children and young people.

We have captured areas of children and young people's lives that are important to them and their families and against these we have agreed a framework which sets out:

Impacts - The key long term, sustainable change we want to secure for all children and young people in Norfolk.

Outcomes - The difference we want to make which, if secured, will lead to the impacts being achieved.

Guiding principles

- Child and young person focused
- Positively framed – based on aspirations rather than just needs
- Places importance on how children, young people and families feel about their lives
- Inclusive of all children and young people in Norfolk
- Recognises our shared responsibility for children, young people and families
- Co-produced with young people
- Represents the interests and focus of all Children and Young People Strategic Alliance members

We will be working with our partners to embed FLOURISH as an ambition that underpins all our work, but FLOURISH isn't just an ambition for social care, education, health and other professionals working directly with children, young people and families. Our businesses, communities and every person living or working in our county has a role to play in helping Norfolk's children and young people to Flourish.

We want Norfolk to be a county where every child can flourish:

family and friends

Children and young people are safe, connected and supported through positive relationships and networks

learning

Children and young people are achieving their full potential and developing skills which prepare them for life

oppportunity

Children and young people develop as well-rounded individuals through access to a wide range of opportunities which nurture their interests and talents

understood

Children and young people feel listened to, understood and part of decision-making processes

resilience

Children and young people have the confidence and skills to make their own decisions and take on life's challenges

individual

Children and young people are respected as individuals, confident in their own identity and appreciate and value their own and others' uniqueness

safe and secure

Children and young people are supported to understand risk and make safe decisions by the actions that adults and children and young people themselves take to keep them safe and secure

healthy

Children and young people have the support, knowledge and opportunity to lead their happiest and healthiest lives

FLOURISH Outcomes

family and friends

- As many children and young people (CYP) as possible are able to live safely with family
- Where CYP are not able to live with their family, they have the support they need to build a stable foundation of positive relationships
- CYP have positive childhood experiences in their homes, schools and communities
- CYP have the support they need from their parents and carers
- CYP have positive role models and trusted adults in their lives
- CYP have the skills and opportunities to develop positive friendships and relationships which support them throughout their lives

learning

- CYP establish a great early years foundation for learning and see the benefit in becoming lifelong learners
- CYP enjoy learning and developing skills and feel positive about what they can achieve
- CYP have good engagement with learning in and out of school, including attendance and extra-curricular opportunities
- CYP make the best possible progress in learning and education
- CYP are supported by families, professionals and communities at all stages of their development
- YP are equipped with the skills and confidence to live as independently as possible

opportunity

- CYP have improved equity of opportunity through the removal of barriers including improved economic, geographical and digital inclusion
- CYP have a wide range of education, employment, training, social and community activities available to them
- All CYP, at every age and regardless of disability or additional needs, have access to opportunities that suit their needs and ambitions
- CYP have the emotional, personal and practical support they need to make the most of the opportunities available

understood

- CYP are active, respected and included members of their communities as individuals and collectively
- All CYP voices are influential in all decisions made about their lives
- CYP feel adults respect their views and opinions and promote CYP influence
- CYP know their rights, how to make their views known and are confident to speak up
- CYP are confident that all strategies and services for CYP have their needs and ambitions at their heart
- CYP are confident that their voice will make a difference and can see the impact they are making

resilience

- CYP can understand and make good decisions and are empowered to do so
- CYP know what independence entails and are able to transition in the best way for them
- CYP are supported to try new things, have a variety of experiences and be curious and aspirational
- CYP understand life can be complicated and know asking for help is OK
- CYP can recognise when they need help and have choice and control over the support they receive
- CYP have a range of options for support and advice

individual

- CYP are understood and valued as individuals and in their social groups
- CYP understand and value each other
- CYP and others on their behalf are able to tackle prejudice and discrimination
- CYP have safe spaces to explore, develop and become confident in their identity as they grow
- CYP's self-expression is prioritised, promoted and respected
- CYP have a range of opportunities to influence the wider world

safe and secure

- CYP are free from exploitation, abuse and neglect
- Fewer CYP enter/re-enter the criminal justice system
- CYP are safe and secure in all settings, including where they live
- CYP feel that families, professionals and communities understand and carry out their role in keeping them safe
- CYP trust the people and systems that are there to help keep them safe, know where to go for help and feel confident and able to do so
- CYP know what to do to keep each other safe
- CYP are supported to understand and take appropriate risks

healthy

- CYP have the best achievable physical, mental and sexual health
- CYP know how to get healthy and keep healthy and are confident in their own self care
- CYP have choice in how they access health services, including the best possible virtual health experience
- CYP are supported at the earliest possible stage, reducing crises
- CYP know when and where to go for help with physical and mental health and have confidence and trust to do so





How well are Norfolk's children and young people currently flourishing?

Norfolk is a great place to grow up, with the majority of children having happy, healthy childhoods and flourishing.

Most children and young people receive the support they need from their families, communities and universal services, but everyone needs help sometimes, and some children, young people and families need more help due to the challenges they face.

Family life

Within Norfolk, most children and young people are able to live safely within loving and supportive families. Reducing the number of children who need to be in care and looked after outside of their family setting has been a priority for Norfolk, and has reduced since 2018. It is now below the national average rate and that of Norfolk's statistically similar councils. Historically, a higher-than-average proportion of children in care, around one in six, are adopted each year. Although this fell to around one in seven in 2019, by 2021 Norfolk was again ahead of regional, statistical neighbour and national percentages in this area.

For those children who are in care, arrangements and settings tend to be relatively stable. More children than average have placements that last more than two years, and for those approaching their 18th birthday (when they would cease to be 'looked after') a higher-than-average proportion go on to stay with their foster carers. More can be done, however, to support the emotional and behavioural health of children in care, and the percentage of children in care who return home to live with their parents or those with parental responsibilities is also reducing and is lower than in similar areas.

Re-referrals to family support and social work services are decreasing, reflecting an approach of family-led solutions planning and the building of positive support networks to improve families' resilience. It has been seen, however, that more family assessments are leading to ongoing involvement of social care support. In addition, in 2020-21 nearly 300 young people aged 16-24 had a homelessness duty accepted to them due to their family being unwilling or unable to accommodate them, which reflects a higher level of family breakdown than we would like to see.

International research has identified that adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) including physical, emotional and sexual abuse, neglect and household dysfunction, domestic abuse and substance misuse can have a significant impact on physical, mental and behavioural health as children grow. We know that ACEs have a cumulative effect – the more adverse experiences in childhood,

the more severe the effects can be. It is estimated that 9% of adults will have experienced 4 or more ACEs in their childhood. In Norfolk, this would equate to approximately 15,000 children and young people.

We also know that parents who experienced adversity as a child are far more likely to have children who experience high numbers of ACEs too, and that building resilience and having a trusted adult to talk to are crucial mitigation factors in a child's ability to flourish despite the challenges they have faced. Early help has an important role to play in preventing and overcoming the effect of ACEs, alongside working in a trauma-informed way across the children and young people's system.

It is likely that the Covid-19 pandemic has had a significant impact on the relationship children have with their family and friends. Whilst detailed comparative information is not available across all areas, we know that issues around domestic abuse, isolation and mental health have worsened during the pandemic. We know from local data that there have been 'spikes' in the number of domestic abuse cases recorded by the police where someone under-18 was present. The proportion of contacts about children relating to family support issues also roughly doubled between 2020 and 2021. A more formal review of the impact of the pandemic on family life will be possible when more recent benchmarking data is available, but this area is already a key feature of future planning.

Even before the pandemic hit and created greater pressure on families struggling to cope, we were concerned about children who were invisible to agencies while being neglected. Clearly, the impact of the pandemic limited professional eyes on some children at the same time as financial and social pressures have made it harder for some families to cope. The combined effect has been to make it more likely that some children will be neglected and less likely that they will be identified at an early stage.

This adds even more strength to the argument for continued cross-agency support as the most effective way of responding to neglect and preventing children coming in and out of care, especially in relation to our approach to prevention and early help.





Learning and Opportunities

Norfolk's very young children don't always benefit from the same learning opportunities as in other areas. The percentage of two-year-old children benefiting from funded early education has been significantly lower than in other similar counties for a number of years, and in 2021 was the lowest rate in Norfolk's statistically similar 'family group' of councils. The pandemic also seems to have had a significant impact on this, with the rate of disadvantaged two-year olds in funded early education falling from nearly 70% in 2019 to just under 60% in 2021. Our local data tells us, however, that there has been a significant recent improvement in this area.

By the time children in Norfolk are three and four years old, 90% are benefiting from some kind of free early education, which is close to the pre-pandemic figure and much closer to the 'family group' average. Overall learning outcomes at this stage show a more positive picture too, remaining above comparable authority areas.

As children in Norfolk move into school, and through the 'key stages', the attainment picture is mixed. Data is only available up to 2019, as national assessment and testing in primary schools were cancelled in 2020 and 2021. At age five, more children achieved a good level of development in the Early Years Foundation Stage compared to national averages, but attainment at the end of primary school in reading, writing and mathematics lags behind national levels. Gaps between disadvantaged and other pupils remain significant – in line with those seen nationally.

Average progress in secondary schools is slightly better than national averages, particularly in mathematics. Attainment on GCSE examinations, and the percentage of young people remaining in education post-16 are all around national averages. As is the case nationally the gap between disadvantaged and other pupils widens as children get older.

Over 90% of 16 and 17-year-olds participate in learning (this includes full-time education and apprenticeships) with an additional 2.6% progressing directly into employment without training. This is different from the national profile where more 16 and 17-year-olds participate in learning than in Norfolk and less progress into employment without training. This pattern of more young people in Norfolk going into work without training is confirmed in the percentage of 19-year-olds having achieved level three qualifications, which at 51.4% is below the national average of 57.4%. The Norfolk Apprenticeship Strategy is designed to address this and even with the challenges of the pandemic we continue to have a higher percentage of 16 and 17-year-olds in apprenticeships than for England.

We know more work is needed to support children and young people as they progress through their learning, to address wider issues that impact on their education and learning, building on the help and support currently being provided. Having listened to families and young people who have special educational needs, they have told us that they need choice to ensure that they have the opportunities to fulfil their individual hopes and potential. For some, this is the choice of local inclusive education within the early years setting, school or college close to home. For others this is the choice to access specialist provision.



There is a good range of wider opportunities available for children and young people in Norfolk, but how easily these can be accessed is affected by a number of factors.

The availability of learning, employment, support and social opportunities varies markedly between different geographical areas. Most provision is centred in Norfolk's city and towns, with more limited opportunities in Norfolk's rural areas which also have limited transport systems, making engaging with and feeling included in opportunities more difficult for children and young people living there.

A number of children in Norfolk live in families experiencing financial challenges, which affects their ability to engage with available opportunities. Nearly 19% of children in Norfolk live in low-income families as defined by national measures, significantly above the average for statistically similar councils of around 16%.

Over 94% of households in Norfolk are in areas where superfast broadband coverage (>30Mbps) is available, which, although slightly below the national figure, represents good and improving coverage. More vulnerable families do still experience digital exclusion however, with pockets of poor coverage, access to equipment and affordability remaining issues to be addressed to ensure connectivity for all in an increasingly online world.

Vulnerable young people and those at risk of becoming NEET (not in education, employment or training) receive additional help to support their transition into post-16 learning, but in 2021 the number of 16-18 year olds in Norfolk who are NEET or not known remains stubbornly above regional and only just in line with national averages. Within this group of young people who are NEET, there is also a comparatively high proportion of young people from socio-economically deprived backgrounds (particularly in the urban areas of Norwich, Kings Lynn and Great Yarmouth) those with special educational need and disabilities (SEND) and young people in, or who were formerly in, local authority care. The number of young adults aged 18-24 claiming unemployment assistance is, however, lower than local and national averages and is decreasing.

Health and Wellbeing

Overall health outcomes for children and young people in Norfolk are similar to those for England. There are, however, differences in health outcomes based on where children live and in some groups of children such as children with SEND and children in care. For example, children with SEND are more likely to display lower levels of emotional wellbeing and report self-harm.

Further work is required to promote healthier lifestyles with the focus on reducing the number of women who smoke during pregnancy and providing weight management support to children and their families to reduce obesity.

Recent research suggests that one in six children and young people are thought to have an emerging or diagnosable mental health need, a figure that has unfortunately risen from one in nine in 2017, perhaps in part due to the impact of the pandemic. Conversely, this figure suggests that five out of six children and young people nationally have a good level of mental wellbeing, and this is something we need to both maintain and build upon.

Across Norfolk, children and young people accessing therapeutic support for their mental health needs has been steadily increasing year on year, with 50% more children and young people accessing our local services this year compared to two years ago.

Safety and Security

We are seeing the overall risk of exploitation for children and young people supported by children's social care services reducing. There has been a reduction of the number of high-risk cases since February 2021 following the introduction of two new services to support young people at risk of exploitation and serious youth violence. Medium and standard risk cases have reduced by a smaller margin, however, given the focus on ensuring identification of extra familial risk, a more gradual reduction is to be expected.

Reoffending rates continue to track above the regional and national rates, however, the fluctuations seen through 2016 and 2017 have been flattened out

to mirror the national trend. The number of children on a statutory order has reduced significantly since the implementation of the Challenge for Change (C4C) project.

The long-term trends show an overall reduction of first-time entrants into the criminal justice system, roughly mirroring what is happening nationally. 2020 data is not yet available to be able to monitor and respond to the trend and impact of COVID, however, in 2019/20, 368 C4C referrals were received compared to 272 in 2020/21.

Demand for social care remained lower at the height of the pandemic compared to previous years, as seen across the country. A significant effort was mobilised to address this concern, including publicity campaigns to drive up awareness and an extension of the Children's Advice and Duty Service (CADS) offer, which contributed significantly to referrals returning to normal levels.

The anticipated 'surge' in demand following return of schools in September 2020 manifested as a significant increase in referral to the Family Support Service during the autumn of 2020 and additional resources were deployed to this area to respond, helping to keep children safe and secure. This appears to be a pattern seen regionally, reflecting the increased strain on families and the disruption to the usual networks and system of early help which creates resilience for families. There has not been a corresponding surge in demand at social work or child protection level.



We know some of our adolescent young people are at a greater risk of child exploitation, both sexual and criminal, and that these risks have not abated despite our greatly enhanced understanding and response over recent years. We are currently seeing, as a result of rivalries between groups that come together for both criminal and allegiance/belonging purposes, significant increases in youth-on-youth violence, manifesting itself in tit-for-tat retributive violence involving weapons.

A number of Serious Case Reviews and a national Safeguarding Practice Review have highlighted the risks to very young children, especially from non-accidental injuries. This has been picked up as a priority for the Norfolk Safeguarding Children Partnership (NSCP) so that we can continue to build on the work that has gone before and address issues earlier as part of protecting babies.

The voice of children, young people and families

How children, young people and families feel about their lives and the support they receive is an important measure of how well Norfolk's children and young people are flourishing, and how well we, as the Strategic Alliance, are helping to meet their needs and aspirations.

There are a growing number of ways children and young people can make their voices heard and have influence over decisions affecting their lives. Active young people's groups across the county, including special interest groups such as Young Carers, the Norfolk In Care Council, the Mental Health Participation Group and a soon to be established reference group for BAME young people are giving young people a direct route to speak to and influence decision-makers. Other groups including the county-wide Youth Advisory Boards empower young people to campaign on issues that matter to them and directly influence how money is spent for children and young people.

Parents of children who might struggle to have their voices heard due to additional needs also have powerful advocates for them through a range of parent/carers groups, in particular Norfolk's Parent Carer Forum (Family Voice Norfolk) who are members of the Strategic Alliance alongside other parent/carers groups such as SENSational Families, SEN Network and ASD Helping Hands.

Strategic Alliance member organisations also have a commitment to directly engage with, involve and co-produce with children, young people and families and do so through a variety of methods. Stakeholders' involvement in co-producing key pieces of work (e.g. the FLOURISH outcomes framework), priorities and strategies is increasing across the system and the value and benefit of their involvement is recognised more than ever.

There is, however, more work still to be done in this area. Children, young people, and families tell us that decisions about them are sometimes still being made without them, and opportunities for them to directly have their voices heard are not always effectively and engagingly promoted. They also tell us that we aren't always using their views as well as we could, or that we are asking the same questions again and again, and that we need to be better at telling them the difference their views and suggestions have made.

Young people have also told us that it is important every young person, not just members of active groups, has a chance to have influence on issues that are important to them, and this is an area of focus for the Strategic Alliance going forward. The partnership also has a key role in empowering children and young people to influence the wider world, by facilitating opportunities for them to take action, and encouraging the growing reality that young people are more informed, aware and interested in wider social issues than ever before.



What children, young people and families have told us they want

Information and access

- Clear explanation about services and how they fit together
- Up to date information that's easy to find and relevant for us
- Early support that is open to anyone to access
- Transparency about waiting times and support for me while I wait
- Clear referral and access routes
- Clarity about what help is available, where and for who

Quality and inclusivity

- Services and activities that are accessible, inclusive, welcoming and non-judgemental
- People who listen to, encourage and believe in you
- Treat us as experts about our own lives
- Chances to contribute and help others
- Chances to contribute and help others
- Better understanding of my needs
- Use a range of ways, including social media, to engage with us
- Get to know me as an individual and involve me in decision making

Help and support

- Opportunities to talk about what's bothering us
- Safe spaces where young people can be themselves
- Support to help us get back into learning
- Help during important transitions, like moving to high school and turning 18
- More help and support and to receive it much earlier/sooner
- Teach us about risks like County Lines so we don't just see it in the media
- Support to help address my anxieties
- Consistent support – not just at certain times

Our FLOURISH Priorities



Over the coming years, Children and Young People Strategic Alliance partners will be focusing on four specific areas of work we have identified as particularly important, based on what children, young people and families and the information we have about them has told us.

1. Strengthening our shared focus and approach on **Prevention** and **Early Help**
2. Working together to support children and young people's **Mental Health** and **Emotional Wellbeing**
3. Improving support for children and young people with **Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)**
4. Addressing gaps in **Learning** following the pandemic

Each of these areas is supported by a specific, expert subgroup of the Children and Young People Strategic Alliance, who will lead activities and report against progress.



Prevention and Early Help

Why this is a priority

Prevention and early help maximise life chances for children, improves outcomes for families and prevents more complex problems emerging and we know that the need for early help may occur at any point in a child or young person's life, requiring us to intervene early and as soon as possible in order to tackle problems emerging for children, young people and families, or with groups most at risk of developing problems.

We believe that in taking action to prevent the likelihood of adverse outcomes and in supporting families at the earliest opportunity as needs emerge is an essential part of helping children FLOURISH. Given that a range of universal and targeted services play an important role, the development and delivery of an effective early help and prevention offer is not the responsibility of a single agency.

As a partnership we have a duty to take action to reduce the likelihood of adverse outcomes in children, young people's and families' lives. Working Together to Safeguard Children (2018) requires local agencies to have in place effective ways of identifying emerging problems and potential unmet needs for children and their families. It also requires local agencies to work together to put processes in place for the effective assessment of needs of individual children who may benefit from early help services. Section 10 of the Children Act 2004, requires us to evaluate the quality and effectiveness of our early help processes and services, including identifying and responding to any gaps, to inform and improve future planning and service delivery in order to improve outcomes for children, young people and families. The NHS Long Term Plan (2019) has a strong focus on prevention in supporting people to adopt improved healthy behaviours and reduce the risks of early ill health. For children, young people and families, this will include areas such as breast feeding, infant feeding and healthy eating, emotional wellbeing and smoking cessation.

We know that a proportion of children face additional challenges and barriers at different points in their lives, whether related to their own additional needs or linked to their parents' needs. We want strong, resilient families, and supporting children, young people and families at the earliest opportunity is therefore an essential part of helping children to flourish.

Our focus is on working with children and young people and families to design an approach that works for them, so that all families, have the information, advice and guidance they need and can access the help, when they need it, no matter who they ask. We need to enable families to identify and make use of the strengths within their existing networks, build resilience and know when and how to ask for help. This requires practitioners across agencies and organisations to be able to work as one system with shared ways of working,

so that prevention and early help support is joined up, clearly communicated, simple to understand and easy to access.

This will require a step change in our approach so that we can bring together the collective capacity of families, communities, and professionals in the interests of children and young people and their emotional wellbeing, educational, health, social and family needs. If we can get it right, it will create the platform for all children to flourish.

What needs to happen:

- Improve opportunities for children, young people and families to access information, guidance and self-help through reliable digital information, marketing, and promotion.
- Work with our partners to develop further a whole system response to prevention and early help, joining up pathways to ensure that children, young people and families receive advice, guidance and support at the earliest opportunity.
- Develop a young person's participation programme to secure insights about what support children and young people need now and into the future to support their well-being.
- Share and analyse information across the partnership that assists to collaboratively respond to identified inequalities and emerging vulnerability of individuals and communities.
- Alongside the voluntary and community sector, develop vibrant communities that take responsibility for the aspirations, opportunities and achievements of their children and young people.
- Support the development of facilities to ensure a range of positive activities for children, young people and families.
- Assist children and young people through family networking and community-based approaches to develop networks of support that prevent need escalating.
- Maximise opportunities for learning and achievement within families, supporting social mobility and economic well-being.
- Further develop and strengthen the early help services being provided, including parenting support and childcare, to reach a wider range of children with SEND, including ensuring that children and young people with SEND can access universal provision.
- Develop the range of community based short breaks available for families with disabled children, ensuring parents/carers have choice and flexibility in how their needs can be met from inclusive universal services through to community-based provision.
- Facilitate opportunities for the workforce to identify and respond to the holistic needs of children, young people and families earlier, using shared a language and a more joined-up approach to assessment.

- Improve access to evidence-based practice interventions, including parenting skills, that support children, young people, and families earlier and prevent the need for more specialist services, and help build resilience and promote self-help.
- Develop and improve multi-agency working and coordination of services for children with SEND and their families by promoting early support and help when needs are first identified.
- Improve confidence, skills and practice across the children and young people's workforce around SEND and mental health that ensures earlier identification and responses to inclusion and emotional well-being.

What success will look like for children, young people, and families

- Children and young people's needs are collectively understood, action is taken to proactively address identified inequalities and needs will be identified earlier to enable the right help to be put in place before problems escalate.
- Parents and carers will have the support, advice and information to be able to build the skills they need to best support their children.
- Children, young people, families and professionals will be able to understand their needs through the use of common language and approaches to assessment.
- The proportion of children and young people attending school with 90% attendance or more will increase
- The number of parents and carers in continuous employment will increase
- The number of outcomes achieved through the Supporting Families programme will increase
- The number of early help assessments undertaken by the partnership will increase
- The proportion of families receiving early help prior to entering specialist/statutory services will increase
- The number of families making progress against the goals in their early help plan will increase
- The uptake and delivery of family networking within early help practice where families develop their own solutions to presenting issues will increase
- There will be a reduced risk of homelessness for families
- There will be a reduced risk of financial exclusion for families due to unmanageable debt or ability to meet basic family needs
- The number of fixed term and permanent exclusions will reduce

What success will mean for agencies working with children, young people, and families

- Professionals working with children, young people and families will be more confident in providing direct help and accessing additional, joined up support.
- The demand for EHCPs where children and young people's needs can be met through early help and inclusive provision will reduce
- The demand on Children's Social Care (including Family Support & Social Work Teams) will reduce
- The demand for crisis mental health interventions will reduce, with children and young people's physical, mental and emotional wellbeing being supported earlier.
- Unnecessary re-referrals will reduce, with needs being met at the earliest opportunity.
- Planning and decision-making will be based on evidence about what is important to children, young people and families
- An increased proportion of funding will be spent on early help support
- Prevention and early help will have a clear partnership focus and governance.



Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing

Why this is a priority

Children and young people's emotional wellbeing and mental health has never been so high on the public agenda and is a key priority within the NHS Long Term Plan. Historically underfunded, the NHS has made a new commitment that funding for children and young people's mental health services will grow faster than both overall NHS funding and total mental health spending.

At any one time a child may be on the spectrum of being emotionally and mentally healthy or very unwell, and many children move along the spectrum at different times during their childhood. Covid has had a significant impact on the emotional wellbeing and mental health needs of children and young people, which were already inclining prior to Covid, and therefore this increased focus and resource has come at a critical time. In 2004, one in 10 5-16 year olds were estimated to have a probable mental health disorder, by 2017 this had increased to one in nine and by 2020 was estimated at one in six. Mental health is inextricably linked with wider societal determinants and the major socio-economic risk factors for mental health have been profoundly impacted by the pandemic.

Children and young people tell us some of the drivers for poor mental health are:

- family income and feelings about their family's socioeconomic circumstances
- social dimensions of life – worries about appearance, being bullied, family relationships and academic achievement
- poor parental physical and mental health
- abuse and neglect
- feeling unsafe in their neighbourhoods

What needs to happen

Ensure all children and young people 0-25 years with an emotional or mental health need have easy access to appropriate and effective support at the earliest opportunity with the aim of preventing mental ill health

- Develop an integrated single point of advice, guidance & access for all emotional wellbeing and mental health referrals that will be able to offer low level support and guided self-help, as well as improve quality of referrals to enable effective triage and allocation to appropriate pathways for support

- Continue to develop our children and young people's mental health participation and social recovery model to ensure the voice of children, young people and families is at the centre of all improvement and transformation work.
- Continue to build on and develop digital offers of support (e.g. Kooth, Just One Number) for children, young people and their families so they can access support more easily outside of traditional therapeutic settings
- Coordinate an integrated approach across local authority, health and the VCSE sector to support education settings around whole school approaches to emotional wellbeing, mental health and resilience and embed Mental Health Support Teams (MHSTs) across Norfolk and Waveney
- Develop an approach to 'parental support', including peer support models and whole family approaches with the wider system

Develop a comprehensive model of demand and capacity across the system to ensure we are able to optimise processes to ensure children and young people are seen at the earliest opportunity by a service, as well as have the capacity and appropriately trained workforce to provide specialist therapeutic support in line with demand.

- Continue to support services to reduce their waiting lists for accessing therapeutic support
- Develop system wide workforce development strategy and a local centre of excellence for children and young people's mental health training, learning and knowledge that all system partners can access. Embed innovation and research as core components within the centre of excellence to inform transformation
- Complete skills mapping survey of alliance provider workforce and identify training needs, with a particular focus on ensuring staff are equipped to meet the needs of children and young people with additional complex needs e.g. suspected or confirmed neurodevelopmental disorders.

Ensure all children and young people have access to 24/7 crisis support including 111 crisis line, assessment and brief intervention, Intensive support in the community and alternatives to admission.

- Ensure that where provision is expected to be utilised by children, young people and adults, that the provision is age-appropriate, and the teams are equipped and confident to meet the needs of younger cohorts
- Expand the offer to ensure all children and young people with a presenting mental health need are offered an assessment, brief intervention and where appropriate intensive support in the community, including an inclusive offer for children and young people with eating disorders and suspected or confirmed neurodiversity.

- Work with Children's Services and other system partners to develop a day unit as an immediate to short term solution for more complex children and young people presenting in crisis who need more intensive support or step down from an inpatient unit, in a community setting with wrap around care and treatment from a multi-agency team.
- Develop a decision unit and home treatment team for children and young people where a day unit is not clinically appropriate or not accessible for families
- Develop a service offer to ensure children and young people who are at risk of presenting in crisis can access risk support to help them feel safe and supported.

Ensure all children and young people with a suspected eating disorder are assessed and in NICE compliant treatment within one week for urgent cases and four weeks for routine cases

- Develop an all age eating disorder strategy which delivers a transformed service offer across Norfolk & Waveney based on need and choice
- Develop a system wide training programme to meet the needs of Specialist Eating Disorder Teams, Acute Hospitals, Community Services and Primary Care to help them effectively and safely manage and support children and young people presenting with an eating disorder
- Work with voluntary organisations to proactively support lower risk children and young people in the community and to support parent / carers with training and peer support/ respite to families

What success will look like for children, young people, and families

- The number of children and young people accessing support for their emotional wellbeing and mental health across the system will increase
- Children and young people will have improved experiences of therapeutic treatment and exit services having met their goals
- The number of children and young people with a low-level need identified in schools and referred to Mental Health Support Teams or universal resilience provision will increase
- Children, young people and families can access crisis support 24 hours a day, seven days a week.
- Children and young people who require more intensive support will be able to access treatment through Day Units and Home Treatment Teams, improving the experiences and outcomes of these individuals
- All children and young people with an eating disorder will be in treatment within one week for urgent presentations and four weeks for routine, ensuring their needs are met at the earliest opportunity

- Children, young people and their families will have easy access information, advice and guidance to support them with their emotional wellbeing
- The number of children and young people presenting in crisis with an eating disorder requiring medical stabilisation will reduce
- Children and young people who require medical stabilisation on acute paediatric wards are discharged when medically safe and are able to access therapeutic support for their eating disorder in the most appropriate environment to meet their needs
- Children and young people, families and professionals feel better supported by the mental health system

What success will mean for agencies working with children, young people, and families

- Centre of Excellence for training and sharing good practice will be available to ensure all professionals working with children and young people are equipped to meet their emotional wellbeing needs, as well as understanding when it is necessary to refer to more specialist support
- Numbers of therapeutic roles to support children and young people mental health across a variety of statutory and VCSE providers will increase
- Unnecessary referrals to specialist services will reduce
- Children, young people, families and professionals will be able to understand children and young people's wellbeing needs through the use of common language and joint approaches to assessment and intervention.



Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND)

Why this is a priority

Norfolk is working towards four key priorities for children and young people with SEND, articulated through the [Norfolk Area SEND Strategy](#).

The need for an over-arching, ongoing, Area SEND Strategy is due to the need to ensure that the identification of need and the support, services and provision that follow is systematically co-ordinated across the county and across the education, health and care systems. We know from our own data, from our deepening working relationship with parent/carers groups and from comparison with other areas and through inspection that we need to improve SEND in many ways. However, we also have many examples of good and outstanding provision in Norfolk, and we need to celebrate these and learn from their successes.

We know that:

- Of the **123,233** students in primary and secondary education in Norfolk:
 - **13.1%** (16,138) have Special Educational Needs (SEN) support
 - **3.8%** (4,668) have an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP)
- The number of young people aged 0-25 with EHCPs in Norfolk has increased by around **21%** (from 6,689 to c8,500) between 2020 and our current estimate, similar to the national increase.
- Norfolk's young people were less likely to have new EHCPs issued within 20 weeks in 2020 (**20.1%** compared to 60.4% nationally) although local data shows this has increased to 54% in 2021
- Compared to national figures, in 2020 (our most recent data) Norfolk's young people with ECHPs or SEN Support:
 - are less likely to be in mainstream education settings (**35.4%** compared to 43% nationally)
 - are more likely to be awaiting provision (**0.9%** v. 0.4%)
 - are more likely to be educated at home (**1.3%** v 0.8%)
 - are less likely to be in a special school (**31.1%** v. 41%)
 - are more likely to be in alternative provision (**2.5%** v. 0.9%)

To ensure effective assessment for special educational needs and disability (SEND) there must be co-ordination of assessment and reviews and the related specialist provision across the county council's children and adult services, the CCG and education and health providers covering an age range of 0-25. This creates a complex system and operates within a statutory framework which places Children's Services in the lead agency role and with related responsibilities for the other agencies and providers. In response to rising

need, increased budget pressures and the outcome of recent Ofsted/CQC inspection there are currently three major programmes of SEND transformation which, taken together, combine in our SEND Strategic Improvement and Early Effectiveness planning, these major programmes are:

- Area SEND Strategy
- SEND & Alternative Provision (AP) Transformation Programme
- Ofsted/CQC Written Statement of Action

What needs to happen

We need to ensure that all our improvement work for SEND is focussed on the priorities within our Area SEND Strategy.

Working together with children and young people with SEND

- Children, young people, and their parents/carers feel confident about sharing their experiences and that these will be used to shape improvements
- Children and young people are supported to have an active role in decision making
- Communication about services is clear and understood by children and young people and their parents/carers and those working with them
- Children, young people and their parents/carers and professionals work in co-production to develop ways to share information
- Timely and meaningful assessments are used to plan the support needed to enable children and young people to progress



Improving what is in place for families and professionals to support children and young people with SEND

- All those working with or volunteering to support children and young people have the right skills and training for their roles
- Education, health and social care services for children and young people are shaped by a strong commitment to co-production
- All services regularly review how they collect, share, and use data
- Those who plan services are using resources effectively
- Children, young people and their parents/carers are part of conversations about SEND support, know what to expect and are included in decision making
- Children, young people and their parents/carers have access to information to be able to make choices when making placement decisions

Communicating the SEND services and support available in Norfolk

- Services produce and develop their information in co-production with children, young people and their parents/carers
- Services ensure that information is easy to use and understand, helpful and up to date
- Children, young people, parents/carers and professionals work together to continuously review and improve the SEND Local Offer website.
- A wide range of communication methods is used to make sure that information is available to everyone who needs it

Preparing young people for adult life

- Children and young people are supported to take an active role in their community, including employment and living an independent adult life
- Children and young people are supported to understand and look after their health and wellbeing
- Education, health and social care services will work together with children, young people and parents/ carers to understand and meet the needs of children and young people
- Services are shaped by a clear understanding of the needs of children and young people and by reviewing the impact of services on their lives
- All children, young people and their parents/carers will know where to go for help and support with transition and preparing for adult life

What success will look like for children, young people, and families

- Children and young people are supported locally
- Children and young people are ready for education, training and/or employment

- Children and young people feel confident to aim high and have ownership of their future
- Three new specialist schools are opened and existing special schools have more places
- More than a hundred new places are created in our specialist resource bases
- Information is co-produced, accurate and reliable
- EHCPs are always high quality and within the required timescale

What success will mean for agencies working with children, young people, and families

- Everyone is committed to working together
- Services gather feedback and explain what they will do to improve
- Services respond to the changing needs of children and young people with SEND
- Settings confidently identify needs at an early stage
- Settings have the resources to meet needs
- Settings have an inclusive culture, supporting children and young people and their needs
- Improved quality and sufficiency of placements for looked after children with disabilities



Addressing Gaps in Learning

Why this is a priority

Face to face learning for children and young people, in a good school, is paramount to their achievement. Researchers from the London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE) and the University of Exeter found that pupils in England and Northern Ireland lost 61 of the usual 190 days of schooling on average between March 2020 and April 2021 ([Covid: Pupils have lost a third of learning time](#)). Whilst some flourished, based at home, with a diet of on line learning, some have not. This has caused learning delay and in younger children affected their language and social and emotional development.

National evidence supports the view that there could be a significant impact on individuals who have lost time in school. For example, a year in school can increase earnings in later life by as much as 8%. Losing a significant amount of time in school could therefore impact on adult economic prospects.

The gap for children who are disadvantaged and those who are not was already greater than we would want, both nationally and in Norfolk. It is estimated that this could be worse as a result of the time out of school.

For some children and young people, we know that there has been an impact on their mental health and wellbeing and their confidence to re-integrate into large, busy schools. For a small number of children this has led to behavioural challenges, and in a minority, sporadic attendance. Some primary settings are reporting an increased occurrence of incidents of self-harm and disordered eating and concerns regarding 'age/stage' inappropriate behaviour.

Many children, whose parents had opted for elective home education following the pandemic have now returned to school. However, in some cases they continue to be home educated.

Schools are experienced in catch up, so will be able to assess learning loss quickly and plan recovery programmes. They are expected to manage the impact of the pandemic – sensitively in terms of children's mental health and wellbeing, to manage the current impact on their staffing and children with a significant rise in cases in young people, deliver recovery programmes as well as return to normal in terms of a robust, rigorous and comprehensive school curriculum.

For the very youngest children we know there has been a significant disruption to their language acquisition and confidence. Learning through play with others is fundamental to language learning. Access to a programme of learning to

read, with regular access to age-appropriate reading material will have further compounded language development for some children. There is more time to catch these children up and schools will adjust their curriculum appropriately. However, a wider response across all partners, agencies and communities could enhance this further and close the gap more rapidly.

What needs to happen

Utilise the newly formed Norfolk Learning Board to address the key systemic priorities – initially to support recovery, and longer term to lead the system collaboratively

- Bring together the education sector leaders, from settings, schools and colleges, to work collaboratively, pooling expertise and resources, draw in co-operation and support from key partners and stakeholders to focus on systemic challenges, to champion and lead county-wide priorities for recovery initially and future learning development
- In Year 1 - establish two key workstreams. 1) Transition at all key stages of learning to deliver co-ordinated approaches and strategies to promote better transition across early years, primary secondary and post 16, and 2) Inclusion - integrating priorities around wellbeing, mental health, SEND, curriculum support and language development, and align with wider Prevention and early help model

Through the Education Training and Strategy Group (multi-agency partners) ensure alignment to NLB, Norwich Opportunity Area, secure commitment to enhance post 16 pathways, promote key national and local opportunities and programmes, ensure robust communication and equality of opportunity

- Create/develop and deliver online transition and IAG support activities including face to face, automated and Live chat IAG solutions
- Develop and deliver targeted support activities during Y11 and Y12 at groups of young people identified as being most at risk of not being in education, employment or training (NEET)
- Schools, colleges, and other post 16 providers will identify and refer young people in need of support and who meet the criteria to the Social Recovery programme

Identify wellbeing need in schools and provide a contextualised response that is outcome focused, meets need early where possible and provides training, support and curriculum activity

- Enhance the DfE wellbeing project, target specific education providers to enhanced support
- Provide universal and targeted relationships, sex and health education (RSHE) support to schools that ensure an effective curriculum is delivered to equip pupils with the knowledge, values and skills to promote their health and wellbeing, including supporting their peers as appropriate

- Create a thematic toolkit of resources, guidance and continuing professional development (CPD) opportunities to help schools and settings identify and effectively respond to established and emerging mental health and wellbeing related challenges

Work with schools and early years providers to support the identification gaps in learning, utilise appropriate assessment strategies and build a curriculum that addresses these gaps

- Focus on targeting maintained schools at risk of poor/ less robust curriculum progression /provision, and therefore adverse Ofsted inspection
- Establish a blended approach to curriculum CPD, and work with sector to develop and broker training and support – e.g. headteacher associations, Teaching Schools, Research School NLB, Norwich Opportunity Area etc.
- Support schools with promoting resourcing and teaching reading through targeted CPD

Improve language acquisition and social and emotional development for young children who have missed out on experiences to socialise and develop language

- Support community groups to develop and improve stay and play sessions for families with children 0-2
- Support more disadvantaged families to take up funded Early Years provision for 2-year-olds
- build on the expertise and expand the network of trained communications champions ([Norwich Opportunity Area](#)) to create a sustainable network of communication experts working across schools and early years providers.

What success will look like for children, young people, and families

- Gaps in outcomes for disadvantaged learners are narrowing and are smaller than those reported nationally
- Academic achievement in Norfolk schools returns to at least pre-pandemic standards, following re-introduction of testing and examinations

- A smaller proportion of young people in Norfolk are reported as NEET or with an unknown destination aged 16 and 17 compared to 2021 measures
- Outcome indicators related to language acquisition and reading are improving (EY Foundation Stage Profile, phonics screening check, reading attainment at KS1 and 2 in primary schools)
- Permanent exclusions remain lower than in previous years (pre pandemic), and continue to decline
- A higher proportion of disadvantaged two-year-olds benefit from high quality early education

What success will mean for agencies working with children, young people, and families

- Ofsted Outcomes for quality of education and personal development are better or at least in line with national benchmarks, LA maintained schools do not receive an adverse inspection judgement
- Education leaders enjoy better wellbeing and are more effective due to better joined up working to meet the challenges they face



Working together to deliver ‘what works’

Alongside working together to achieve our four identified priorities, our Strategic Alliance partners each have strategies and plans which they have developed in order to deliver our wider responsibilities and ambitions for children, young people and families – what they want and need in order that they can flourish.

This strategy aims to complement and add value to these individual plans through identifying how we can work better together to help every child and young person to flourish, rather than duplicate anything that is well covered elsewhere.

There are significant areas where our partners’ strategic priorities align. These common areas help us identify where working together makes most sense and will lead to the best results.

Common themes emerging across Strategic Alliance member organisations’ strategies and plans include commitments to:

- Collaborate with and put children, young people and families’ views and wishes at the heart of all decisions which affect their lives
- Provide help and support at the earliest possible stage, to prevent problems escalating
- Ensure there is sufficient, good quality provision which offers choice and flexibility
- Protect and care for vulnerable children, young people and families
- Improve social mobility, confidence, achievements and life chances for children, young people and families
- Provide smooth pathways into and through services, with fewer gaps and duplications
- Work holistically with children, young people and families on all areas impacting on their ability to thrive
- Provide children, young people and families with opportunities to become more resilient and to help themselves
- Improve accessibility and reduce inequalities and barriers to independence
- Work more efficiently and effectively and embrace innovation
- Collaborate and share resources
- Develop the skills of the children and young people’s workforce

Building on these commitments, we have identified a range of areas that we need to focus on and secure through working together if we want to both deliver against the specific priorities identified in this plan and to enable children, young people and families to Flourish.

Several of the determinants will be actioned across FLOURISH and the four key priorities, because we know they are important areas of focus for all our work. Others are more specific to individual FLOURISH impacts.

Through the work of the Strategic Alliance across the children and young people's system, we will encourage, support and champion the focus on delivering these determinants so that all children and young people in Norfolk can Flourish.



FLOURISH Determinants



Universal determinants – applicable across all FLOURISH impacts

- Effective early identification and intervention
- Skilled and understanding workforce
- Choice and control
- Effective, accessible information, advice and guidance
- Aligned, easy pathways
- Targeted support
- Integrated system working
- Accessible, engaging opportunities
- Sufficient, effective support networks



Tailored Determinants

particular to individual FLOURISH impacts

family and friends

- Effective, accessible universal preventative services
- Risk and safety mitigation and management
- Edge of care support
- Safe, stable places to live
- Healthy peer relationships
- Trusted, safe relationships with adults

learning

- Effective, sufficient, high quality learning provision
- Access to life-long learning and skills development
- Inclusive and preventative practices
- Peer support
- Good home learning environments
- Engagement with learning

opportunity

- Understanding of inequalities and barriers
- Removal of barriers
- Availability of pathways

understood

- System commitment to participation
- Embedded co-production
- Empowerment of children and young people
- Engaging promotion
- Children, Young People and Family-led planning
- Feedback and encouragement
- Advocacy of children and young people's views



resilience

- Basic needs are met
- Effective transition planning
- Risk coaching and mitigation



individual

- Respectful relationships
- Promotion of understanding and acceptance
- Pro-active challenge from individual to system level
- Safe environments
- Peer support
- Inclusive, person-centred service design and delivery



safe and secure

- Safe environments
- Effective perpetrator deterrent and prosecution
- Preventative interventions
- Effective safety promotion
- Understanding of risk
- Community and peer understanding and support
- Effective, timely information sharing and communication
- Trusted relationships with adults and agencies



healthy

- Prioritisation of prevention and wellbeing
- Holistic approaches to clinical and social needs
- Healthy environments
- Understanding risk and impact of choices on healthy lifestyles
- Healthy behaviours

How we will know we are succeeding

Developing an outcome monitoring framework for FLOURISH

In setting out our strategy, we are able to call on a wide range of data and information from across our Strategic Alliance partnership as we think about children and young people's FLOURISH outcomes, the factors that affect them, and the impact of the support we provide to improve them.

This information, however, frequently relates to specific elements of children and young people's journey, or particular services, and we don't currently systematically bring this together to get an overall sense of individuals' experiences and outcomes, or a sense of the total impact of the Strategic Alliance's work.

Our aim is for our strategy, and the ongoing monitoring of its delivery, to be informed by an increasingly data and evidence-led narrative that enables the Strategic Alliance to identify issues and trends in how our children and young people are Flourishing and answers the "so what?" questions about whether we are making a difference.

Our approach will be based on an objective analysis of a range of data from across the children and young people system, using the skills and knowledge of analysts and professionals within partners' organisations, and collated into a set of key documents and products.

To support this, we will develop a systematic whole-partnership monitoring framework alongside the FLOURISH outcomes, to enable the Strategic Alliance to track progress against each outcome, and as a whole, using data and evidence. This will be supported by dedicated analytical and technical capacity within the data system & performance enabling subgroup.

The shape and nature of this framework will be set by the Strategic Alliance, but in line with good practice it is likely to include:

- A concise set of the most important outcome and progress measures for each FLOURISH impact area.
- An over-arching dashboard that brings all of these together into a single view, along with the ability to 'drill down' into more detail.
- Clear ownership of the monitoring of each of the FLOURISH impact areas, taking into account data sharing responsibilities and where the expertise lies to provide accurate, up to date context and further information.
- An agreed set of principles that describe how and when issues are highlighted or escalated to the Strategic Alliance and how data is collected, presented and reported.

- An annual cycle that includes:
 - A formal, published progress report and needs assessment, covering all FLOURISH impact areas.
 - a review of our priority measures, and any targets set against those, to ensure they are telling us the right information about the right people at the right time.

To inform the development of effective monitoring around the FLOURISH outcomes and impacts, we recognise we need to further develop our intelligence gathering, specifically around how children, young people and families feel about their lives. This work will be led by the Strategic Alliance's Stakeholder Engagement and Insight subgroup and will ensure the wishes and feelings of children, young people and their families are at the heart of the Strategic Alliance's measures of success and, therefore, the Alliance's decision making.



Partners





Cabinet

Item No: 9

Report Title: Trading Standards Service Plan 2022/23

Date of Meeting: 4 April 2022

Responsible Cabinet Member: Cllr Margaret Dewsbury (Cabinet Member for Communities & Partnerships)

Responsible Director: Tom McCabe (Executive Director – Community and Environmental Services)

Is this a Key Decision? No

Introduction from Cabinet Member

Over the last year, the Trading Standards service plans, service delivery and developments have continued to be impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic. Whilst continuing to deliver statutory duties and calibration services for businesses in a covid-secure manner, the service has seamlessly flexed to support Public Health and enforcement partners in responding to and recovering from the Covid-19 pandemic:

- Ensuring business compliance with constantly changing coronavirus restrictions legislation, including at retail level and sports venues, and
- Working with the Norfolk Against Scams Partnership (NASP) to raise awareness of Covid-19 related scams and frauds, such as fake vaccination and booster services.

On top of this, the service responded to three avian influenza outbreaks in the county over the winter, conducting foot patrols and/or sending mailshots to residents in the affected areas to identify and advise poultry keepers on how to protect their flocks and prevent further spread of the disease.

Since the last service plan, the service has new enforcement duties arising from:

- The Food Information (Amendment) (England) Regulations 2019 (otherwise known as “Natasha’s Law”), which introduce the mandatory declaration of allergens in foods that are prepacked for direct sale
- The Calorie Labelling (Out of Home Sector) (England) Regulations 2021, which introduce mandatory calorie labelling at large catering businesses
- The Botulinum Toxin and Cosmetic Fillers (Children) Act 2021, which prohibit specific cosmetic treatments or the offer of such treatments to persons under the age of 18, and

- The Offensive Weapons Act 2019, which (within the Trading Standards remit), bans the sale of specific bladed weapons, broadens the prohibition of bladed weapon sales to persons under the age of 18 and bans the sale of corrosive substances to persons under the age of 18.

The Trading Standards Service Plan and associated sub-plans (as annexed to the main plan) set out the service priorities for 2022-23, taking account of the service budget set in February 2022, and focusing on:

- the recovery of a vibrant and sustainable economy
- regulation to promote healthy, fulfilling, and independent lives
- support to enable strong, engaged, and inclusive communities, and
- regulation to ensure a greener, more resilient future.

Executive Summary

The Trading Standards service takes an evidence-driven approach to strategic and tactical planning and decision making. The service plan has been developed using analysis of information (intelligence), such as consumer complaints recorded by the Citizens Advice Consumer Helpline (CACH), information about threats and rogue traders recorded on the Trading Standards' national intelligence database, and intelligence disseminated by enforcement partners such as the Food Standards Agency (FSA), the Department of the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) and the Office of Product Safety and Standards (OPSS). This robust approach ensures that the service plan reflects the issues and problems Norfolk people and businesses face, ensuring our service is focused on the needs of the county. This includes providing part of the 'national shield'; collaborating with National Trading Standards (NTS) to address both national issues that affect Norfolk and the impact of local businesses nationally and globally.

The Trading Standards Business Services Policy has also been reviewed. It continues to reflect the business offer provided by the Trading Standards service.

Recommendations:

- 1. To agree and adopt the Trading Standards Service Plan and associated Annexes set out in Appendices 1 to 4**
- 2. To agree and adopt the Trading Standards Business Services Policy set out in Appendix 5**

1. Background and Purpose

- 1.1 The Trading Standards service's ambition is for a safe, fair, and legal marketplace for Norfolk, that supports and benefits local businesses and communities. In alignment with Better Together, For Norfolk - Norfolk County Council's strategy for 2021-2025, our five priorities are:
 - A vibrant and sustainable economy
 - Better opportunities for children and young people
 - Healthy, fulfilling, and independent lives

- Strong, engaged, and inclusive communities
- A greener, more resilient future

1.2 Trading Standards has a very broad remit:

- Protecting the integrity of the food chain, from farmed animal welfare and disease control (such as, in response to avian influenza) to food safety and standards
- Ensuring goods are safe and trading is fair
- Tackling underage and illegal sales of alcohol, tobacco products, knives, and corrosive substances
- Environmental protection, ensuring businesses are supported to comply with new green legislative requirements
- Aiding Public Health in supporting retailers and sports venues to comply with coronavirus restrictions and recover from the covid-19 pandemic, and
- Ensuring the safety of a number of sports grounds in the county.

The government consistently utilises Trading Standards enforcement as a method to ground its policy ambitions in areas where regulation and enforcement is required. Recent examples of this include:

- extensions to calorie and allergen food labelling
- extensions to the prohibition of sales of bladed products, such as knives, to persons under the age of 18
- bans on cosmetic filler treatments for and sales of corrosive substances to persons under the age of 18
- bans on microbeads in cosmetics; certain fuels for wood burning stoves and tenant fees, and
- enforcing covid-19 related business requirements.

We are seeing a revamp of regulations as a consequence of EU transition, and we are anticipating a raft of new legislation, which will require enforcement by Trading Standards.

1.3 The service supports businesses through the provision of:

- information and advice to ensure compliance with trading standards
- calibration, verification, testing and hire of weighing and measuring equipment
- a level playing field by ensuring fraudulent and unfair practices are not allowed to prosper.

The service's Business Services Policy is appended to this report (Appendix 5).

The service investigates criminal offences and civil breaches and takes legal action where necessary to protect individuals, in particular the vulnerable, as well as wider legitimate public and economic interests. The service also seeks to protect Norfolk people from fraud, scams and rogue traders through awareness raising and our No Cold Calling Zones and Trusted Trader scheme.

Trading Standards therefore has an important social and economic role in the county, helping communities to strengthen, people and the environment to thrive, the economy of Norfolk to grow and both communities and businesses to recover from the covid-19 pandemic.

- 1.4 The Trading Standards service takes an evidence-driven approach to strategic and tactical planning and decision making. The service plan has been developed using analysis of information (intelligence), such as consumer complaints recorded by the Citizens Advice Consumer Helpline (CACH), information about threats and rogue traders recorded on the Trading Standards' national intelligence database, and intelligence disseminated by enforcement partners such as the Food Standards Agency (FSA), the Department of the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) and the Office of Product Safety and Standards (OPSS). This robust approach ensures that the service plan reflects the issues and problems Norfolk people and businesses face, ensuring our service is focused on the needs of the county. This includes providing part of the 'national shield'; collaborating with National Trading Standards (NTS) to address both national issues that affect Norfolk and the impact of local businesses nationally and globally.

The service plan (Appendix 1) includes our 'plan on a page' (page 12) which summarises our strategic control strategy and focus on protecting the public and legitimate business.

2. Proposal

- 2.1 The Trading Standards Service Plan 2022/23 (Appendix 1) includes, and attention is drawn to:
- Annex I: Enforcement of Age Restricted Sales and Illicit Tobacco Products Plan 2022/23 (Appendix 2 to this report)
 - Annex II: Food & Feed Law Enforcement Plan 2022/23 (Appendix 3 to this report), and
 - Annex III: Delivery of Animal Health & Welfare Framework 2022/23 (Appendix 4 to this report).
- 2.2 The Enforcement of Age Restricted Sales and Illicit Tobacco Products Plan enables the County Council to discharge its statutory duty to annually consider and review its enforcement of the Children and Young Persons (Protection from Tobacco) Act 1991 and the Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003.
- 2.3 The Food and Feed Law Enforcement Plan is a statutory plan required by the Food Standards Agency, which incorporates work that is intended to protect the food supply chain, covering both food production and control of animal feed used for animals intended for human consumption.

- 2.4 The service's Business Services Policy has been reviewed. It continues to reflect the business offer provided by the Trading Standards service (Appendix 5).

3. Impact of the Proposal

- 3.1 The Trading Standards service has a track-record of evidence-driven strategic and tactical planning and decision making. Our service plan ensures that we target our resources at those areas of trade that cause the most detriment to Norfolk consumers and businesses and anticipate emerging issues. It enables us to collaborate with partners to achieve complementary aims, such as our work with Public Health, the police, and Environmental Health on restrictions to control the spread of coronavirus. It also enables us to empower communities to protect themselves from frauds and scams, such as through our work with the Norfolk Against Scams Partnership (NASP). Our planned approach promotes an environment in which businesses and communities can thrive.

For example, during the last year the Trading Standards service:

- Continued to work closely with the Police, Environmental Health, Public Health, Communications and npLaw to provide advice and support to businesses and the public on business closure, business restrictions and self-isolation legislation, introduced to control the spread of the coronavirus. In addition, we worked with a covid-19 testing business and "fit-to fly" businesses, which attracted multiple consumer complaints after becoming overwhelmed with orders overnight as a result of changes in travel requirements. We advised the businesses on how they could provide redress to impacted customers and introduce processes to prevent any recurrence of the issue.
- Continued to work with the Sports Grounds Safety Authority (SGSA) to ensure that, on re-opening, the County's designated stadiums and regulated stands are not only safe but also covid-19 secure, in line with government guidance. For example, on the implementation of Plan B in December, we worked with our venues to address the covid pass entry requirements and mandatory wearing of face coverings. Working with other agencies such as the Police, Fire and Rescue, Environmental Health, Public Health and the Ambulance Service, the service has reviewed the operating arrangements and/or re-issued safety certificates for a number of venues around the County, including for football, greyhounds, stock car racing and horse racing
- Worked alongside members of the Animal and Plant Health Agency (APHA) to respond to three Avian Influenza outbreaks in the county, conducting foot patrol visits and or sending mailshots to residents in the disease zones surrounding the infected premises to identify poultry keepers and advise them on how to protect their flocks and limit the spread of the disease. This winter season has seen an unprecedented level of Avian Influenza outbreaks across Great Britain, with over 90 cases confirmed up until the end of February 2022. A countrywide Avian

Influenza Prevention Zone remains in place requiring keepers to adhere to strict biosecurity requirements, including the requirement to house birds, in order to limit the spread of the disease. The service continues to respond to complaints about unhoused poultry and poultry welfare as a result of these requirements.

- Calibrated over 19,500 items of equipment, supplied weights and other weighing equipment, provided hire weights, and verified other weighing and measuring instruments for local, national, and international businesses and public organisations
- Supported the creation of 27 new No Cold Calling zones, taking the county total to 292 zones, meaning, at present, 13,394 Norfolk properties are protected from rogue and unscrupulous cold-calling doorstep traders.
- Conducted 43 inspections at e-cigarette retailers and ensured the non-compliant disposable e-cigarettes found at 55% of businesses, that were over strength, oversized and/or incorrectly labelled, were removed from sale.
- As a result of our food sampling and enforcement activity, raised 6 food incidents with the Food Standards Agency (FSA) regarding undeclared allergens in prepacked foods as well as handling 8 complaints in relation to undeclared allergens in non-prepacked foods which caused illness/injury.
- Took eight prosecutions during the year, where, in every case, the offenders either pleaded guilty or were found guilty at trial. The cases related to rogue builders/tradespeople, illegal tobacco sales, an unroadworthy vehicle and horse welfare.

4. Evidence and Reasons for Decision

- 4.1 The Trading Standards Service Plan, inclusive of Annexes I, II and III (Appendices 1 to 4), is considered to be the most effective way to demonstrate how the service intends to fulfil its regulatory/statutory responsibilities taking into account the available intelligence, resources and the Better Together, for Norfolk priorities we are seeking to support.
- 4.2 The Business Services Policy (Appendix 5) was approved in 2016. It has been reviewed and continues to reflect the business offer provided by the Trading Standards service.

5. Alternative Options

- 5.1 The proposed Plan and associated documents are considered to set out the most effective approach and best fit with the strategic direction of Norfolk County Council. Alternative approaches could be taken, but these would require further work to develop and may result in a need to secure additional funding to deliver.

6. Financial Implications

- 6.1 The activities within the proposed service plan and the recruitment detailed in section 7.1 below can be delivered within the agreed budget/using current reserves.
- 6.2 The service has secured new enforcement burdens funding from government for our new duties under The Food Information (Amendment) (England) Regulations 2019 (otherwise known as “Natasha’s Law”) and The Botulinum Toxin and Cosmetic Fillers (Children) Act 2021. We are currently seeking similar funding for our new duties under The Offensive Weapons Act 2019.
- 6.3 As highlighted in the service plan itself, current accommodation constraints for our Calibration, Verification and Testing Services (CVTS) laboratories are stifling growth, which could result in an inability to generate the required income via our commercial services. Capital investment may be required, as per section 7.2 below.

7. Resource Implications

- 7.1 **Staff:** There is a long-standing national shortage of qualified Trading Standards Officers (TSOs). We currently have 5 vacancies (28% of our TSO posts) into which we have been unable to recruit in recent years. We have an aging demographic within the service, with, by April 2022, an average age of trainees, TSOs, Lead TSOs and Section Managers/Head of Service of 51; with 40% over the age of 55 and two-thirds over the age of 50. As highlighted in the service plan itself, the current vacancies and age demography present a significant risk to our ability to meet service demands. In addition, the potential failure to maintain a sufficiently large cohort of qualified staff would severely inhibit our ability to successfully recruit and retain trainees, who depend on the support of these staff to attain their professional qualification. It takes approximately 3 years to train a Trading Standards Officer; through a combination of theoretical study and practical on-the-job training.

The staff survey results for Trading Standards have shown a consistently high score (negative impact) for job pressures and workplace tensions. This is, in part, a result of the regulatory work we undertake, but it is also as a result of the staffing reductions we have seen over a number of years and our inability to fill staffing vacancies with qualified Trading Standards Officers (TSOs).

Investment in our workforce to develop a resilient service has been a priority in our service plan since 2020/21 but has been delayed by our focus on our coronavirus pandemic response. Further to the approval of a business case, we are implementing an innovative graduate recruitment and training programme with a view to attracting people who have the capability to complete the on-the-job training and gain the experience necessary to attain their Trading Standards Practitioner Diploma. We are currently seeking to recruit TSOs and trainee

TSOs to fill our vacant posts and cover anticipated retirements. We are advertising recruitment opportunities via a wide range of local community groups, national university sites and veteran jobsites, with a view to encouraging applications from people from diverse backgrounds.

7.2 Property: We will be reviewing the operational accommodation needs of the service, in particular, our Calibration, Verification and Testing Services laboratories to ensure that they meet the size and configuration requirements to enable the service to continue to grow and generate the required income via our commercial services.

7.3 IT: The Trading Standards service has invested in a replacement case management system, which will be launched in readiness for the start of the 2022-23 service year. The Information Management Team (IMT) is providing technical support during the implementation phase and will provide ongoing technical support once the system is launched.

It is anticipated that, once fully implemented, the system will generate efficiencies in workflows, enhanced mobile working for officers and a reduction in the need for administrative and IMT support.

8. Other Implications

8.1 Legal Implications: Statutory duties are addressed in the Trading Standards service plan 2022-23 and associated plans.

The Trading Standards service is principally concerned with preventing or reducing crime and disorder. Enforcement activities are determined via our intelligence-led approach and enforcement action is undertaken in accordance with the CES Compliance and Enforcement Policy. This policy provides a clear framework within which the service can protect the public, legitimate businesses, and the environment in a consistent, fair, and transparent way, in line with both local and national priorities and the legal requirement arising from Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998.

The service has regard to the Freedom of Information Act 2000, the Data Protection Act 2018, and corporate data protection policies and procedures as well as service-specific policies in relation to data protection where these differ in a criminal justice context.

8.2 Human Rights Implications: Enforcement activities occasionally necessitate the use of covert surveillance or access to communications data, as regulated by the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 (RIPA) and the Investigatory Powers Act 2016 (IPA). In carrying out its enforcement role, the service has regard to these acts and the County Council's RIPA and IPA policies, when considering the necessity and proportionality of such activities.

In addition, in undertaking its enforcement role, the service has regard to the Human Rights Act 1998, in terms of the right to a fair trial, the right to respect for private and family life, prohibition of discrimination and protection of property.

8.3 Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA): There are no material changes to the Trading Standards Service Plan relevant to equality.

However, an Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) was produced for the CES Compliance and Enforcement Policy last year, in conjunction with the CES Equality and Accessibility Officer. The assessment found that, for Trading Standards, recording of the protected characteristics of our contacts is currently limited to formal investigations. This is due to the current recording system being led by the needs of the Courts, rather than for broader monitoring purposes. Trading Standards has since reviewed and explored options for wider recording of protected characteristics to enable greater understanding of the diversity of the business and public communities we serve. The new case management system (see section 7.3 above), which will be in use from April 2022, is capable of recording more detailed information and work will be carried out to explore how best to implement this. However, broader data capture is, to a large extent, dependent on the Citizens Advice Consumer Helpline, which handles all our frontline consumer contacts.

In addition, we are planning to work with the Equalities, Diversity and Inclusion team during summer 2022 to revisit our equality impact assessment for the service as a whole.

8.4 Data Protection Impact Assessments (DPIA): The service routinely obtains, stores, and shares information to provide advice and guidance, conduct investigations and ensure compliance with relevant laws. Some of this information is personal data, and some of it is confidential or sensitive. The information is securely stored electronically, on the County Council's Network, and in other ways such as on secure databases and in secure paper files. The information is stored and processed in accordance with the law (including the Data Protection Act 2018 and the Enterprise Act 2002) and with proper regard to the council's privacy notices.

Discussion has taken place with the Information Governance Team who advise that a Data Protection Impact Assessment is not required, as there is no new processing and the relevant privacy notices relating to regulatory provision are in place and have been recently reviewed.

8.5 Health and Safety implications (where appropriate): The service follows the County Council's Health & Safety – "Our Commitments policy" and associated corporate policies, including "Covid-19 Your Health and your safety" and the

corporate Covid-19 Compliance code. The service has comprehensive risk assessments for covid-secure working practices which complement those for service-specific activities such as weights and measures inspections or potentially confrontational situations. These enable us to manage the health, safety, and wellbeing of our staff, whether they are working at business premises, in customers' homes, in the office, in our laboratories or in their own homes. Our comprehensive set of risk assessments are reviewed on an annual basis as part of our Health, Safety & Wellbeing Action Plan.

8.6 Sustainability implications (where appropriate): The service will have a focus on environmental protection, ensuring:

- businesses are supported to comply with new green legislative requirements, and
- the service operates in a manner to support the council's net-zero ambitions.

The latter includes:

- a commitment to engage with the development of the corporate Environmental Action plan, adopting best practice where applicable
- implementing the mobile working functionality of our replacement case management system and thus reducing our use of paper forms
- sign-posting businesses to online information and advice and providing bespoke advice via email and thus reducing our use of information leaflets and letters, and
- retaining the positive benefits of home-working and implementation of MS Teams to reduce business travel, especially for meetings.

8.7 Any Other Implications: Officers have considered all the implications which members should be aware of. Apart from those listed in the report (above), there are no other implications to take into account.

9. Risk Implications / Assessment

9.1 This service plan provides a clear framework and mitigates any risk of legal challenge regarding the delivery of the regulatory/statutory enforcement function of the Trading Standards Service.

9.2 As demonstrated in the last service year, plans will need to be revised if:

- Additional coronavirus restrictions enforcement is necessitated by further outbreaks
- The county is impacted by more animal disease outbreaks, such as avian influenza or classical swine fever, or
- The service is unable to recruit qualified Trading Standards Officers and/or trainees.

10. Select Committee Comments

At their meeting on 16 March 2022, the Infrastructure and Development Select Committee reviewed and commented on the Trading Standards Service Plan 2022/23 including:

- Annex I: Enforcement of Age Restricted Sales and Illicit Tobacco Products Plan 2022/23
- Annex II: Food & Feed Law Enforcement Plan 2022/23, and
- Annex III: Delivery of Animal Health & Welfare Framework 2022/23.

The Committee also reviewed the Trading Standards' Business Services Policy.

11. Recommendations

1. To agree and adopt the Trading Standards Service Plan and associated Annexes set out in Appendices 1 to 4
2. To agree and adopt the Trading Standards Business Services Policy set out in Appendix 5

12. Background Papers

12.1 [CES Compliance and Enforcement Policy](#)

Officer Contact

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

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

Trading Standards Service Plan 2022-23

Responsible Senior Officer Name: **Sophie Leney**

Period covered: **2022-2023**

Latest update: **3 March 2022**

What our service aims to achieve

The Trading Standards service's ambition is for a safe, fair, and legal marketplace for Norfolk, that supports and benefits local businesses and communities. In alignment with Better Together, For Norfolk - Norfolk County Council's strategy for 2021-2025, our five priorities are:

- A vibrant and sustainable economy
- Better opportunities for children and young people
- Healthy, fulfilling, and independent lives
- Strong, engaged, and inclusive communities
- A greener, more resilient future

The things we do

We will undertake the following service activities:

1. Support the economy and economic recovery, by providing businesses with access to information and compliance advice, including through chargeable, bespoke services
2. Support the economy and economic recovery, through our traded service, by delivering calibration, verification, testing and hire to the public and private sectors
3. Safeguard vulnerable people and build community resilience with partners; by tackling scams, fraud, and rogue traders; including through our Norfolk Against Scams Partnership (NASP), No Cold Calling Zones and Trusted Trader scheme
4. Protect consumers and support legitimate businesses by tackling non-compliance, focusing on the most detrimental trading

Through programmes of intelligence-led market surveillance, education, and enforcement activities:

5. Protect the environment
6. Safeguard communities and public health by addressing coronavirus pandemic-recovery social and business restrictions, and tackling the supply of age restricted products to young people

For further information see **Annex I: Enforcement of Age Restricted Sales and Illicit Tobacco Products Plan 2022-23**

7. Ensure the safety, standards, and quality of the food chain, including food, animal feeds and agricultural fertilisers

For further information see **Annex II: Food & Feed Law Enforcement Plan 2022-23**

8. Safeguard the standards of animal health and welfare and reduce the risk of animal disease outbreaks and associated risks to the Norfolk economy and public health

For further information see **Annex III: Delivery of Animal Health & Welfare Framework 2022-23**

9. Ensure fair trading of products and services, and the safety and legal measurement of products
10. Ensure safety at sports grounds, working with partner agencies and other stakeholders via safety advisory groups

Our focus for the 2022/23 service year is on:

- Investment in our workforce to develop a resilient service: Recruitment and development of Trading Standards Officers and trainee Trading Standards Officers to ensure we have the staffing resources necessary now and in the future to fulfil our statutory duties and address the county council's priorities.
- Environmental protection, ensuring:
 - businesses are supported to comply with new green legislative requirements, and
 - the service operates in a manner to support the council's net-zero ambitions.
- Online market surveillance, in line with coronavirus pandemic recovery practices: Continuing to strengthen our online compliance and enforcement approach, in line with the shift to online trading and fraud.
- Development of our commercial services: Increasing our income, primarily through our calibration and chargeable business advice functions to reduce our reliance on grant funding.

In all that we do, we commit to being:

- Forward looking
- Innovative
- Empowering
- Collaborative
- Evidence driven
- Prudent, and
- Developmental

Our service structure

The Trading Standards Service currently consists of four teams:

- Calibration, Verification & Testing Services
- Food and Farming
- Intelligence and Enforcement Support
- Safety and Fair Trading

In 2022/23 we will be introducing a fifth team, Business and Community Support, to ensure we can focus on our investment in our workforce to develop a resilient service, environmental protection, and development of our commercial services.

The service has a full-time equivalent staffing complement of 43.36 FTE with a headcount of 45.

The service is delivered from three offices, County Hall in Norwich, Priory House in King's Lynn, and Hethel Engineering Centre (Calibration, Verification & Testing Services only).

Norfolk's population is 914,039¹ and there are 33,145² active enterprises in Norfolk. With a net budget of £1,715,520, the annual cost of the Trading Standards service is £1.88 per head or £51.76 per enterprise.

Monitoring our outcomes/performance

Over the last two service years, in line with every other public sector service, business and third sector organisation, the Trading Standards Service's plans, service delivery and developments have been significantly impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic, albeit, in the last year, we have striven to deliver our business-as-usual regulatory duties.

Over the last year, we have continued to work closely with the Police, Environmental Health, Public Health, Communications and npLaw to provide advice and support to businesses and the public on business closure, business restrictions and self-isolation legislation, introduced to control the spread of the coronavirus. In addition, we worked with a covid-19 testing business and "fit-to-fly" businesses, which attracted multiple consumer complaints after becoming overwhelmed with orders overnight as a result of changes in travel requirements. We advised the businesses on how they could provide redress to impacted customers and introduce processes to prevent any recurrence of the issue.

We have continued to work with the Sports Grounds Safety Authority (SGSA) to ensure that, on re-opening, the County's designated stadiums and regulated stands are not only safe but also covid-19 secure, in line with government guidance. For example, on the implementation of Plan B in December 2021, we worked with our venues to address the covid pass entry requirements and mandatory wearing of face coverings. Working with other agencies such as the Police, Fire and Rescue, Environmental Health, Public Health and the Ambulance Service, the service has reviewed the operating arrangements and/or re-issued safety certificates for a number of venues around the

¹ 2020 Office of National Statistics figure (estimated)

² 2021 Office of National Statistics figure from the Inter Departmental Business Register

County, including for football, greyhounds, stock car racing and horse racing. The biennial inspection by the SGSA concluded that the service (on behalf of the County Council) is high performing in discharging its regulatory duties for the Safety of Sports Grounds.

The Calibration, Verification and Testing Services (CVTS) team is forecast to generate £540,000 of income by year end, £28,000 (5.2%) over target. Income is generated by calibrating over 19,500 items of equipment, supplying weights and other weighing equipment, providing hire weights, and verifying other weighing and measuring instruments. Ways of working and travel have been impacted by the pandemic, but our reputation and flexibility has secured additional income from the pharmaceutical sector and some new business as a result of EU transition. The CVTS team is also responsible for maintaining Norfolk Trading Standards' own weights and measures and, via Section 101 agreements, those of Cambridgeshire, Essex, and Suffolk. The CVTS team continues to work closely with NorseCare and others to ensure medical weighing equipment meets Care Quality Commission (CQC) requirements whilst generating savings for the company in equipment maintenance, although some inspections have been delayed due to covid-19. The team successfully maintained our accreditation from the United Kingdom Accreditation Service (UKAS), ISO9001 certification, and designation from the Secretary of State as a Notified Body as well as securing designation as a UK Approved Body to enable continued conformity assessments for both the GB and Northern Ireland markets post EU exit. CVTS continues to support the local economic recovery and has utilised the county council's courier service to provide free collection and delivery services to Norfolk businesses. This has been well received by Norfolk's private and public sector and has generated savings for those businesses as well as improving our business offer whilst creating some efficiency gains for the service.

Throughout the year, Trading Standards has continued to support Norfolk communities to activate No Cold Calling Zones (NCCZs) in their locality, enabling residents to declare that they no longer wish to accept traders calling at their homes without an appointment and thus deterring rogue and unscrupulous traders cold calling them. Norfolk's first No Cold Calling Zone was created in December 15 years ago in East Harling. During 2021, 27 new zones were created, taking the county total to 292 zones, meaning, at present, 13,394 Norfolk properties are protected within a No Cold Calling Zone.

We have continued to work with the Norfolk Against Scams Partnership (NASP) to enable organisations to protect people and businesses from fraud, scams, and doorstep crime, and to help those who are defrauded. The Partnership has 56 public, private, and voluntary sector organisations as members. The partnership has worked together during the pandemic to raise awareness of covid-19 related scams, running social media campaigns, and distributing postcard-style scam information leaflets throughout Norfolk. We have worked with the local radio and press to highlight the latest scams relating to covid-19 vaccinations and boosters. We have highlighted cyber fraud throughout the year including text, email, and identity fraud scams, and we have recently launched a pilot scheme with police volunteers fitting telephone call-blockers for people who are vulnerable to scam telephone calls.

We have continued to monitor the marketplace to ensure consumer products, including food, are safe and legal. For example:

- Sales of second-hand cars generate the most consumer complaints of any trade sector in Norfolk (and nationally). We undertook an operation to inspect our most detrimental car traders in Norfolk, which led to the identification of unsafe vehicles at 3 businesses – one of whom was prosecuted for an unroadworthy vehicle. We

have secured national funding to lead a regional project, working with our East of England Trading Standards Authorities (EETSA) to tackle the most detrimental car sellers in the region over the next service year.

- As part of an EETSA regional project, we tested hand sanitisers for declared alcohol content, germicidal efficacy, and marketing claims. As a result, two products were withdrawn from the market, the labelling of three was amended and one retailer switched products, to those produced by a local manufacturer.
- Following test purchase, 22,000 unsafe lighters were removed from the marketplace and 28 eBay listings of cheap motorcycle helmets imported from China were taken down.
- Working with the county council's Transport for Norwich and Norfolk Police we contacted sellers of e-Scooters and used social media messaging to highlight their responsibilities under consumer protection legislation to make it explicit that personal e-scooters (as opposed to official hire e-scooters) can only be used on private land and not on the road.
- Following a rise in complaints and national concerns regarding the sale of disposable e-cigarettes that are over strength, oversized and sold to those underage, we conducted 43 inspections at e-cigarette sellers in the county. During these inspections, non-compliant products were found and removed from sale at 55% of the premises.
- Over 21,000 illicit cigarettes and 4kg of illegal hand-rolling tobacco were seized from a business in King's Lynn; having been found in a concealment behind a fake fuse box during an intelligence-led operation. We continue to work with enforcement partners to tackle the sale of illegal tobacco in Norfolk; including through engagement with landlords to evict their shop tenants who persist in selling.
- We have conducted intelligence-led food sampling surveys, included checking for undeclared allergens, meat species, and standards of imported foods and bread flour. Of the samples taken and reported on by our public analyst during the service year (to the end of January 2022) just over 60% have been found to be non-compliant.
- We have continued our focus on food allergens work. As a result of our sampling and enforcement activity, the service raised 6 food incidents with the Food Standards Agency (FSA) regarding undeclared allergens in prepacked foods as well as handling 8 complaints in relation to undeclared allergens in non-prepacked foods which caused illness/injury. Our "ask for allergens" campaign was featured in a council email signature banner during the year, which led to a dramatic increase in views of our associated webpages. In October 2021 additional allergen labelling requirements for prepacked for direct sale food products (Natasha's Law) came into effect and in advance of this we designed and disseminated an advice mailshot to those sectors of the Norfolk food business community most affected, to ensure they are aware of their legal responsibilities.
- We have assisted a business in King's Lynn with the export certification of their product (a high-risk food not of animal origin) by undertaking sampling and analysis on a cost recovery basis, to enable them to meet post EU-exit requirements.

- Our feed hygiene enforcement activities to ensure the safety and integrity of farmed animal feed and pet food has included responding to FSA feed alerts relating to salmonella in pet food.

Once again, this year, the service worked alongside members of the Animal and Plant Health Agency (APHA) to respond to three Avian Influenza outbreaks in the county. In November 2021 officers conducted foot patrol visits in the disease zone surrounding an infected premises near Wells-next-the-Sea, to identify poultry keepers and advise them on how to protect their flocks and limit the spread of the disease. Over the Christmas period and into early January 2022 officers undertook this work in the disease zone surrounding an infected premises near Watlington and in February we operated in a zone near Fakenham. This winter season has seen an unprecedented level of Avian Influenza outbreaks across Great Britain, with 77 cases confirmed up until the end of January 2022. A countrywide Avian Influenza Prevention Zone remains in place requiring keepers to adhere to strict biosecurity requirements, including the requirement to house birds, in order to limit the spread of the disease. The service continues to respond to complaints about unhoused poultry and poultry welfare as a result of these requirements.

Despite the continuing constraints on the court service, Trading Standards had eight prosecutions during the year, where, in every case, the offenders either pleaded guilty or were found guilty at trial. The cases related to rogue builders/tradespeople, illegal tobacco sales, an unroadworthy vehicle and horse welfare.

We will know we have made a difference when:

- Businesses understand and comply with legal requirements when they trade. Sanctions are applied to those who flout the law
- Communities and local businesses can protect themselves and others from and do not lose money to scams, fraud and rogue traders
- Illegal and/or unsafe products are prevented from entering/removed from the marketplace
- Our workforce capacity and commercial income ensure we have a resilient service

Measure	How we did in 2016/17	How we did in 2017/18	How we did in 2018/19	How we did in 2019/20	How we did in 2020/21	How we did in 2021/22 (to date)	Our target for this year
Percentage of businesses brought to broad compliance with trading standards	Target = 95% Actual = 95.30%	Target = 95% Actual = 94.69%	Target = 95% Actual = 95.66%	Target = 95% Actual = 94.87%	Target = 95% Actual = 97.80%	Target = 95% Actual = 97.67%	95%
Percentage of rogue traders and most detrimental businesses brought to compliance	Target = 80% Actual = 85.58%	Target = 85% Actual = 78.10%	Target = 85% Actual = 86.16%	Target = 95% Actual = 98.81%	Target = 95% Actual = 95%	Target = 95% Actual (YTD) = 98.46%	97%
Number of (a) Norfolk people who are 'Friends Against Scams' and (b) partners in the Norfolk Against Scams Partnership (NASP), protecting people from financial abuse	Not measured	(a) FAS Target = 600 (a) FAS Actual = 626	Discontinued	No targets set (a) 3,886 (b) 50	No targets set (a) 4,192 (b) 55	No targets set (a) 4,266 (b) 56	No targets set
Amount of money that, as a result of Trading Standards intervention, is not lost to or is recovered from fraudsters and rogue traders	Not measured	Not measured	Not measured	Not measured	£166,809	Actual not available until year end	Baselining measure due to 2020-22 being non-representative
Percentage of products, including foods and feeds, sampled or test purchased, which are found to be non-compliant and are subsequently brought to compliance or removed from the marketplace	Target = 90% Actual = 94%	Target = 93% Actual = 95.45%	Target = 93% Actual = 98.27%	Target = 93% Actual = 97.34%	Target = 96% Actual = 100%	Target = 96% Actual = 93.33%	96%

Feedback from our customers

Measure	How we did in 2016/17	How we did in 2017/18	How we did in 2018/19	How we did in 2019/20	How we did in 2020/21	How we did in 2021/22 (to date)	Our target for this year
Business satisfaction with Trading Standards services	Target = 94 Actual = 91.20	Target = 93 Actual = 92.90	Target = 93 Actual = 93.50	Target = 97% Actual = 94.40%	Target = 97% Suspended due to covid-19	Target = 97% Suspended due to covid-19	95%

Our key risks

Risk (Managed and monitored via the Trading Standards Risk Register)
<p>A loss of staff due to the service's aging demographic and/or continued austerity measures could result in a loss of specialist trading standards knowledge and skills, resulting in an inability to (a) deliver statutory duties and (b) generate the required income through our commercial activities of Primary Authority Partnerships, bespoke advice, calibration, verification testing, and hire services.</p> <p>In addition, our workforce does not currently reflect the diversity of the population and businesses we serve.</p> <p>Accommodation and ICT constraints on our Calibration, Verification and Testing Services (CVTS) laboratories are stifling growth, which could result in an inability to generate the required income via our commercial services.</p>

Measures (to monitor risks)

Measure	How we did in 2016/17	How we did in 2017/18	How we did in 2018/19	How we did in 2019/20	How we did in 2020/21	How we did in 2021/22 (to date)	Our target for this year
Proportion of Trading Standards Officers/Managers who hold necessary qualifications and current competencies to be authorised to deliver the Trading Standards Service priorities (as required by statute and as set out in the Control Strategy).	Target = 100% Actual: July = 90% Nov = 94%	Target = 100% Actual: April = 97% Aug = 99% Dec = 98.94% Mar = 99.64%	Discontinued	Not measured	Target = 100% Not measured due to covid-19	Actual not available until year end	100%

Measure	How we did in 2016/17	How we did in 2017/18	How we did in 2018/19	How we did in 2019/20	How we did in 2020/21	How we did in 2021/22 (to date)	Our target for this year
Income generated through our commercial activities of calibration, verification, testing and hire services	Target = £339,500 Actual = £397,846	Target = £355,000 Actual = £410,533	Target = £375,000 Actual = £420,407	Target = £425,000 Actual = £512,976	Target = £452,000 Actual = £534,584	Target = £512,000 Actual = £538,000 (forecast)	£562,000
Income generated through our commercial activities of Primary Authority Partnerships and bespoke advice	Target = £20,240 Actual = £868	Target = £20,580 Actual = £20,522	Target = £21,030 Actual = £15,485	Target = £21,280 Actual = £25,532	Target = £41,280 Actual = £16,612	Target = £41,280 Actual = (YTD) £11,070	£41,280

Supplementary information

In addition to the local ambition and priorities outlined on page 1 above and Norfolk Trading Standards' Strategic Assessment 2022 recommendations, the Trading Standards Service Plan has regard to (a) the Chartered Trading Standards Institute (CTSI) Four Nations Priorities, which are:

1. **Protecting those at risk of the highest harm from the worst impacts of financial hardship** including:
 - Scams and doorstep crime – educating consumers on how to protect themselves from scams using local and national networks, preventing doorstep crime, and taking action against fraudsters and scammers
 - Housing and rents – with so many people living in insecure or unsuitable homes Trading Standards plays a critical role to ensure consumers are getting a fair deal and ensuring tenants' rights are protected by working with estate agents, letting agents and landlords and taking action against rogue agents and landlords where necessary
 - Unfair terms – working with consumer protection partners and business to keep contracts fair and ensure consumer rights are upheld
 - Pricing and metrology – ensuring consumers have access to clear and accurate pricing information, get what they pay for and can make proper value for money choices, especially on essentials like food and fuel
 - Educating consumers who may be seeking cheaper products due to financial hardship and turn to troublesome websites or marketplaces where they may be scammed or sold dangerous goods.
2. **Identifying and removing dangerous or harmful products from the market:**
 - Intercepting and removing from the market dangerous or defective goods, including counterfeits e.g. PPE, Covid "cures" and claims, dangerous electronics and consumer goods, illicit alcohol, and tobacco
 - Ensuring food standards and quality to avoid illness and even death caused by undeclared allergens or misdescribed and poor-quality food
 - Preventing crises like BSE by assuring the integrity of the food chain from animal feed to final product
 - Taking enforcement action against those who do not comply with the law, including formal action for the most serious or persistent breaches.
3. **Supporting businesses to diversify and adapt to new circumstances:**
 - Working with businesses to help them diversify with new business models such as the shift to online transactions
 - Helping businesses to get different products and services on the market
 - Ensuring a level playing field by ensuring all businesses comply with trading standards laws.
4. **Helping businesses and consumers to successfully navigate the consequences of the UK's departure from the EU:**
 - Providing advice to business on new legislation and requirements especially in relation to the import and export of goods
 - Ensuring compliance with, and enforcement of new rules e.g. ensuring products are properly marked

- Working with partners to ensure consumers have the right information about their rights and obligations.

(b) the National Trading Standards (NTS) Interim Strategic Assessment 2021 priorities and (c) the East of England Trading Standards Authorities (EETSA) Strategic Assessment 2021 priorities, which are:

Doorstep crime and cold calling	NTS	EETSA
Mass marketing scams	NTS	EETSA
Product Safety		EETSA
Animal Health		EETSA
Food		EETSA
Lettings	NTS	
Fair trading: Energy-related fraud	NTS	EETSA
Intellectual property	NTS	EETSA
Fair Trading – used cars	NTS	EETSA
Fair Trading – other areas including home improvements, puppy trading, consumer redress impacted by the coronavirus pandemic, and copycat websites	NTS	
Tobacco Control	NTS	EETSA
Age restricted sales of knives and tobacco/e-cigarettes (EETSA)		EETSA
Estate agency	NTS	
Animal feed	NTS	
Intelligence		EETSA

This Service plan is supplemented by our 2022-23 control strategy and with the following functional specific plans which describe how we will address statutory responsibilities relating to underage sales; food and animal feed safety and standards; and farmed animal welfare and disease control:

- Annex I: Enforcement of Age Restricted Sales and Illicit Tobacco Products Plan 2022-23
- Annex II: Food & Feed Law Enforcement Plan 2022-23
- Annex III: Delivery of Animal Health & Welfare Framework 2022-23.

Please see the Trading Standards Service's plan on a page below.

Service: Trading Standards

Plan on a Page 2022/23

What we will do

Ambition: A safe, fair, and legal marketplace for Norfolk, that supports and benefits local businesses and communities

Priorities:

A vibrant and sustainable economy
Better opportunities for children and young people
Healthy, fulfilling and independent lives
Strong, engaged and inclusive communities
A greener, more resilient future

Focus for 2022/23:

- Investment in our workforce to develop a resilient service
- Environmental protection
- Online market surveillance, in line with coronavirus pandemic recovery practices
- Development of our commercial services

How we will do it

Support the economy and economic recovery, by providing businesses with access to information and compliance advice, including through chargeable, bespoke services
Support the economy and economic recovery, through our traded service, by delivering calibration, verification, testing and hire to the public and private sectors
Safeguard vulnerable people and build community resilience with partners; by tackling scams, fraud and rogue traders; including through our Norfolk Against Scams Partnership (NASP), No Cold Calling Zones and Trusted Trader scheme

Protect consumers and support legitimate businesses by tackling non-compliance, focusing on the most detrimental trading

Through programmes of intelligence-led market surveillance, education and enforcement activities:

- Protect the environment
- Safeguard communities and public health by addressing coronavirus pandemic-recovery social and business restrictions, and tackling the supply of age restricted products to young people
- Ensure the safety, standards and quality of the food chain, including food, animal feeds and agricultural fertilisers
- Safeguard the standards of animal health and welfare and reduce the risk of animal disease outbreaks and associated risks to the Norfolk economy and public health
- Ensure fair trading of products and services, and the safety and legal measurement of products
- Ensure safety at sports grounds, working with partner agencies and other stakeholders via safety advisory groups

How we will know if we have made a difference

Businesses understand and comply with legal requirements when they trade. Sanctions are applied to those who flout the law

Communities and local businesses can protect themselves and others from and do not lose money to scams, fraud and rogue traders

Illegal and/or unsafe products are prevented from entering/removed from the marketplace

Our workforce capacity and commercial income ensure we have a resilient service

Our commitments: We commit to being:

Forward Looking

Innovative

Empowering

Collaborative

Evidence Driven

Prudent

Developmental



Norfolk County Council

Community & Environmental Services

Trading Standards Service

Enforcement of Age Restricted Sales
and Illicit Tobacco Products



A review of our activities in 2021-22 and a strategy for 2022-23 to deter the sale of age restricted products to young people and the sale of illicit tobacco products in Norfolk, with the intention of improving community safety and public health.



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

Context

The Children and Young Persons' (Protection from Tobacco) Act 1991 requires a Local Authority to review its enforcement activity relating to the supply of cigarettes and tobacco to persons under the age of 18 on an annual basis. There are similar duties arising from Section 54A of the Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003. The Trading Standards Service has a responsibility to enforce the compulsory health warning requirements on tobacco products and the age restrictions and composition legal requirements applicable to e-cigarette liquids which contain nicotine.

This Plan fulfils these review obligations, as part of the overall work of Trading Standards to improve community safety and public health.

The supply of illicit tobacco products continues to be a problem in Norfolk. There is evidence of supply spreading to smaller market towns in addition to the larger urban areas of Norwich, King's Lynn, and Great Yarmouth. These products fail to carry the health warnings of legitimate tobacco products and are often counterfeits of established brands. Their unknown composition and unregulated production present an additional health hazard to smoking, already the major cause of death in the UK. Illegal cigarettes do not have the self-extinguishing qualities of legal cigarettes and pose a greater fire risk. The Service receives intelligence that sales of illicit cigarettes are being made to young people. The relative cheapness of these products makes them attractive to buyers; including those under 18 years old, and undermines smokers' attempts to quit. This plan integrates the Trading Standards Service actions to tackle these illicit products along with the obligations outlined above.

Background

Trading Standards community safeguarding activities are intelligence-led and focus on both national and local priorities. Improving community safety and public health by tackling illicit and age restricted products is a key priority for the service.

Trading Standards recognises that effective enforcement of legislation to prevent the sale of age restricted goods requires a multi-agency approach and seeks to work in partnership with a range of agencies and stakeholders to ensure accurate identification of priority and high-risk areas, share best practice and engage in collaborative work, such as joint operations and licence reviews.

Trading Standards aligns its service delivery, wherever possible, to support the priorities of other council services. In order to align its community safeguarding activities with Public Health priorities, the Service will focus activities on:

- Preventing the sale of alcohol to young people
- Taking action through alcohol licensing requirements
- Preventing the sale of cigarettes, e-cigarette liquids and tobacco to young people
- Disrupting the supply of illicit tobacco products
- Working with the Norfolk Tobacco Alliance, and
- Working with Community Alcohol Partnerships (CAPs)

Service delivery will take place across the whole of the county; based on the intelligence derived from information received about the sale of age restricted products and illicit tobacco products.

Review of 2021-22

The impact of Covid-19 continued to restrict the actions that could be taken.

The amount of intelligence received regarding premises selling age restricted products to underage persons increased significantly from 2020-2021 levels. This includes complaints made to the police and district council licensing departments in the county.

1. Alcohol

In the first three quarters of the 2021-22 service year, intelligence was received about 15 premises selling alcohol to underage persons. All premises were advised by remote means on their responsibilities in relation to underage sales.

With 2 of these premises, further intelligence was received about continuing underage sales. Since we could relax the covid-19 restrictions imposed on test purchase operations, two test purchases have been carried out. In one case no sale took place and in the other a sale was made, and this matter is ongoing.

The Community Alcohol Partnership (CAP) in Gorleston & Bradwell, set up in October 2019, has been combined with the long-standing Great Yarmouth CAP. Partner activities have recently resumed. Trading Standards continues to attend and contribute to partnership meetings.

In addition, a new CAP has been set up in King's Lynn and West Norfolk. It is at an early stage but collaborative working with partners is progressing.

The Trading Standards Service is a Responsible Authority in licensing matters. Trading Standards continues to work closely with the other Responsible Authorities, in particular, Norfolk Constabulary Licensing Team, in order to ensure the licensing objectives are upheld in Norfolk. Where a business is found to be selling alcohol to underage persons, Trading Standards, in conjunction with Norfolk Constabulary, will apply for a review of the premises licence. So far in the 2021-22 service year we, along with the Norfolk Constabulary Licensing Team, have supported one review which was made by local residents near a public house in Gorleston. The concerns raised related mainly to anti-social behaviour but included an underage sales element.

2. Tobacco

In the first three quarters of the 2021-2022 service year, we received intelligence about 5 premises selling cigarettes to persons aged under 18. The premises were given advice by remote means.

The Government's Tobacco Control Strategy is key to the Trading Standards Service's response in enforcing legislation in relation to both the supply of illicit tobacco products and underage sales, as well as ensuring that legal tobacco products are stored and labelled as required by law.

In the latter part of this year, Trading Standards has been able to restart intelligence-led visits to shops and this will continue.

In October 2021, working with Norfolk Constabulary in Kings Lynn, one shop was

visited and over 21,000 illegal cigarettes and over 4 kg of illegal hand rolling tobacco was seized. This was stored in a void behind what was in effect a fake electrical fuse box locked using an electro-magnet. Investigations into this matter are ongoing.

One prosecution of two individuals, previously alleged to have sold illegal tobacco, is on hold, due to the individuals involved being untraceable, but some recent information received may assist in progressing.

One person was prosecuted in June 2021 for the possession of illegal tobacco in Dereham. He was sentenced to 4 months' imprisonment, suspended for 12 months and ordered to pay costs of £1,000.

Trading Standards, in conjunction with Norfolk Constabulary's Licensing Team, has continued to apply to revoke existing Premises Licences and prevent unsuitable applicants from obtaining them. This service year we jointly objected to an application in Thetford where the applicant and premises had links to a person from whom Norfolk Constabulary had seized over a million cigarettes. The licence was not granted.

In King's Lynn, jointly working with Norfolk Constabulary, we continue to deal with a number of shops which have persistently sold illegal tobacco products. In the past, some shop landlords have not been co-operative in dealing with tenants who are engaging in the sale of illegal tobacco. However, we have revisited our approach of working with landlords, following successful outcomes in Lincolnshire where the Proceeds of Crime Act 2002 has been utilised.

Our joint work has led to a change of use of two shops in King's Lynn, with a third closed down for several months. It has recently reopened, and we are making enquiries with regard to changes of landlord and tenant.

3. Nicotine inhalation products (electronic cigarettes or NIPs)

The fluids used in nicotine inhalation products (NIPs) are subject to the same age restrictions as cigarettes and tobacco. Underage sales of nicotine inhalation products are becoming an increasing problem, with intelligence received in this service year to date about 8 premises compared to no intelligence reports in 2020-21. Advice has been given to all premises by remote means and by face-to-face visits.

In addition, a further 43 inspections have been carried out to check the labelling, strength, and quantity of NIP fluids at vape shops. Non-compliant products, which were over-strength, over-sized and/or incorrectly labelled, were found at 55% of the premises visited. Advice on the legal requirements, including the underage sales element, has been provided to retailers and the non-compliant items have been voluntarily removed from sale or seized.

4. Knives

Trading Standards received no complaints about premises in Norfolk selling knives to persons under 18 in the first three quarters of 2021-2022. We worked with Norfolk Constabulary as part of the national campaign, Operation Sceptre, in November 2021, conducting joint visits to ensure retailers are fully aware of their legal responsibilities on preventing sales to underage youngsters.

5. Fireworks

Norfolk Constabulary takes the lead on sales of fireworks to under-18s, and we will support. No intelligence has been received about underage sales of fireworks so far this service year.

6. Other Products

Intelligence regarding the underage sales of other products is rare. One item of intelligence was received about the sale of lighter fluid and advice was given to the premises in question.

Looking ahead to 2022-2023

Our planning assumption for the forthcoming service year is that the coronavirus pandemic will not impact our enforcement activities, but plans will be revised if necessitated by further restrictions.

Enforcement Activities (including test purchasing programmes)

Trading Standards will continue to focus its resources on alcohol, tobacco, and nicotine inhalation products (NIPs). We will also respond to intelligence relating to other products, where there is an identified need.

A staged approach is adopted with due regard to the Community and Environmental Services (CES) Compliance and Enforcement Policy. In respect of age restricted sales this includes:

- The provision and publicity of advice and support materials
- The delivery of advice and help to new retailers of age restricted products
- The investigation of complaints together with the delivery of advice and assistance to prevent the recurrence of underage sales
- Targeted test purchasing utilising young people and where appropriate, underage volunteers
- Recommendation to adopt a "Challenge 25" type policy
- Working with and supporting national or regional initiatives
- Multiagency/community group/industry partnership working including Community Alcohol Partnerships (CAPs), and
- Encouraging reporting of sales of illicit tobacco and sales of age restricted products to underage people and improving the flow of intelligence in this regard.

Enforcement Approach

Following the provision of advice and support, the service will test the business' underage sales policies. Where information continues to indicate that underage sales are taking place, test purchasing by underage volunteers will be undertaken with support from Norfolk Police.

We will also continue to provide officers and utilise Trading Standards young volunteers to support Norfolk Police, in relation to their lead role for underage sales at 'on licence' premises.

The recruitment, selection and utilisation of young persons for test purchasing will be in accordance with the protocols, systematic procedures and risk assessments adopted and developed in line with the Home Office and other guidelines. These protocols and procedures are maintained in the Service's Policies and Guidance system and are thus subject to

rigorous internal audit. All officers involved in the test purchase programme have been subject to police vetting procedures.

Where Trading Standards carry out test purchasing utilising underage volunteers, this is carried out in accordance with the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 (RIPA). Generally, test purchasing using underage volunteers is only used where other methods of preventing a business from selling age restricted products to underage persons have failed.

Enforcement activity will also be carried out at premises where intelligence is received regarding the sale of illicit tobacco products. This activity will include visits with specialist tobacco detection dogs to find concealed illicit tobacco. Formal action will be taken against businesses where it is found, as appropriate.

The service, working with our police partners, will take a robust stand in response to anyone found to be purchasing alcohol or tobacco products on behalf of a young person.

We will, in conjunction with Norfolk County Council Public Health and with other agencies, as appropriate, promote ways of reporting sales of illicit tobacco and sales of age restricted products to young persons.

Tobacco

During 2022-2023 it will remain a priority to gather and then act upon any intelligence received, including that received from our partners. Trading Standards is an active member of the Norfolk Tobacco Alliance and will be striving to help achieve CLeaR (Challenge, Leadership and Results) status in tobacco control for Local Government for Norfolk County Council.

In line with our Compliance and Enforcement Policy we will continue to provide an effective response to secure compliance of and/or disrupt Norfolk businesses engaged in supplying illicit tobacco products, including:

- Seizure and destruction of illicit tobacco products
- Seizure of criminal assets (including vehicles & cash)
- Institution of proceedings with a view to prosecution and the issue of simple cautions
- The destruction of illicit tobacco products
- Preventing the issue of and securing the revocation of Premises Licences
- Carrying out safety testing, where appropriate, on illicit cigarettes, and
- Working with the landlords of properties used for the supply or storage of illicit tobacco with a view to securing the eviction of tenants who continue to break the law. Where appropriate legal proceedings will be instituted where landlords fail to co-operate.

Trading Standards, with partners, will carry out the highlighted activities at retail level. In parts of Norfolk, currently Great Yarmouth and Kings Lynn, criminal organisations are thought to control the illicit tobacco supply. It will be necessary to work with enforcement partners to effectively tackle these groups.

Operation CeCe is a joint Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs (HMRC) and National Trading Standards (NTS) operation. Funding is provided by HMRC to NTS to carry out visits at a retail level to disrupt the supply of illegal tobacco. Each regional Trading Standards

association in England and Wales has made a case as to how the funding should be used. In our region, the East of England Trading Standards Authorities (EETSA) have directed regional funding to those local authority areas where disruption activity at retail level is deemed most suitable.

In Norfolk, we are supporting a sub-operation of Operation CeCe, targeting three retail premises in the county. Recent inspections have resulted in a total of 5,100 illegal cigarettes and 7.70kg of illegal hand-rolling tobacco being seized from two of the three businesses.

Knives

Norfolk Constabulary take the enforcement lead. Trading Standards will assist Norfolk Constabulary with Operation Sceptre, the national initiative to reduce knife crime; by carrying out joint advice visits to knife retailers.

In addition, during the year the enactment of the Offensive Weapons Act 2019 will give Trading Standards a strengthened enforcement role with regard to online sales of bladed items and the prohibition of their delivery to persons under 18 years of age. The service is currently seeking new enforcement burdens funding to enable us to fulfil this role.

Cosmetic Fillers (including Botox)

The Botulinum Toxin and Cosmetic Fillers (Children) Act 2021 came into effect on 1 October 2021, prohibiting specific cosmetic treatments on children and the offer of such treatments. Trading Standards and the police are responsible for enforcing the new duty with businesses and practitioners operating in their locality. Using existing powers available to us under the Consumer Rights Act 2015, we are able to inspect, enforce compliance, undertake test purchases, and bring forward prosecutions.

The service has secured new enforcement burdens funding to enable us to fulfil this role and we will adopt the same staged approach as detailed above.

Corrosive Products

The Offensive Weapons Act 2019 creates new offences of supplying a corrosive product to a person under 18 years of age whether in person or by remote means and of delivering a corrosive product to an underage youngster.

The service is currently seeking new enforcement burdens funding to enable us to fulfil our enforcement role and we will adopt the same staged approach as detailed above.

Alcohol & anti-social behaviour

The link between anti-social behaviour and the consumption of alcohol and substance abuse is established. The strategy of preventing the upstream supply of a number of restricted products to underage persons and thus reducing the level of anti-social behaviour associated with the use of these products will continue to be supported.

This plan will contribute to community objectives and those arising from Government strategy for community safety and public health. Alcohol and associated anti-social behaviour will continue to be a particular focus. We will continue to support both the Community Alcohol Partnerships (CAPs) in Norfolk.

Proof of Age Schemes

The Trading Standards Service does not promote any specific proof of age scheme but supports those schemes that conform to the PASS Scheme criteria. Many retailers have adopted the “Challenge 25” policies in relation to all age restricted products.

Trading Standards will continue to encourage all businesses involved in the sale of any age restricted products to adopt a policy which achieves the aims of “Challenge 25”.

Our ‘Minor Sales Major Consequences’ pack includes a section on adopting a “Challenge 25” type policy. The Trading Standards Service will also encourage and promote the use of a ‘Refusals Log’ by traders to provide evidence that proof of age is being sought and sales refused in appropriate circumstances.



Norfolk County Council

Community & Environmental Services

Trading Standards Service

Food & Feed Law Enforcement Plan
2022-23



**Produced in accordance with the requirements of the
Food Standards Agency Framework Agreement**



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Food and Feed Sampling Policy

The Food Standards Agency (FSA) Framework Agreement and Section 2.6 of the Food Law Practice Guidance (England) document require Food & Feed Law Enforcement Plans to be laid out in a common format but recognises that, as local authorities may have corporate service plan templates, they may use the corporate format as long as the information requirements laid out in the Agreement guidance are included and are separately identifiable. Therefore, wherever possible this Annex makes reference to the applicable sections of the Trading Standards Service Plan 2022-23 rather than replicating the information it contains.

Section One: Trading Standards Service Aims and Objectives

1.1 Aims and Objectives

The Trading Standards service's ambition is for a safe, fair, and legal marketplace for Norfolk, that supports and benefits local businesses and communities. In alignment with Better Together, For Norfolk - Norfolk County Council's strategy for 2021-2025, our five priorities are:

- A vibrant and sustainable economy
- Better opportunities for children and young people
- Healthy, fulfilling and independent lives
- Strong, engaged and inclusive communities
- A greener, more resilient future

1.2 Links to Corporate Strategic Ambitions

Our ambition and priorities accord with the County Council's 2021-2025 Strategic Plan for the County, Better Together, for Norfolk, and its vision, priorities, guiding principles and commitments:

Vision

In Norfolk, we cherish our heritage, we embrace opportunity, and offer an extraordinary place in which to spend a lifetime.

- We want Norfolk to be the place where everyone can start life well, and age well, and where no one is left behind
- We want our economy to be vibrant, entrepreneurial and sustainable, supported by the right jobs, skills training and infrastructure
- We want our communities to feel safe, healthy, empowered and connected, their individual distinctiveness respected and preserved

Priorities

- A vibrant and sustainable economy
- Better opportunities for children and young people
- Healthy, fulfilling and independent lives
- Strong, engaged and inclusive communities
- A greener, more resilient future

Guiding Principles

- No one left behind
- Prevention over cure
- A local approach

Commitments

- Forward looking
- Innovative
- Empowering
- Collaborative
- Evidence driven
- Prudent
- Developmental

- 1.3 How Trading Standards helps to deliver the County Council's vision and strategy is captured in our plan on a page on page 12 of the Trading Standards Service Plan 2022–23.

Section Two: Background

2.1 Profile of the Local Authority

The population of Norfolk in 2020 was estimated to be 914,039¹. The age profile of Norfolk's population is much older than England as a whole with 24.7% of people being aged 65 and over, compared to 18.5% for England.

Norfolk is the fifth largest of the 25 two tier (or shire) counties in England, with a geographical area of 549,751 hectares. The population density is one of the lowest for any of these counties, giving Norfolk a predominantly rural character.

There are 33,145² active enterprises in Norfolk. Norfolk has a large rural economy with 74.9% of Norfolk's SMEs being in rural areas³.

Agriculture remains a large employment sector with 9%² of enterprises in this sector. The total farm labour force is large with nearly 12,500³ people employed on commercial holdings. In comparison with other local authority areas the county has one of the largest livestock populations of commercial poultry (15,515,558³) and pigs (539,174³).

The health and life sciences sector is also an important part of the economy in Norfolk. The Greater Norwich area in particular is home to a cluster of internationally renowned research organisations, such as the Quadram Institute. These organisations employ some 3,000 scientists, which is the largest concentration of health, food, plant and bio scientists in Europe. The Greater Norwich area has also been awarded Food Enterprise Zone Status.

2.2 Organisational Structure

The structure of the Trading Standards service is set out on page 3 of the Trading Standards Service Plan 2022-23.

The Trading Standards service currently reports, via the Director of Community, Information & Learning, Ceri Sumner, to the Executive Director of Community and Environmental Services.

The Executive Director of Community and Environmental Services, Tom McCabe, reports to the Council's Cabinet. The cabinet member for Communities and Partnerships is Councillor Mrs Margaret Dewsbury, margaret.dewsbury@norfolk.gov.uk.

¹ 2020 Office of National Statistics figure (estimated)

² 2021 Office of National Statistics figure from the Inter-Departmental Business Register

³ Norfolk Rural Economic Strategy 2021-2024

⁴ Defra Farming Statistics 2016

The Council has 84 elected Members. The current political make-up of the Council is: 57 Conservative council seats, 12 Labour, 9 Liberal Democrat, 3 Green, 2 Independent, 1 Independent (non-aligned).

Feed and food law enforcement is the responsibility of the Food and Farming Section of the Trading Standards service. The section's functions are:

- Providing support for Norfolk based businesses in the food and farming sectors, to further economic growth:
 - delivering targeted business information to achieve compliance, promoting self-help
 - providing business advice and support on request, including chargeable advice
 - acting as 'primary authority' for food and farming sector businesses.
- Ensuring the standards of animal health and welfare; the quality, safety and hygiene of the food chain and metrology standards through delivery of intelligence-led compliance programmes, including sampling, inspections, verifications and market surveillance enforcement activities in the following areas:
 - Animal health and welfare, including disease control and licensing
 - Primary food production including fertilizers, animal feeding stuffs and food hygiene
 - Food standards
 - Legal metrology.
- Intelligence-led criminal and civil interventions and investigations, tackling issues emerging from the tasking and coordination process and focusing on the most detrimental offending within the food and farming sectors.

2.2.1 The manager responsible for the delivery of official feed and food controls is:

Jon Peddle
Food and Farming Manager
Email: jon.peddle@norfolk.gov.uk
Tel: (01603) 224380

The Lead Feed Officer is Colin Maxwell and the Lead Food Officer is Paula Crowson, both of whom are based in the Food and Farming Team. The Food Law Code of Practice lays down the responsibilities and competencies of the Lead Food and Feed role (which may be more than one person) which are shared in the Service between Jon Peddle, Colin Maxwell (feed) and Paula Crowson (food).

2.2.2 The Authority has contracted with Public Analyst Scientific Services Ltd (PASS) to provide the public analyst and agriculture analyst functions for the county.

2.3 Scope of the Animal Feed and Food Service

The Trading Standards service delivers a range of animal feed and food enforcement services. Specific functions are detailed below:

- Programmed inspections at animal feed and high-risk food premises
- Targeted enforcement activities
- Inspections and other enforcement activities arising from complaints and referrals
- Sampling of food and animal feed for analysis and/or examination as part of national, regional and local programmes
- Primary Authority responsibilities
- Responding to food and feed safety incidents
- Provision of information, advice and support for businesses
- Publicity including public awareness campaigns
- Working in partnership with other agencies involved in the protection of the food chain including the Food Standards Agency (FSA); the Department of the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra); the Department of Health (DH); Public Health (PH); the other ten local Trading Standards authorities who together make up the East of England Trading Standards Authorities (EETSA) and the seven District Council Environmental Health Departments in Norfolk.

The animal feed and food law enforcement service is delivered exclusively by officers employed by the County Council, alongside other similar services, for example, the inspection of weighing and measuring equipment.

2.4 Demands on the Animal Feed and Food Service

Using the appropriate risk scoring profile food businesses are scored on a high, medium or low risk basis. There are 58 high-risk, 7,252 medium-risk and 4,875 low-risk food businesses recorded on the Trading Standards service's database, totalling 12,185 food businesses. There has been an overall increase in the number of recorded food business premises from the previous year. This may be attributable to food business start-ups during covid-19 lockdowns and the increased efficiency of the transfer of food registration information, received via the national online portal.

There are 6,040 agriculture businesses recorded on the Trading Standards service's database. The appropriate risk scoring profile for feed businesses scores them on a frequency of inspection basis from 1 to 5 years with a score of 1 being the highest risk and 5 being the lowest. The inspection programme, based on risk, is agreed with the FSA as part of the national grant funded audit and inspection programme.

A number of businesses are designated both food and feed businesses. The Trading Standards service conducts food standards, feed standards, feed hygiene and food hygiene at primary production inspections or a combination of these interventions at these businesses.

There are 541 food manufacturers in Norfolk, 4% of the sector, ranging from major multinational companies to cottage industries. The majority of food businesses are caterers (7,279 = 60%) such as public houses, restaurants and hotels, or retailers (3,148 = 26%) including general stores and bakers.

The county has 46 animal feed, including pet food, manufacturers as well as a very large number of on-farm mixers.

A large percentage of the companies with which the Trading Standards service has a Primary Authority relationship are within the food and agriculture sectors.

In writing this annual plan it is standard practice to anticipate demands on the service, across various aspects of food and feed delivery, by examining the demands and resources required in the previous service year. However, the continued impact and disruption caused by Covid-19 upon both businesses and the service in its usual delivery of activities means that such comparisons may be unreliable. Where more appropriate to do so, this plan uses figures from the 2019/20 year to forecast demand.

It should also be noted that this plan has been written on the premise that the impact of Covid-19 on any activities proposed for the 2022/23 year will be minimal as we adjust to living with Covid-19. However, if Covid-19 continues to impact upon planned activities to the extent and manner in which they can be delivered, the service will prioritise and adapt its delivery in line with prevailing guidance, as it has done since the beginning of the pandemic.

The Trading Standards Service has office locations at County Hall, Norwich and Priory House, Kings Lynn. These locations are open to the public 9.00 – 17:00 Monday to Friday.

2.5 Enforcement Policy

The Community and Environmental Services (CES) directorate is responsible for a range of regulatory functions, including Trading Standards, Planning enforcement (mineral and waste sites), Flood and Water (land drainage), Norfolk Fire and Rescue (fire safety), Highways (networks, maintenance and blue badge enforcement) and Safety of Sports Grounds, and the CES Compliance & Enforcement Policy has been implemented, having regard to the established legal framework for decision-making, the Code for Crown Prosecutors (CPS) and the “Regulators’ Code” published by the Office of Product Safety and Standards (OPSS).

Section Three: Service Delivery

3.1 Animal Feed and Food Premises Inspections (Interventions)

The Trading Standards service reviews its policy in relation to inspections (interventions) at business premises on an annual basis in accordance with the principles of better regulation, the Food Law Code of Practice (England) and the Feed Law Code of Practice (England). In relation to farm premises the service also

considers the Animal Health and Welfare Framework Agreement and the Farm Regulators' Charter.

- 3.1.1 In relation to feed businesses, this service leads the regional approach to feed enforcement with its East of England Trading Standards Authority (EETSA) partners and liaises with National Trading Standards (NTS) and the Food Standards Agency (FSA). At the time of compiling this plan the number of feed visits required by the NTS/FSA programme for the forthcoming year, based on a full risk-based inspection programme, is not confirmed but is expected to be similar to that required for the 2021/22 service year, with an estimate of 70 inspections at Norfolk based premises, out of a total of 230 inspections required across the EETSA region. This programme is entirely financed by grant funding provided by the FSA and administered by NTS. This proposed programme now takes full account of earned recognition for businesses that are members of an assurance scheme and covers equally the full range of feed businesses. Livestock and arable farms are the main types of premises to be visited; reflecting the importance of having feed controls in place at primary production.

The NTS/FSA programme of interventions and activity is produced using agreed risk models and desktop modelling of our premises database. The programme is agreed by the FSA prior to commencement and funding. As such it is accepted that this programme satisfies the requirements for interventions laid down in the Feed Law Code of Practice (England).

- 3.1.2 In relation to food businesses, the service will inspect all food businesses in Norfolk that are deemed to be high-risk by virtue of the previous trading history or the appropriate risk scheme, on at least an annual basis. In addition, intelligence-led inspections or other interventions will be conducted at those business sectors presenting the highest risk to the food chain and consumers/other legitimate businesses. It will also be appropriate, on occasion, to respond with inspections or other interventions where intelligence is received via consumer/trader complaints or referrals from other enforcement agencies about the non-compliance with trading standards of individual businesses. In line with Hampton principles⁴ and the resources available the service will not therefore, as a matter of routine, carry out inspections at medium or low risk food businesses unless they are visited as a result of the aforementioned factors.

The above measures are intended to focus our available resources on the areas of greatest risk, using available intelligence, and as such the service will not be able to fulfil a food inspection programme in accordance with the requirements of the Food Law Code of Practice (England). This discrepancy is covered in greater detail under section 4: Resources.

Whilst the Food Law Code of Practice (England) requirements remain in place in relation to inspection programmes, the FSA has produced a "Covid-19 Local Authority Recovery Plan" that recognises the pressure that local authority resources

⁴ Reducing administrative burdens: effective inspection and enforcement: Philip Hampton – March 2005

have been under in responding to Covid-19. This plan acknowledges that, given the impact of Covid-19, local authorities may vary from the required schedule of programmed interventions during the recovery period outlined in that plan. The service is currently in compliance with the inspection programme requirements outlined in the Recovery Plan document.

3.1.3 The service has assessed the value of carrying out unannounced inspections as opposed to announced inspections. It applies the following policy on animal feed and food inspections and audits:

- (a) Where official controls take the form of an audit or there is a need to have the feed or food business operator present e.g. so that records can be examined, then such visits will be announced. In these cases, prior notification will be kept to a minimum.
- (b) In all other cases and in particular where previous visits or intelligence suggests that serious non-compliances have occurred, visits will be unannounced. All establishments will be subject to ad hoc visits which will be unannounced.

The service will keep this policy under review and, if the policy leads to a disproportionate negative impact on the use of resources of both the service and Feed and Food Business Operators, it will be revised.

The policy will also be kept under review in light of the enhanced requirements of the Official Control Regulations (EU) 2017/625 (as amended) and the requirement for competent authorities to perform regular and unannounced risk-based controls to identify fraudulent activities. The service believes that the above policy is still valid, as the requirements of the legislation are met by activities covered in part (b) of the policy.

3.1.4 The inspection programmes for food and animal feed are shown below:

Project Name	Project Description/Outcomes	Staffing/ Other Resources* 2021/22	Staffing/ Other Resources* 2022/23
Feed Hygiene & Standards Inspection Programme	To inspect 70 agriculture businesses, e.g. selected feed mills, importers, retailers and farms. To ensure compliance in relation to feed labelling/packaging, stock rotation/storage, feed hygiene, record keeping/traceability and sale or use of prohibited materials.	0.15 FTE	0.15 FTE
Inspection of High-Risk Food Businesses	To carry out inspections at 58 businesses identified as high risk for food.	0.90 FTE	0.80 FTE
*Excluding managerial, administrative and legal support but including revisits and follow up action			

Animal feed and food inspections are carried out by suitably qualified, competent and experienced Trading Standards Officers. Some targeted enforcement activities

are carried out by Trainee Trading Standards Officers, studying for qualifications under the Chartered Trading Standards Institute (CTSI)'s Professional Competency Framework (CPCF), adequately supervised by qualified staff.

Feed/Food Standards Inspections are carried out in accordance with the Feed Law Code of Practice (England) and the Food Law Code of Practice (England). Other intelligence-led inspections or other interventions will be conducted during the year. The majority of such inspections also involve targeted sampling and an outline of the sectors to be inspected, and the resources required, is included in 3.5 below. We will also continue to undertake focused allergens compliance project work, including the additional requirements for prepacked for direct sale products (Natasha's Law) which came into force in October 2021. The resources for this project work, which also includes inspections and sampling, is also included in 3.5 below.

3.2 Animal Feed and Food Complaints

Anticipated resource requirements for handling animal feed and food complaints are based on the complaint/contact numbers received in previous service years, the nature of those complaints/contacts and the level of enforcement response required. The number of food complaints/contacts is anticipated to be 230 (based on 2019/20) and the number of agriculture complaints/contacts is anticipated to be 20.

The staffing resources required are given below:

Project Name	Project Description/Outcomes	Staffing/ Other Resources* 2021/22	Staffing/ Other Resources* 2022/23
Complaints and Referrals	To undertake reactive enforcement in response to complaints from other enforcement agencies, businesses and the general public in relation to animal health, agriculture and food matters to ensure legal compliance. Analysis will be undertaken to identify further proactive work, identify trends and report on significant outcomes and impacts.	0.05 FTE (feed) 0.80 FTE (food)	0.05 FTE (feed) 0.80** FTE (food)
<p>*Excluding managerial, administrative and legal support</p> <p>** Forecast based on 2019/20.</p>			

In addition to reactive complaints/referrals work, information and advice is made available to consumers. This is achieved through signposting to the Citizens Advice 'Advice guide' website via our website www.norfolk.gov.uk/business/trading-standards and through our social media posts on twitter and Facebook.

3.3 Home Authority Principle and Primary Authority Scheme

Following a change to our Business Services Policy in 2017, this service no longer offers the full range of functions under the Home Authority Principle. In particular, the service no longer offers free bespoke advice to businesses. Bespoke advice

tailored to the individual needs of a business is now provided on a chargeable basis. The service supports Primary Authority Partnerships administered by the Office of Product Safety and Standards (OPSS).

The service will provide the following levels of service to Primary Authority businesses:

- Actively promote the benefits of the Primary Authority scheme to businesses within Norfolk and outside of Norfolk
- Designate Primary Authority Officer(s) to each partnered business, with the relevant competencies or access to the necessary expertise to be able to offer advice
- Respond to requests for advice and guidance
- Issue assured advice, where it is appropriate to do so
- Facilitate a response to enquiries raised by other authorities
- Maintain records of relevant incidents, business policies and diligence procedures, where known
- Maintain confidentiality in relevant circumstances
- Ensure businesses are aware of our procedure for dealing with complaints or disagreements
- Have in place arrangements to notify other authorities of indulgences relevant to “subsequently corrected” errors
- Participate in relevant sector groupings with enforcement partners where our Primary Authority Partners businesses operate in the applicable market sector
- Support national advice and conciliation procedures, where appropriate.

Primary Authority businesses will be inspected/visited or otherwise contacted:

- As part of the inspection programme for high-risk businesses, or
- As part of the planned series of targeted enforcement activities, or
- As a result of a complaint/referral received, or
- To maintain the Primary Authority Partnership relationship.

Currently, the service has Primary Authority Partnerships with two food businesses and one feed business. The resources required to handle complaints and service requests relating to these Primary Authority businesses are included in Sections 3.2 and 3.4.

3.4 Advice to Business

The Trading Standards service works with businesses to help them to comply with trading standards and to encourage the use of good practice. On receipt of business requests for advice we will respond in a number of ways including:

- directing the business to our website or that of a partner organisation, such as the Chartered Trading Standards Institute (CTSI)’s Business Companion and/or the New Anglia Growth Hub
- referring the business to another agency
- providing leaflets produced by partner organisations, our business briefings or standard letters

- providing comprehensive bespoke information or advice via the telephone, email or a letter, on a cost recovery basis and/or
- visiting the business to provide comprehensive advice, on a cost recovery basis.

In each case, our response will be proportionate to:

- the potential risk to consumers caused by a failure on behalf of the business to understand the information/advice provided,
- the experience of the business in question, and
- the impact upon the economic prosperity of the business or its competitors in not achieving compliance in the respective area(s) of the law.

In line with our Business Services Policy, if a business requires more detailed or interpretative advice on trading standards law then we will provide the advice on a cost recovery basis at a pro-rata hourly fee.

In dealing with any requests for advice we will prioritise requests for advice from new businesses, Primary Authority businesses and members of our Norfolk Trusted Trader Scheme.

The Service reviews all information and advice it provides to consumers and businesses on an annual basis. This is with a view to signposting customers to the most appropriate source of online information available to enable self-service and assisted service.

Animal feed and food service requests will be handled by virtue of the projects detailed overleaf and further projects developed during the 2022/23 service year. Anticipated resource requirements are based on the service request numbers received in previous service years, the nature of those service requests and the level of enforcement response required.

The number of food service requests is anticipated to be 100 (based on 2019/20). The number of agriculture service requests is anticipated to be 187.

As outlined in Section 3.3 above the service currently has Primary Authority Partnerships with one feed business and two food businesses. An estimate of billable hours of advice under Primary Authority Partnerships is included in these figures.

Project Name	Project Description/Outcomes	Staffing/ Other Resources* 2021/22	Staffing/ Other Resources* 2022/23
Business Advice	To provide enforcement and compliance information and advice in relation to agriculture (animal feed, feed hygiene, pet food, fertilisers) and food in response to requests from businesses. Analysis will be undertaken to identify further proactive work, identify trends and report on significant outcomes and impacts.	0.20 FTE (feed) 1.00 FTE (food)	0.15 FTE (feed)*** 1.00** FTE (food)***
<p>*Excluding managerial, administrative and legal support</p> <p>** Forecast based on 2019/20.</p> <p>*** Includes estimated hours of advice to be delivered under Primary Authority Partnerships</p>			

3.5 Animal Feed and Food Sampling

The Trading Standards service's Food and Feed Sampling Policy is annexed to this Plan.

The Trading Standards service targets its proactive sampling at locally produced animal feed and foods, those products/ingredients from companies that manufacture in, are based in, or import into Norfolk. In line with a letter from the FSA (ENF/E/08/061) the service is committed to ensuring that at least 10% of all food samples are of foods imported into the United Kingdom. In addition, animal feed/foods are targeted which are causing current concerns. These are identified through communication with the Food Standards Agency (FSA) and the Department of the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra); through local, regional and national intelligence held by local authorities; and through consultation with the Public Analyst. The service's sampling programmes therefore include projects run in conjunction with the Food Standards Agency (FSA) and the East of England Trading Standards Authorities group of local authorities (EETSA).

Listed overleaf are sampling surveys that will be carried out in 2022-23. This list will be added to as, for example, intelligence identifies other animal feed/food that should be targeted. At the time of writing this plan the service planning cycle for food and feed sampling has not been concluded and further surveys will be added as a result of this process.

Through the examination of available intelligence and data the service is already aware that compliance with allergen requirements, including the additional requirements for prepacked for direct sale products (Natasha's Law), will again be an area of high priority for 2022/23. The Service will continue to develop activities under its long-term comprehensive programme of allergen compliance work, including sampling, business and consumer engagement and enforcement, if need be.

All sampling by officers is, wherever possible, undertaken in accordance with relevant legislation and all formal animal feed and food samples are taken in accordance with the Feed Law Code of Practice (England) or the Food Law Code of Practice (England) as applicable.

Samples are analysed and/or examined by the service's nominated Public/Agriculture Analyst in accordance with the procedures laid down in the Food Safety (Sampling and Qualifications) Regulations 2013, the Food Law Code of Practice (England) and the Feed Law Code of Practice (England). Alternatively, some samples are examined/tested in house, if it is appropriate to do so. The Public/Agriculture Analysts appointed by the Authority are employed by Public Analyst Scientific Services Ltd (PASS).

Project Name	Project Description/Outcomes	Staffing/ Other Resources* 2021/22	Staffing/ Other Resources* 2022/23
Agricultural Sampling	To undertake animal feed and fertilizer sampling to ensure compliance in relation to composition, safety, hygiene and labelling.	0.80 FTE £4,000 Purchase and analysis costs	0.80 FTE £4,000 Purchase and analysis costs

Surveys under the sampling project will include:

- Feed materials which are the subject of a complaint to the service
- Imported feeds/ingredients that have been the subject of feed hazard notifications
- Lysine and methionine in pig and poultry feed

Project Name	Project Description/Outcomes	Staffing/ Other Resources* 2021/22	Staffing/ Other Resources* 2022/23
Allergens project	Allergen compliance work, including pre-packed for direct sale products; including sampling, business and consumer engagement and enforcement	0.25 FTE	0.45 FTE
Food Sampling Programme (excluding Allergens Project)	Targeting food sampling at areas identified as causing the most harm to consumers in terms of food safety, quality or nutritional standards	1.30 FTE £33,000 Purchase and analysis costs	1.20 FTE £33,000 Purchase and analysis costs

Surveys under the sampling projects will include:

- Undeclared allergens in non-prepacked foods
- Undeclared allergens in foods pre-packed for direct sale
- Sampling during the investigation of complaints
- Sampling during the investigation of food fraud including meat species in meat products or preparations
- Illicit alcohol
- Foods produced in Norfolk or imported by Norfolk based businesses
- Foods imported from outside the United Kingdom
- Foods identified by Food Standards Agency priorities

* Excluding managerial, administrative and legal support

- 3.6 Control and Investigation of Outbreaks and Food Related Infectious Disease
Food poisoning notifications do not usually fall within the remit of the Trading Standards Service. If, however, the service becomes aware of any incident of food poisoning or infectious disease, the facts will be reported to the appropriate authority.

- 3.7 Animal Feed/Food Safety Incidents
On receipt of any animal feed or food alert, the Trading Standards service will respond as directed and as appropriate and in accordance with the Feed Law Code of Practice (England) or the Food Law Code of Practice (England).

The Food Standards Agency (FSA) issues Food Alerts and Allergy Alerts to let local authorities and consumers know about problems associated with food. In some cases, a "Food Alert for Action" is issued which requires intervention action by enforcement authorities. 68 food alerts were issued by the FSA in 2021 (January to December). The FSA also issued 84 allergy alerts.

During 2021, as a result of sampling and enforcement activity, the service raised 6 food incidents with the FSA regarding undeclared allergens in prepacked foods as well as handling 8 complaints in-relation to undeclared allergens in non-prepacked foods which caused illness/injury.

Feed alerts are far less frequent than food alerts. During 2021 the service was involved in 25 feed incidents raised by the FSA, including salmonella in pet food and cat pancytopenia. This was predominantly as a result of the businesses notifying us of their sample failures, before then notifying the FSA themselves. The Service also raised one feed incident itself, as a result of non-compliances discovered by our own feed sampling activities.

It is estimated that, for the coming service year, 0.10 FTE will be required for feed/food safety incident work.

In cases where the service receives reports of chemical contamination of food and there is a subsequent threat to human health, it will liaise with the appropriate district council environmental health department, with a view to taking over responsibility for the case, or for undertaking a joint investigation, as the situation demands.

- 3.8 Liaison with Other Organisations
The Trading Standards service works with a wide range of organisations, to varying degrees of formality, in carrying out its animal feed and food law enforcement function. These include the Food Standards Agency (FSA), the Department of Health (DH), the Department of Environment, Farming and Rural Affairs (Defra), the Animal Medicines Inspectorate (AMI), National Trading Standards (NTS), the other ten local authority Trading Standards Services in the East of England (EETSA) and District Council Environmental Health Departments.

The service maintains a strong commitment to the regional work of EETSA and officers from Norfolk contribute to the EETSA Food Group and the EETSA Agriculture Group. Via quarterly meetings and regional Knowledge Hub groups, the service aims to ensure that local food and feed enforcement activity is consistent with neighbouring authorities. The service participates in the National Agriculture Panel, with that panel being chaired by an officer of this service. A recently retired officer of this service was also a long-time member and chair of the National Food Standards & Information Focus Group.

The service also ensures co-ordination with Norfolk's Environmental Health Departments through the Norfolk Food Liaison Group (NFLG), set up to co-ordinate activities in line with the requirements of the Food Law Code of Practice (England).

The service is fully committed to working with the Food Standards Agency on the development of the Achieving Business Compliance strategic redesign of food standards, to determine a future delivery model for official food controls.

The estimated staffing resource for liaison work during the year is 0.25 FTE.

3.9 Animal Feed and Food Safety and Standards Promotional Work, other non-official Controls and Interventions

Animal feed and food safety and standards promotional work for the year is linked to the results of our sampling and other enforcement projects, to any relevant prosecutions, and to information provided by our enforcement partners, primarily the Food Standards Agency (FSA). Promotional work consists of postings on our website www.norfolk.gov.uk/business/trading-standards; including scam alerts, postings via our twitter feeds and Facebook pages and regular press releases, locally, regionally and nationally. In addition, we occasionally develop our own promotional material to assist with consumer and/or business education work, the most recent example being material we developed for our allergens project (resources in relation to allergens promotional work have been accounted for in 3.5).

Information and intelligence gathering work is carried out by feed and food officers as part of their ongoing duties. Information and intelligence is also gathered and analysed by our intelligence lead and technical support staff in the Intelligence and Enforcement Support Section. Such work informs our control strategy, tasking and coordination function and our service planning cycle.

Resourcing details are provided in the table overleaf:

Project Name	Project Description/Outcomes	Staffing/ Other Resources* 2021/22	Staffing/ Other Resources* 2022/23
Promotional Work, Intelligence Gathering	Promotional work including results of market surveillance, enforcement projects, prosecutions and information dissemination. Promotion will include use of our website, social media pages and feeds, local, regional and national press releases and liaison with media organisations. Intelligence gathering work will include complaints and information monitoring, review of local, regional, national and international data to inform market surveillance and enforcement activity.	0.05 FTE (feed) 0.05 FTE (food)	0.05 FTE (feed)** 0.05 FTE (food)**
*Excluding managerial, administrative and legal support			
**Intelligence gathering work also undertaken by Intelligence and Enforcement Support Section.			

Section Four: Resources

4.1 Financial Allocation

The net budget for the Trading Standards service for 2022/23 is £1,715,520. A breakdown of the Trading Standards budget for feed and food enforcement is shown below:

Budget description	2021/22 Outturn (tbc)	2022/23 Estimate
Staffing	Total F&F: £717,980* Food & Feed: £272,832 (based on 5.95 FTE)	Total F&F: £701,920 Food & Feed: £280,768 (based on 5.85 FTE)
Sampling (food & agriculture purchase and analysis)	£37,000	£37,000**
Subsistence/travel	Total TS: £5,040 (profiled budget) Food & Feed: £676 (based on 5.95 FTE)	Total TS: £6,000 Food & Feed: £811 (based on 5.85 FTE)
* Includes posts resourced by EU Transition funding		
** At the time of writing this plan the Service is applying for grant funding for feed/hygiene audits and feed sampling to supplement the 2022/23 sampling budget. The results of any grant bid will affect surveys proposed in Section 3.5 above. Whilst the overall grant funding is likely to be slightly reduced in comparison to 2021/22 funding, changes to the timing and allocation of these resources means we are unable to confirm at this time.		

The relative amounts allocated to food and feed law enforcement are based on the staff allocation breakdown given in Section 4.2.

- 4.1.1 The Food Law Code of Practice requires the service to inspect its food businesses over a prescribed cycle. In addition to the inspection of all high-risk businesses and other interventions detailed in this plan, the expectation is that all medium risk businesses will be inspected every 2 years and that an inspection or alternative enforcement strategy be undertaken at low risk premises once every 5 year. As outlined in 3.1.2 above, the FSA has produced a “Covid-19 Local Authority Recovery Plan” that currently allows local authorities to diverge from the required schedule of programmed interventions, during the recovery period outlined in that plan.

The service has determined that, if it were to conduct the routine food inspection programme detailed above, the following resource would have to be redeployed from other enforcement activities, such as fair trading, animal health & welfare or product safety work:

Food Business Inspections:	• Medium risk	8.2 FTE
Food Business Alternative Enforcement Strategies	• Low risk	0.2 FTE

However, mindful of the recommendations of the Hampton⁴ and Macdonald⁵ Reviews which state the service should only carry out inspections of businesses where there is a clearly identified risk presented by that business, the service will, as in previous years, conduct intelligence-led inspections or other interventions within those business sectors or at those food business operators presenting the highest risk to the food chain and consumers/other legitimate businesses. A flexible approach to resourcing enables us to respond appropriately to incidents and our local approach to risk assessment and effective targeting of resources, rather than the execution of a routine inspection programme, will provide the necessary protection to the county’s food chain.

- 4.1.2 The service continues to invest in modern ICT systems. Access to the Internet, to the APP Civica database and to other information systems is seen as a vital resource for operational staff. The service currently uses the UK FSS iNet database for recording, managing and submitting food and feed sampling data. As a result of withdrawal of funding by the FSA the service is aware that UK FSS iNet, whilst still in operation, no longer benefits from external ICT support. At the time of writing this plan the service is awaiting further instruction from the FSA as to how the replacement system for data transfer will operate.

The service has signed up to the “Register a Food Business” national online portal operated by the FSA to enable it to receive real-time food business registration data.

⁴ Reducing administrative burdens: effective inspection and enforcement: Philip Hampton – March 2005

⁵Review of Regulation in Farming: MacDonald – May 2011

The service has procured the newest database product from Civica, the cloud based “Cx” platform. This platform is due to be introduced at the start of the 2022/23 service year and will initially run alongside, and then replace, our current “APP” Civica platform.

All food and feed law enforcement officers have been issued with laptops, smart mobile telephones and digital cameras. During the 2020/21 year officers also received a refresh of their laptops with operational food and feed officers being issued with hybrid laptops that incorporate detachable tablets. The issue of such devices, along with the mobile working functionality of the Cx platform, will, in time, allow officers to directly record and update database information whilst off site at business premises.

The service has issued all of its operational officers, including all food and feed officers, with purchasing cards. This has greatly enhanced our ability to undertake online market surveillance sampling activities.

The service does not have an individual budget for ICT as such matters have previously been transferred to corporate budgeting.

- 4.1.3 No fixed amount is set aside for legal costs with specific regard to food and feed law. However, a general legal cost subjective is allocated to the budget, the budgeted amount for 2022/23 being £20,000, which may be supplemented from contingency, if necessary.

4.2 Staffing Allocation

The current staffing allocation to food and feed enforcement has been calculated on the basis of the projects/activities described in Section 3 above as summarised and unless otherwise stated FTE figures quoted relate to competent staff:

Plan Section	Project/Activity	FTE 2021/22 Feed	FTE 2021/22 Food	FTE 2022/23 Feed	FTE 2022/23 Food
3.1	Feed Hygiene & Standards Inspection Programme	0.15		0.15	
3.1	Inspection of high-risk food businesses		0.90		0.80
3.2	Complaints and Referrals	0.05	0.80	0.05	0.80
3.4	Business advice	0.20	1.00	0.15	1.00
3.5	Agricultural sampling	0.80		0.80	
3.5	Food Sampling Including Allergens Project		1.55		1.65
3.7	Food/feed alerts		0.10		0.10
3.8	Liaison	0.15	0.15	0.15	0.10
3.9	Promotional Work, Intelligence Gathering (including non-qualified staff)	0.05	0.05	0.05	0.05
	Subtotal:	1.40	4.55	1.35	4.50
	Total:	5.95		5.85	

4.3 Staff Development Plan

The service focuses on the needs of both specialist feed and food law enforcement officers and other staff in terms of their training and continuous professional development (CPD).

The current training arrangements are reflected in the Learning and Development Framework and the Learning and Development Plan. Over recent years the number of qualified food and feed officers within the service has reduced, as officers have left the service. The service has invested in supporting trainees to study for the Trading Standards Practitioner Diploma (TSPD) in order to attain the qualifications necessary to be able to undertake food and feed standards work. At present the Service has two trainees

Skills and competency are assessed at annual staff personal development plan discussions, midyear reviews and 1-2-1 meetings and a programme of continuous professional development is implemented to ensure the maintenance of essential knowledge and skills.

The Food Law Code of Practice England (2021) lays down competency demonstration requirements for food officers (20 hours CPD per annum) The service ensures that sufficient time and resources are provided to allow food officers to attain the required 20 hours of CPD per annum.

The service has developed its competency assessment process in line with the requirements of the Competency Framework and the Food Law Code of Practice (2021).

Similarly, the Feed Code of Practice (England) (2018) requires that competent officers are able to evidence 10 hours CPD per annum. Again, the service ensures that sufficient time and resources are provided to allow feed officers to attain this CPD.

Section Five: Quality Assessment

5.1 Quality Assessment and Internal Monitoring

The following arrangements will be used to assess the quality of the Authority's service:

- All procedures and work instructions relating to feed and food law enforcement are subject to established in-house quality improvements and auditing procedures which apply to the whole of the Trading Standards service
- Evaluation surveys sent out to a sample of businesses following an inspection or request for advice
- Review of a random number of inspections, service requests and complaints by section/line managers
- Feedback at 1-2-1 meetings, midyear review and personal development plan discussions on individual performance
- Feedback at team meetings.

Section Six: Review

6.1 Review Against the Service Plan

The Service uses a performance measurement toolkit, “PMR”, to collate, report and review performance on a monthly basis.

At monthly intervals the Trading Standards Management Team undertakes a performance review. The meeting includes recognition of any variance from target, the reasons for variance and any appropriate measures to be put in place to address such variance.

The Trading Standards Management Team also reviews progress against our Control Strategy Priority Actions of:

- Through a programme of intelligence- led market surveillance, education and enforcement activities ensure the safety, standards and quality of the food chain, including food, animal feeds and agricultural fertilisers, and
- Support the economy, and economic recovery, by providing businesses with access to information and compliance advice, including through chargeable, bespoke services

at a monthly Tasking and Coordination meeting.

These priority actions include the provision of business advice, liaison with regulatory and business partners, intelligence-led market surveillance and enforcement activities, including risk-based inspection and sampling.

The allocation of suitable resources to tackle any emerging food or feed issues or trends can also be raised for consideration by the Trading Standards Management Team at the monthly Tasking and Coordination meeting.

Information on performance measures and targets is set out on pages 7, 8 and 9 of the Trading Standards Service Plan 2022-23.

6.2 Identification of any Variation from the Service Plan

As outlined in Section 6.1 above the Service, on an ongoing basis, monitors its performance using the above means and takes action to address variance from target throughout the year.

6.3 Areas of Improvement

The service is committed to addressing areas of improvement highlighted by the ongoing quality assessment and internal monitoring as outlined in Section 5.1 above and the monthly reporting as outlined in Section 6.1 above.

Food and Feed Sampling Policy

Background

Our five priorities are:

- A vibrant and sustainable economy
- Better opportunities for children and young people
- Healthy, fulfilling and independent lives
- Strong, engaged and inclusive communities
- A greener, more resilient future

Introduction

This policy outlines our general approach to the sampling of food and animal feed. This policy is produced in accordance with the service's obligations under the Framework Agreement on Official Food and Feed Controls and the respective Food and Feed Codes of Practice.

Policy

This service recognises that sampling and analysis is an essential part of food and feed standards enforcement, which enables authorised officers to assess compliance with food and feed standards, composition, safety and labelling requirements. This includes using sampling and analysis as part of proactive market surveillance and reactive responses to complaints.

The service is committed to maintaining a contract with a suitably qualified Public/Agriculture Analyst for the analysis of formal food and feed samples.

On an annual basis we will formulate and commit resources to a sampling programme for food and animal feed products. This programme will be developed taking into account factors including the nature of the food and feed businesses in the county, our intervention plan, Primary Authority functions, the Food Standards Agency (FSA) food and feed priorities and other available local, regional and national intelligence pointing to areas of most concern. We will also develop our sampling programme in consultation with the service's appointed Public/Agriculture Analyst.

This service is committed to participation in national and regional sampling surveys where proposed sampling/analysis fits in with the above-mentioned factors.

Although developed as an annual programme, this service will continue to monitor intelligence for emerging issues and will change or amend the sampling programme as necessary.

This service will target its proactive sampling at locally produced animal feed and foods, those products/ingredients from companies that manufacture in, are based in or import into Norfolk. In line with guidance issued by the FSA this service is also committed to ensuring at least 10% of all food samples are foods imported into the United Kingdom.

All formal food and feed sampling will be undertaken in accordance with the Food Law Code of Practice (England) or the Feed Law Code of Practice (England), as applicable. All formal samples are analysed and/or examined by the service's nominated Public/Agriculture Analyst in accordance with the applicable legislation. Officers who take formal samples are suitably qualified and competent to do so in accordance with the respective Food and Feed Codes of Practice.

Where it is the case that informal samples are taken by officers, wherever it is possible, these samples shall be taken in accordance with relevant legislation.

All food/feed samples and the result of examination/analysis will be recorded. Food and Feed Business Operators will be notified of both the samples taken and the results of analysis. Where sample results are considered to be unsatisfactory, the service will take appropriate action to ensure compliance is achieved. Any action will be carried out in accordance with the CES Compliance & Enforcement Policy.



Norfolk County Council

Community & Environmental Services

Trading Standards Service

Delivery of Animal Health & Welfare Framework
2022-23



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

Norfolk County Council Trading Standards Service: Delivery of Animal Health & Welfare Framework 2022-23

County councils, metropolitan boroughs and unitary authorities in England have a statutory duty to help local communities comply with laws to prevent the spread of animal disease and protect the welfare of animals. It is compliance with these laws that gives our farming industry the freedom to trade freely and thrive, ensuring that the food we eat is safe and as described, shaping our countryside and making a major contribution to local economies.

The agriculture sector is a major industry in Norfolk and is synonymous with the character of the county. 9%¹ of active enterprises in Norfolk are in the agriculture, forestry and fishing sector. The total farm labour force is large with nearly 12,500² people employed on commercial holdings. In comparison with other local authority areas, the county has one of the largest livestock populations of commercial poultry (15,515,558²) and pigs (539,174²) in the United Kingdom.

Central and local government partners have produced an updated [Animal Health and Welfare Framework](#)³ that offers local authorities a set of practical principles to help deliver duties under animal health and welfare legislation in a way that:

- Is responsive and accountable to local communities;
- Is focused on high risk activities to make best use of limited resources;
- Recognises why national consistency is important for businesses, the public and to protect against animal disease;
- Delivers controls in a way that supports European and international trade agreements;
- Promotes collaborative working.

The Framework is a partnership agreement that aims to increase mutual understanding and collaboration between the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra), the Animal and Plant Health Agency (APHA) and local authorities in relation to animal health and welfare work. It includes responsibilities for all partners to achieve this. The table on the following pages outlines the responsibilities for Norfolk County Council Trading Standards and how these are achieved.

1 2021 Office of National Statistics Inter- Departmental Business Register

2 Defra Farming Statistics 2016

3 Produced in partnership between [Defra](#), [the Animal Plant Health Agency \(APHA\)](#), the [Association of Chief Trading Standards Officers \(ACTSO\)](#) and the National Animal Health and Welfare Panel (NAHWP). It is supported by the [Local Government Association \(LGA\)](#).

Responsibilities of Local Authorities

No.	Action Required	Planned Service Delivery
1	Undertake annual service planning based on the principles in the Animal Health and Welfare Framework.	<p>This document, outlining the responsibilities of local authorities under the Animal Health and Welfare Framework, is included as an annex to the Trading Standards Service Plan.</p> <p>Safeguarding the standards of animal health and welfare and reducing the risk of animal disease outbreaks and associated risks to the Norfolk economy and public health is a defined priority action in the Service Plan and the Trading Standards service's control strategy.</p>
2	Develop a risk based, consistent and accessible process for responding to complaints relating to animal health matters on farms.	<p>The actions of the Service are informed by the Community & Environmental Services (CES) Compliance & Enforcement Policy. The policy includes reference to the Farm Regulators' Charter and the Regulators' Code.</p> <p>The service has adopted the Intelligence Operating Model (IOM) to direct its activities and prioritise its resources. Safeguarding the standards of animal health and welfare and reducing the risk of animal disease outbreaks and associated risks to the Norfolk economy and public health is a defined priority action of the service's control strategy and activities take account of local, regional and national priorities.</p> <p>The service operates a duty system where all matters that have the potential to require further action, including complaints relating to animal health matters on farms, are reviewed by a Lead Trading Standards Officer. If further action is required, the Lead Trading Standards Officer allocates matters to qualified/competent staff, providing handling instructions to ensure a consistent approach. Within the general process, the service has a number of guidance documents, which have been developed to aid the duty team to respond consistently to animal health and welfare complaints, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a flow diagram for allocating animal health matters • a step by step guide to dealing with illegally imported animals • a guide for dealing with alleged breaches of the requirements of avian influenza controls • a guide for dealing with multiple animal welfare issues/complaints relating to the same keeper • guidance on how to deal with abattoir and welfare in transport notifications

No.	Action Required	Planned Service Delivery
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a TB work instruction, and • instructions for dealing with missing ear tag referrals.
3	Provide transparency about how the local authority responds to animal welfare complaints, including collaborative arrangements with other partners and charities.	<p>As outlined in 2 above, the service's standard policy and protocols for handling referrals and complaints include our response to animal welfare complaints.</p> <p>The CES Compliance & Enforcement Policy and the Trading Standards Service Plan, including this framework annex are published.</p> <p>The service has an information exchange protocol with Norfolk Constabulary and has information sharing agreements with Citizens Advice and World Horse Welfare. In addition, the Service has memorandums of understanding with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the East of England Trading Standards Association (EETSA), to enable the use of a shared intelligence database • Suffolk Trading Standards, to share resources in the event of an animal disease outbreak or major animal welfare event • the Animal and Plant Health Agency (APHA) (facilitated for the service by the Association of Chief Trading Standards Officers (ACTSO)), outlining roles and responsibilities to deal with the safe disposal of anthrax carcasses. <p>Referral handling instructions, covering matters including animal welfare complaints, are maintained for Citizens Advice and Norfolk Police.</p> <p>Where appropriate, the Service will arrange joint visits with Veterinary Officers (VO) from the Animal and Plant Health Agency (APHA) to investigate welfare complaints.</p> <p>Where a complaint raises serious welfare concerns the service will seek to investigate the matter within 24 hours of receipt.</p> <p>Liaison is also maintained with other appropriate agencies to try and establish if the subject of the complaint is the subject of any other complaints/investigations, so a consensus on how to move forward can be agreed.</p>
4	Identify high risk businesses and activities on an annual basis.	<p>The service uses a business risk assessment scheme based on that promoted by the Food Standards Agency (FSA) and has adopted the National Trading Standards Intelligence Operating Model (IOM) to inform its activities and prioritise its resources. The service uses available intelligence sources to risk-assess businesses and identify high risk businesses and activities on an ongoing basis. This informs our priority activities outlined in our control strategy and informs tasking and coordination decisions.</p>

No.	Action Required	Planned Service Delivery
5	Produce an annual programme of interventions for all high-risk businesses and activities based on the risk presented by the activities carried out, intelligence, history of compliance and available resources.	<p>The service produces an annual programme of interventions for all identified high risk businesses. In producing the programme, the service considers factors including risk, compliance history, local, regional and national priorities and any other available intelligence. Progress against targets (for interventions carried out) is monitored monthly by the Trading Standards Management Team via reports provided by Lead Trading Standards Officers.</p>
6	Undertake an annual audit of each livestock market and collection centre in partnership with APHA to review documentation and procedures. Produce an annual programme of interventions based on the outcomes of the audit, which remains flexible to changing risk through the year.	<p>There is one livestock market and two poultry sales operating in Norfolk and the service regularly liaises with the market operators.</p> <p>The service works with officers from APHA to undertake the annual audit of the livestock market, reviewing the market premises and their systems, processes and documented arrangements. This audit informs our agreed programme of interventions with the market, which is fed into our annual intervention programme, as outlined in 5 above.</p>
7	Actively engage in regional animal health and welfare groups, attending meetings where possible and contributing to regional discussions about the implementation of the Framework. Ensure membership of the KHub.	<p>The Service contributes significantly to regional and national groups. A Lead Trading Standards Officer with a Service Lead role in animal health and welfare was, for a considerable time, the chair of the East of England Trading Standards Authorities (EETSA) Animal Health and Welfare Regional Group and remains an active member of that group. This lead officer is also a member of the National Animal Health and Welfare Panel and sits on the National Equine Liaison Group. At the time of writing, the officer also sits on the National Outbreak Enforcement Group that has been set up during the prevailing Avian Influenza outbreak affecting large parts of the region (and country), including Norfolk, Suffolk and Essex.</p> <p>The EETSA regional group is active and members support each other with the mutual provision of information and advice to ensure a consistent approach to the application/ interpretation of legislation.</p>

No.	Action Required	Planned Service Delivery
		<p>The EETSA regional group also maintains a close working relationship with the National Animal Health and Welfare Panel. Officers of the service are members of the Animal Health and Welfare group on Knowledge Hub (KHub) (a public service digital platform).</p>
8	<p>Work closely with other local authorities to share knowledge and expertise, including opportunities for shared training, joint inspections, opportunities for contracting and peer to peer reviews.</p>	<p>In addition to that outlined in 7 above, the service has an ongoing commitment to work closely with Suffolk Trading Standards. The service has agreed a Memorandum of Understanding with Suffolk Trading Standards to enable sharing of resources (including cross border authorisation arrangements) to respond to animal disease outbreaks and animal health and welfare issues. Other collaborative working areas with Suffolk Trading Standards include collaborative intelligence functions, shared best practice, a common compliance & enforcement policy and shared learning and development activities.</p> <p>The EETSA Animal Health and Welfare Group has provided and maintains a regional store of equipment to facilitate responses to breaches of the legislation controlling rabies.</p>
9	<p>Proactively exchange and use information and intelligence to inform the delivery of animal health and welfare controls, using national intelligence databases where appropriate.</p>	<p>As outlined in 3 and 4 above the service has adopted a number of information sharing agreements/protocols and memoranda of understanding, and the National Trading Standards Intelligence Operating Model (IOM).</p> <p>All operational officers have access to the national intelligence database, IDB, and are encouraged to make submissions and review IDB intelligence in relation to their activities. The service has produced an easy protocol to allow officers to add to IDB from data stored on our own database (APP Civica) using an “add to IDB” action line.</p> <p>The service employs an Intelligence Lead and an Intelligence Technical Support Officer to support and facilitate our intelligence led approach.</p> <p>The Intelligence Lead scrutinises all incoming complaints, received via the Citizens Advice portal, and partner referrals, such as those from APHA, all of which come in through the secure “intel” email inbox.</p> <p>Each month the Intelligence Lead produces a tactical assessment for the Tasking and Coordination meeting. This assessment includes analysis (from IDB and APP Civica) by subject area (including “Animal Disease Control Measures”), the level of IDB submissions and horizon scanning for areas of concern. The report also highlights the level of use of IDB by individual officers via their last timed login.</p>

No.	Action Required	Planned Service Delivery
		<p>On a day to day basis, if the Intelligence Lead receives any intelligence that raises a concern relating to a matter that has the potential to be a cross border issue this matter is sent to the EETSA Regional Intelligence Analyst (RIA) for further dissemination.</p> <p>The Intelligence Lead and Animal Health Officers of the service have given training to Norfolk Constabulary Control Room staff on Trading Standards matters, including those relating to animal health. The Intelligence Lead and an Animal Health Officer from the Service attend the Norfolk CRAG (Crime Rural Advisory Group) meetings. These measures have and will improve the channels of communication and sharing of intelligence relating to matters concerning animal health and welfare.</p> <p>As outlined in the Service's 2022 Strategic Assessment document, Norfolk Trading Standards has recorded more animal health intelligence on IDB than any other authority in the EETSA region and is fourth highest for all UK authorities in the category.</p>
10	Regional groups to discuss and agree how each local authority will be involved in the recording, accessing and analysis of intelligence relating to animal health and welfare with the aim of making a staged improvement in the level and quality of intelligence recorded and the influence this has on service planning across the region.	<p>The Regional Intelligence Analyst (RIA) for the EETSA region has previously attended a meeting of the EETSA Animal Health and Welfare regional group and given advice on how to improve the quality and frequency of intelligence recording on the national intelligence database, IDB, relating to animal health and welfare matters. The EETSA regional group maintains communication with the EETSA RIA. The Intelligence Officer from APHA also regularly attends the EETSA regional group.</p> <p>As mentioned in 9 above the service currently records more animal health intelligence on IDB than any other authority in the region.</p>

No.	Action Required	Planned Service Delivery
11	Each regional group to review the level of intelligence being recorded and use the intelligence to identify any potential threats on at least an annual basis. Steps should be taken to resolve any concerns about the level or type of intelligence being recorded and a response be formulated to any criminal activity that has been identified.	<p>As per 10 above the EETSA Regional Intelligence Analyst (RIA) has previously attended the EETSA Animal Health and Welfare regional group and given advice on how to improve the quality and frequency of intelligence recording on IDB relating to animal health and welfare matters.</p> <p>The EETSA RIA produces a tactical assessment in anticipation of each bi monthly meeting of the EETSA Regional Tasking Group. The RIA will also highlight any concerns about the level or type of intelligence being recorded within the region. Such concerns are disseminated through senior management meetings within EETSA.</p> <p>The EETSA RIA produces an annual strategic assessment document that includes reference to the regional and national priorities.</p> <p>As mentioned in 9 above the service currently records more animal health intelligence on IDB than any other authority in the region.</p>
12	All local authorities should actively engage in the sharing of environmental, political, legislative or organisational changes at regional meetings that may influence service planning and activities.	<p>Such information is shared at the EETSA Animal Health and Welfare regional group. It is also shared at the EETSA Senior Management Group meetings, where progress of the agreed EETSA regional animal health and welfare workstream is reviewed on a quarterly basis. Issues of particular strategic importance are also discussed at EETSA Heads of Service meetings.</p> <p>In addition, as outlined in 8 above, such information is shared with Suffolk Trading Standards through a programme of collaborative working including collaborative intelligence functions, shared best practice, a common compliance & enforcement policy and shared learning and development activities.</p>
13	Ensure that services consider the requirements laid down in the On Farm Charter and Regulators' Code where appropriate.	The Community and Environmental Services (CES) Compliance & Enforcement Policy has been devised with due regard to the Regulators' Code and the Farm Regulators' Charter and both documents are referenced in that policy.

No.	Action Required	Planned Service Delivery
14	Complete statutory data returns in a timely manner.	The service has a programme, outlining all the required national and regional statutory returns, which is monitored for progress. This programme includes the statutory animal health returns such as the annual return relating to inspections carried out under the Welfare of Animals (Transport) (England) Order and the bi annual return relating to the number of animal health prosecutions.
15	All services should consider how they meet EU standards for the delivery of Official Controls and any future standards that support trade agreements.	<p>The service is aware of the requirements of Article 6 of 2017/625 (as amended) and the requirement to have transparent and accountable audit processes in place.</p> <p>The service has an annual programme of internal audits that can deal with all aspects of service delivery. If the need arises this programme would include an audit of official controls. Officers who undertake animal health and welfare activities must maintain a level of competency. The service has devised a definition of competency (including required qualifications) for this area of delivery. Officers must complete a learning and development log form where they evidence competency. This evidence can include reference to work completed (including the handling of reactive complaints). This log form is reviewed by line managers at least twice a year. Demonstration of competency is linked to the service's warrant issue process. Our modular approach to warrants means that we can add or revoke service delivery areas in officers' warrants in line with their individual competency review.</p> <p>Individual officers are also subject to the Council's performance management framework with annual goal setting and performance monitoring against those goals occurring at regular intervals during the year. In addition, line managers routinely quality monitor work undertaken by officers and give feedback as part of their 1-2-1 meetings.</p> <p>As stated in 14 above the service makes returns as per the government's single data list; including mandatory returns relating to official control delivery.</p> <p>The service has a number of performance measures that are reported to Councillors and senior managers of the council. These performance measures, which can include aspects of official control delivery, are reviewed against target on a monthly basis by the Trading Standards Management Team.</p> <p>As stated in 4 above, the service has adopted the National Trading Standards Intelligence Operating Model (IOM). This helps to manage prioritised threats and identified risks through enforcement and other activities, as well as reviewing the effectiveness of measures taken.</p>

No.	Action Required	Planned Service Delivery
		<p>Norfolk County Council also carries out audits of services within its organisation to ensure compliance with, for example, financial controls.</p> <p>The service is monitoring and horizon scanning to keep up to date with any potential issues as a result of EU exit, the Trade and Cooperation Agreement signed with the EU and other international trade agreements.</p>
16	<p>Each local authority must have an up to date animal disease contingency plan in place, which is shared internally and with partners. Contact details are to be revised as changes happen. The plan should be updated within two years of any changes to the national template.</p>	<p>This Service has an Exotic Notifiable Animal Disease Contingency Plan based on the current national template (which is produced by the National Animal Health and Welfare Panel and the Association of Chief Trading Standards Officers). The Service's plan has recently been updated to reflect improvements made to operational practice during the response to the five outbreaks of avian influenza that occurred in Norfolk in December 2020. A similar "lessons learnt" exercise will be undertaken following the Service's response to the Avian Influenza outbreaks that have occurred during this winter season (two outbreaks so far).</p> <p>A separate Exotic Notifiable Animal Disease Contingency Plan for Norfolk Resilience Forum (NRF) Partners is also in place.</p>
17	<p>Local authorities should ensure that contact details on the Local Authority Master Contact List are updated in a timely fashion. This information is used by APHA to communicate details of possible animal disease outbreaks, make referrals and share intelligence.</p>	<p>The list of Norfolk contacts is currently up to date. The Senior Manager within the Service with responsibility for animal health and welfare is responsible for ensuring the currency of the information provided to the Master Contact List.</p>

No.	Action Required	Planned Service Delivery
18	<p>Officers involved in the delivery of animal health and welfare controls should be trained and qualified in line with local standards and authorisation processes. Local processes should ensure officers are competent in the delivery of effective animal health and welfare controls. As with all responsible employers, local authorities should support staff with personal development processes and training.</p>	<p>The service's approach to ensuring officers are qualified, maintain their competency and are suitably authorised is outlined in 15 above.</p> <p>In addition, as part of the annual service planning process, a learning and development plan is produced. This includes input from Lead Trading Standards Officers, including those who have a specialist lead in animal health and welfare matters, to ensure that required courses and briefings for the forthcoming service year are provided to line managers for discussion at proposed attendees' personal development plan discussions. Lead Trading Standards Officers are also responsible for ensuring that learning and development requirements are identified on an ongoing basis and are delivered.</p>
19	<p>Use the Framework to promote the delivery of animal health and welfare controls to managers and local politicians.</p>	<p>The annual Trading Standards Service Plan includes as an annex this document relating to the Animal Health and Welfare Framework Agreement. This plan is reviewed and agreed by the Trading Standards Management Team and then put forward for approval by members of the Council's Cabinet.</p>

Business Services Policy

In providing business services we aim to help businesses in Norfolk to succeed. We achieve this by concentrating on the following key areas of activity:

- (1) Providing businesses with access to information and compliance advice on request to help them succeed
- (2) Providing targeted support to start-up, small, high-risk and non-compliant businesses
- (3) Primary Authority Partnerships
- (4) Providing calibration, verification, testing and hire services to the private and public sectors
- (5) Providing a Trusted Trader scheme
- (6) Providing business alerts.

Throughout all our activities we have regard to the Regulators' Code.

(1) Providing businesses with access to information and compliance advice on request to help them succeed

On receipt of business requests for advice we will respond in a number of ways including:

- directing the business to our website or that of a partner organisation, such as the Chartered Institute of Trading Standards' Business Companion
- referring the business to another agency
- providing leaflets produced by partner organisations, our business briefings or standard letters
- providing comprehensive bespoke information or advice via the telephone, email or a letter, and/or
- visiting the business to provide comprehensive advice

In each case, our response will be proportionate to:

- the potential risk to consumers caused by a failure on behalf of the business to understand the information/advice provided,
- the experience of the business in question, and
- the impact upon the economic prosperity of the business or its competitors in not achieving compliance in the respective area(s) of the law.

We will prioritise requests for advice from new businesses, Trusted Traders and Primary Authority businesses.

We reserve the right to refuse to provide advice to third parties whom we believe are (i) likely to charge a business for passing on the advice we have provided or (ii) represent non-Norfolk based businesses.

Free Business Advice

We will provide advice to businesses at no charge in the following circumstances:

- i) **Start-Up Businesses:** We will provide advice on and signpost to all the relevant legislation that applies to a Norfolk based start-up business. If more detailed advice or support, including interpretation of the legislation, is required then the section below dealing with charges for business advice will apply.

- ii) Current businesses: We will provide signpost advice and information to ensure existing businesses in Norfolk are aware of the applicable trading standards legislation. Where a non-compliance is apparent with a Norfolk based business, either through our contact with the business or through a referral from a partner authority, we will also make sure that the business is aware of the action to be taken to address the non-compliance.

Charges for business advice

Charges for business advice will be applicable in the following circumstances:

- i) Bespoke Advice. If a business requires more detailed or interpretative advice on trading standards law then we will provide the advice on a cost recovery basis at a pro-rata hourly fee.
- ii) Primary Authority: We will charge for providing services on a cost recovery basis under a Primary Authority Partnership. For more details see **(3) Primary Authority Partnerships** below.

(2) Providing targeted support to start-up, small, high-risk and non-compliant businesses

We provide targeted support by:

- a) inspecting all high-risk businesses in Norfolk on an annual basis,
- b) conducting inspections or other interventions at those businesses presenting the highest risk to consumers or other legitimate businesses,
- c) engaging with start-up businesses, and
- d) engaging with businesses for which we act as Primary Authority.

(a) Inspection of all high-risk businesses in Norfolk on an annual basis

Prior to the start of each service year, we determine those individual businesses in Norfolk that are deemed to be high-risk by virtue of:

- the Food Standards Agency (FSA) risk schemes for food and feed premises, or
- the DEFRA risk scheme for animal health premises, or
- our own risk scheme (based on the FSA risk scheme) for other premises, and
- their previous trading history, when they have demonstrated significant non-compliance with trading standards and we are concerned that they might not comply in the future.

We plan and deliver an inspection programme to ensure that all these businesses are inspected by allocated officers during the service year.

(b) Inspections or other interventions at those businesses presenting the highest risk to consumers or other legitimate businesses

(i) Planned inspections/other interventions

Prior to the start of each service year, we determine, via intelligence, those business sectors in Norfolk that are deemed to present or are likely to present the highest risks to consumers/other legitimate businesses because, for example:

- the Citizens Advice Consumer Helpline receives a large number of consumer complaints about the business sector

- we have conducted interventions in the past and identified high levels of non-compliance with trading standards within the business sector
- new legislation will take effect, which will have a significant impact on the business sector

We plan and deliver a series of targeted interventions whereby we, in conjunction with partner organisations if appropriate:

- produce/identify and disseminate information/advice on compliance with trading standards to businesses within the sector,
- inspect/visit or otherwise contact a number of businesses within the sector to establish levels of compliance and take corrective action to ensure compliance where necessary,
- determine the impact of our enforcement activities, and
- use the results to further inform/advice the business sector and/or consumers and/or inform our intervention planning for the future.

(ii) Ad hoc inspections/other interventions

Where we receive consumer/trader complaints via the Citizens Advice Consumer Helpline or referrals from other enforcement agencies about the non-compliance with trading standards of individual businesses, we will respond in a number of ways including:

- taking formal enforcement action, [Please refer to the Community and Environmental Services Compliance and Enforcement Policy], or
- inspecting/visiting the individual business concerned, or
- ensuring the individual business is included in one of the series of targeted interventions already planned, or
- offering information and advice to the business by telephone, email and/or letter, or
- referring the matter to another enforcement agency, or
- taking no action, beyond noting the complaint/referral for intelligence purposes

In each case, our response will be proportionate to the risk to consumers and/or legitimate businesses caused by the identified non-compliance with trading standards.

(c) Engaging with start-up businesses

Start-up businesses are identified throughout the year and we will:

- inspect or visit the start-up business, or
- ensure the start-up business is included in one of the series of targeted interventions already planned, or
- offer information and advice to the start-up business by telephone, email and/or letter, or
- determine that no proactive contact is necessary.

In each case, our contact will be proportionate to:

- the potential risk to consumers, which would be caused by the start-up business being unaware of their responsibilities in relation to trading standards, and
- the impact upon the economic prosperity of the business or its competitors in not achieving compliance in the respective area(s) of the law.

(d) Engaging with businesses for which we act as Primary Authority

Primary Authority businesses will be inspected/visited or otherwise contacted on at least an annual basis:

- as part of the inspection programme for high-risk businesses, or
- as part of the planned series of targeted interventions, or
- as a result of a complaint/referral received, or
- to maintain the Primary Authority relationship.

(3) Primary Authority Partnerships

We will enter into a Primary Authority Partnership with businesses based in Norfolk and elsewhere in the UK.

Primary Authority is a statutory scheme established by the Regulatory Enforcement and Sanctions Act 2008. Primary Authority enables a business to form a legally recognised partnership with one local authority (the “Primary Authority”) to get assured advice about how they can comply with legislation. Assured advice must be taken into account by other local authorities when dealing with that business, such as carrying out inspections or addressing non-compliance.

We will provide advice, including assured advice, and support under these partnerships and charges, including an annual fee, will be charged on a cost recovery basis.

(4) Providing calibration, verification, testing and hire services to the private and public sectors

We provide:

- weighing and measuring equipment to the private and public sectors throughout Norfolk, the UK and EU
- a specialist service in the calibration and supply of weights of OIML classes E1, E2, F1, F2, M1, M2 and M3.

(5) Providing a Trusted Trader Scheme

We provide Norfolk Trusted Trader, a membership scheme of accredited traders.

Benefits of the scheme include:

- promotion via a website, an online directory, and our Customer Service Centre plus advertising and other marketing activity
- a comprehensive customer feedback system (provided by Referenceline)
- consumer protection law advice
- staff training, where resources permit, and
- independent alternative dispute resolution provided by CEDR (the Centre for Effective Dispute Resolution)

(6) Providing business alerts

We provide alerts to businesses detailing the latest frauds and scams, and information and news from Trading Standards. Business Alerts are available via our website, our Twitter account @NorfolkCCTS and our [Facebook page](#). Businesses can sign up to receive our business alerts by email via our Trading Standards Scam awareness and advice page www.norfolk.gov.uk/businessscams.

Charges for our Services

In addition to the charges for business advice outlined above charges also apply to our calibration, verification and testing services, our Trusted Trader scheme, and where we provide licences or bespoke presentations on trading standards matters to businesses or other groups.

Service Standards

When responding to requests for information, advice or other services, we will meet our Service Standards for Businesses.

January 2022

Cabinet

Item No:10

Report Title: Changing Places

Date of Meeting: 04 April 2022

Responsible Cabinet Member: Cllr Margaret Dewsbury (Cabinet Member for Communities & Partnerships)

Responsible Director: Tom McCabe Executive Director Community and Environmental Services

Is this a Key Decision? Yes

Date Added to Forward Plan: 24/2/22

Introduction from Cabinet Member

As a rural County with a significant tourism economy, Norfolk County Council want to make it easier for disabled people and their families to enjoy activities that others may take for granted, whether that's a day out shopping, a night out on the town, or a trip out to the coast.

In a sign of our commitment to equality of access, Cabinet approved £600,000 in January 2020 to fund a number of Changing Places facilities across the County. This paper provides an overview of the thorough approach to engagement, partnership working and use of data and insight to pinpoint key locations for Changing Places facilities across Norfolk. We seek to provide wide coverage to support day to day lives of Norfolk residents and tourists.

With currently just 17 Changing Places facilities in the county it is clear that there are not enough, and as a council we need to lead the way in investing in and developing more. Not only do Changing Places facilities benefit people's everyday lives, but inclusive facilities also open up tourism in Norfolk as a destination for disabled visitors.

From listening to disabled people and their families we know that having access to much-needed Changing Places toilets increases independence and improves quality of life. These exciting proposals offers NCC the opportunity to enable disabled residents and their families to enjoy our County, accessibly.

Executive Summary

Changing Places facilities are larger accessible toilets for people with complex needs and disabilities who cannot use standard accessible toilets. They contain equipment like hoists, curtains, adult sized changing bench, and space for carers.

Recognising how life-changing these facilities can be, Norfolk County Council's Cabinet committed £600,000 in January 2020 to establish up to eight Changing Places facilities within Norfolk County Council's wider estate. Since then, we have engaged with our community and learnt more about the huge difference these facilities make to the quality of disabled people's lives.

In March 2021 the Government made £30 million available to district councils to establish more Changing Places facilities across the UK.

Although not eligible to apply this funding ourselves, this provided an opportunity to work with our district partners to look at the overall provision in Norfolk in a coordinated way to maximise coverage of these facilities and accessibility in the county.

Government was scheduled to announce funding decisions in Autumn 2021. At the time of writing, we are still awaiting this announcement. However, given the urgent need for Changing Places we feel it is important to start work on the Norfolk County Council funded facilities so not to disadvantage Norfolk residents.

The purpose of this report is to provide an update to Cabinet on the prioritised locations following feedback from our engagement.

Recommendations:

- 1. Note the feedback from the engagement**
- 2. Note progress to date on identifying priority locations for proposed sites for new Norfolk County Council Changing Places facilities set out in section 2.1**
- 3. Agree our proposals to encourage applications to our Norfolk Social Infrastructure Fund for Changing Places facilities as set out in section 2.3**

1. Background and Purpose

- 1.1 Changing Places facilities are larger accessible toilet facilities for people that have more profound disabilities or who may require assistance with toileting. Find out more detail about what a Changing Places facility includes in Appendix 1.

Please find below some photos of the new Changing Places toilet at Norfolk County Council's Attleborough Community Hub as an example of these facilities.





- 1.2 Norfolk currently has 17 Changing Places facilities, but these are not evenly spread across the county (See Appendix 2 for a map and list of locations).
- 1.3 To identify suitable new locations, we first developed a set of criteria, based on existing feedback about Changing Places (See Appendix 3 for the criteria we applied).
- 1.4 Then, to ensure that Norfolk County Council's proposals complemented district proposals, we liaised with district partners to understand the bids they have submitted for Government funding (See Appendix 4 for a list of facilities awaiting development / funding).
- 1.5 Alongside this work we carried out in depth and informative engagement with groups, disabled people and their families around Changing Places. This was to fully understand people's needs and views and to ensure that the proposed facilities are located so as to best support disabled residents and visitors across Norfolk. (See Appendix 5 for a summary of our engagement approach and the feedback received).
- 1.6 This thorough approach has enabled these proposals to be developed.

2. Proposal

2.1 We will prioritise Changing Places toilets at the following locations, subject to full feasibility, design, and planning constraints:

- Acle Library
- Wroxham Library
- Either Brancaster Staithe, Brancaster Beach or Morston Quay (Subject to further exploration)
- Gressenhall Farm and Workhouse
- Dereham Library.

For more information and a map of priority locations please see Appendix 6.

2.2 Any residual funding will then be considered alongside the outcome of Government funding decisions and new funding opportunities to develop

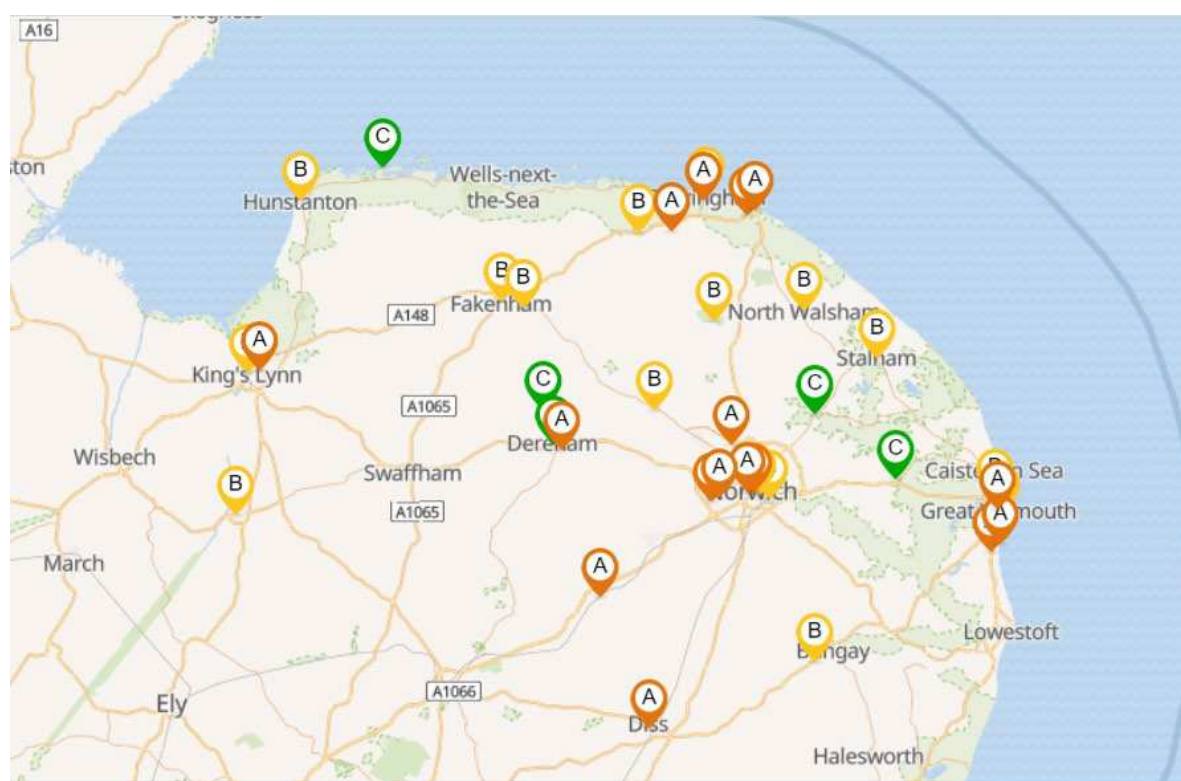
proposals for Norwich, Great Yarmouth, King's Lynn, and South Norfolk in discussion with our district council partners.

- 2.3 Given the profound difference Changing Places make to people's quality of life, we are further proposing to encourage communities to apply to funding for new facilities from the Norfolk Social Infrastructure Fund. Access to quality spaces is a key priority in the Council's Better Together for Norfolk strategy, which this annual capital grants scheme supports.

3. Impact of the Proposal

- 3.1 This proposal will lead to a variety of impacts. Disabled people and families with disabled children will have a wider choice of days out, as well as making everyday activities easier to undertake and leading to better quality of life overall.
- 3.2 People will be attracted to come to visit Norfolk as the new Changing Places will increase the accessibility of our tourist attractions.
- 3.3 People will be able to spend longer in our market towns and feel more included in the life of our communities. Better access to outside spaces will lead to better health and wellbeing. The proposals will also impact on the tourist economy and the local economy in general.
- 3.4 Our proposals potentially add another five Changing Places in Norfolk in the first phase with more to follow. This will make a significant addition to provision.
- 3.5 Provision of Changing Places in Norfolk would look as follows, depending on the outcome of the Government funding decision.

Map showing existing Changing Places (A), those planned or awaiting funding (B) and Norfolk County Council's Phase 1 priorities (C)



4. Evidence and Reasons for Decision

- 4.1 Evidence for our priorities come from the principles we agreed to follow and the feedback we received, as outlined above.

5. Alternative Options

- 5.1 To await formal confirmation of the District Council Government funding bids. However, this will delay the implementation of any new facilities and further disadvantage people with disabilities who live in or visit Norfolk

6. Financial Implications

- 6.1 Funding of £600,000 has already been agreed for new Changing Places in Norfolk. Costs of each individual Changing Places is currently unknown as this is dependent on the location and building specification. We are also mindful of inflation and on-site conditions, which will determine exactly how many facilities we can build.

7. Resource Implications

7.1 Staff:

The implementation of these proposals will be absorbed within existing staff resources

7.2 Property:

Maintenance and revenue costs

Planning permission - As each facility is implemented appropriate planning approval will need to be sought as required.

7.3 IT:

N/A

8. Other Implications

8.1 Legal Implications:

Legal issues will be addressed in respect of each individual project.

8.2 Human Rights Implications:

The human right to sanitation entitles everyone, without discrimination, to: *“have physical and affordable access to sanitation, in all spheres of life, that is safe, hygienic, secure, and social and culturally acceptable, and that provides privacy and dignity”* (UN, 2015).

This right is not fulfilled by the presence of a toilet of *any* kind, in *any* condition. There is a five-point criteria that sanitation services must meet to satisfy the right to sanitation. They must be:

1. Available (near to households, schools, workplaces, health centres etc.)
2. Accessible (to all, without discrimination)
3. Affordable (should not exceed 5% of households' incomes)
4. Safe (free from health hazards, and in locations that are safe for all users, e.g., where women feel safe from harassment and violence)
5. Acceptable (culturally and socially, and must protect peoples' privacy and dignity)

8.3 Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA):

An EQIA has been completed by the Council's Senior Access & Inclusion Advisor. This takes account of our legal obligations under the Equality Act, whether there are likely to be any positive or negative impacts on people with protected characteristics and, the views and experiences of disabled people and disability organisations in Norfolk with respect the proposal. The EqIA has found that the proposal is unlikely to have any detrimental impact on people with protected characteristics but is likely to have a significant positive impact on some disabled people (and their families and carers) who live, work, and visit Norfolk. The EqIA recommends that if the proposal is agreed, it is carefully implemented with full consideration given to; the accessibility of proposed locations; the needs of diverse users of new facilities, and; the need to maximise the geographic spread of facilities through continued work with the Districts. The full EqIA is available on request.

8.4 Data Protection Impact Assessments (DPIA):

N/A

8.5 Health and Safety implications:

Health safety assessments will be carried out for each new facility and regularly updated

8.6 Sustainability implications:

Environmental sustainability of the toilet facilities and waste management will be managed as part of the development of each location

8.7 Any Other Implications:

N/A

9. Risk Implications / Assessment

N/A

10. Recommendations

1. Note the feedback from the engagement
2. Note progress to date on identifying priority locations for proposed sites for new Norfolk County Council Changing Places facilities set out in section 2.1
3. Agree our proposals to encourage applications to our Norfolk Social Infrastructure Fund for Changing Places facilities as set out in section 2.3

Officer Contact

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

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

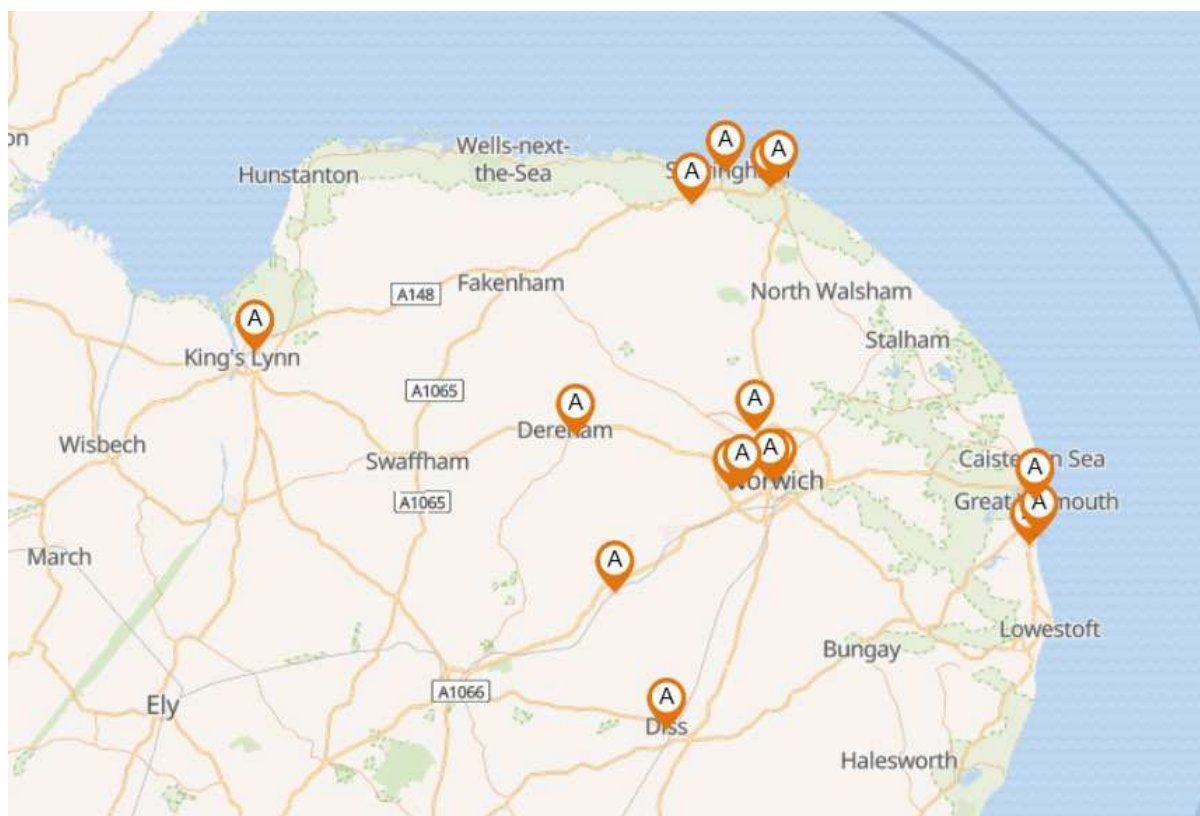
Appendix 1 – Changing Places specification

Changing Places facilities are normally 12 m² in size but can be slightly smaller or larger depending on the location.

Equipment within these facilities will normally include all the facilities of a normal accessible toilet, with the addition of:

- a. Centrally located toilet with facility to transfer from either side
- b. Height adjustable adult-sized changing bench
- c. Tracking hoist system, or mobile hoist if this is not possible
- d. Portable screen
- e. Non-slip flooring
- f. Additional standard equipment such as larger waist bins etc.
- g. Optionally an accessible shower facility

Appendix 2 – current Changing Places in Norfolk



Above: Map showing existing Changing Places (A)

Norwich	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Norfolk and Norwich University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust - University of East Anglia - Vauxhall Community Hub - Chantry Place - Castle Quarter
Great Yarmouth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The James Paget University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust - Gorleston Pierhead - JD Wetherspoons
Broadland	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The Nest, Horsford
King's Lynn and West Norfolk	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Tesco, King's Lynn (Gaywood Superstore)
North Norfolk	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Cromer Meadow Car Park - Sheringham Independence Matters - Holt, Manor Farm Barns - Sheringham, The Reef
Breckland	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Tesco, Dereham - Attleborough Community Hub
South Norfolk	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Tesco, Diss

Appendix 3 - Criteria

The following criteria were developed (based on feedback) for suitable locations:

- Should serve daytime and nighttime economies. Currently there are few facilities that enable disabled people to access the nighttime economy in the same way as non-disabled people or disabled people that can access standard accessible toilet facilities.
- Support the tourist economy, ensuring disabled visitors to Norfolk have the same experience as other tourists to Norfolk.
- Engagement with disabled people is part of any decision-making process.
- Be a key location that disabled people may visit, whether this is social or in relation to their disability.
- Support travel options across Norfolk, such as better access to using the railway to travel across Norfolk or consideration as to accessible toilet breaks on longer car journeys / key tourist routes.
- Minimise duplication of provision, including working with district councils to encourage a joint approach to location of facilities by Norfolk County Council and planned facilities by district councils through the Government grant scheme.

Wherever possible we would look to locating these facilities in our own buildings as we have more influence over these and can be confident that the facilities will be well maintained into the future. However, we have worked in partnership with others on proposals which meet our principles, where we have confidence in the partner and where we can add value.

Appendix 4 - Changing Places facilities either in development or awaiting funding

Our work with stakeholders identified Changing Places facilities that are either already in development with District Councils and corporate partners or that are the subject of bids to the Government fund.



Above: Map showing Changing Places either in development or awaiting funding (B)

Norwich	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Norwich Castle - The Forum - Wensum Lodge
Great Yarmouth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The Marina Centre - Centre 81
Broadland	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Blickling Estate - Roarr Dinosaur Adventure, Lenwade
King's Lynn and West Norfolk	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - King's Lynn Multi Use Community Hub - Hunstanton new library - Downham Market (location to be confirmed)
North Norfolk	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Fakenham, Queens Road Public Car Park - North Walsham (location to be confirmed) - Sheringham, the Leas, Esplanade - Holt (location to be confirmed) - Stalham (location to be confirmed)

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Pensthorpe Natural Park
South Norfolk	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Whitlingham Country Park - Earsham Wetland Centre, Bungay

The following map gives an idea of the spread of Changing Places across Norfolk before Norfolk County Council's priority locations are added in.



Above: Map showing existing Changing Places (A) and those in development / awaiting funding (B)

Appendix 5 – Engagement summary

We contacted 53 local groups and organisations. This included groups representing the views of disabled people, families with disabled children, people with learning disabilities and autism carers, older people, and people with health conditions. We also contacted partnership bodies and transport providers.

We told them about the project and asked them to get in touch if they were interested in becoming involved and how they would like to engage.

Feedback was gathered in a range of formats including online meetings, face to face meetings, and paper and online questionnaires to ensure as many groups could provide feedback as possible.

A summary of participation in this engagement:

We attended Opening Doors Self Advocates group in Cromer, Norwich and South Norfolk which were attended by 27 people with Learning Disabilities.

- Ran two online Zoom discussions with online discussion group with representatives from Family Voice, Equal Lives, The Hamlet, Making it Real, Hamlet Centre and About with Friends.
- Received fifteen responses to the online feedback form
- Received five responses via email feedback

We asked people what made a good Changing Places facility to help us with our design specification. We also asked for views on locations for new facilities.

Comments relating to facilities fell under the following headings:

- Look and feel
- Location
- Signage
- Facilities
- Supplies
- Cleanliness
- Considering the need of families as a whole

The key themes in terms of what was important at locations were:

- The attraction / area the Changing Places is in needs to be accessible, as does the route from the car-park to the facility.
- Locations are safe to use and not isolated / subject to vandalism.
- Joined up facilities, for example having a Changing Places in a car-park, next to an accessible beach where beach wheelchairs could be hired.
- A balance of facilities between tourist areas and in areas that people could use as part of their everyday life. There were differing views as to whether our proposals achieved this.
- The need to be able to access facilities at nighttime and not just when buildings were open.

- Locations suggested for Changing Places facilities included swimming pools, leisure centres / sports centres, near theatres / cinemas, beachfront, gyms, zoos, and places of worship.

Given the nature of our Norfolk County Council estate we asked specific questions around peoples' views on Changing Places in libraries.

Library locations are often central to communities, enable access to Norfolk County Council facilities, have easy access to local town/village centres and, depending on the design of the Changing Places facility, can sometimes support better access to nighttime economy. An example of this is Attleborough Hub, where the Changing Places facility is available 24/7.

Where libraries were felt to be good locations this was due in general to their very central locations, calm and quiet atmosphere, and nearby parking. Library staff were felt to be helpful, and people felt that Changing Places fitted well with the community offer in libraries.

Any concerns were mainly focused on the location within the library and out-of-hours access. People did not want to have to walk through a library to access the facilities and asked where possible for an external entrance. This would also enable use of the Changing Places out of hours and in unstaffed libraries. As people would not necessarily associate libraries with Changing Places, we were advised we would need to directly promote any facilities to potential users.

- Look and feel

There was a general consensus that Changing Places need to be friendly, welcoming spaces and not all white and clinical. Noise reduction, sensitive lighting and colour contrast need to be considered to meet the needs of people with autism and people with sensory impairments.

- Safety and security

This was a big issue for people. People need to feel safe to use Changing Places facilities. Some people experienced intimidation when using accessible toilets in general. Alarm cords that can be reached at ground level, secure yet safe doors and CCT all need to be factored in.

- Location

People mentioned privacy and dignity so wanted to be able to access Changing Places facilities without it being obvious where they were going. Access to nearby parking is also important.

- Signage

Signage both inside and outside the facility needs to be accessible in Easy Read and for people with visual impairments.

- Facilities

Whilst many requested features would come as standard in a Changing Places toilet, it was helpful to hear the range of equipment needed, from door hooks, through to showers. We need to be clear in our promotion the type of hoist the Changing Places facility has. There was some debate as to whether a fixed or movable changing bench was best. This decision will ultimately depend on the specific location and key users.

- **Supplies**

Facilities need to be well stocked with paper towels, paper changing mats, sanitising spray for sanitising the changing bench and disposable gloves.

- **Cleanliness**

Facilities being clean and well maintained are crucial, especially for those that need to carry out medical procedures i.e., catheter changing. As facilities need to be kept clean it is best if Changing Places are in buildings that are already maintained.

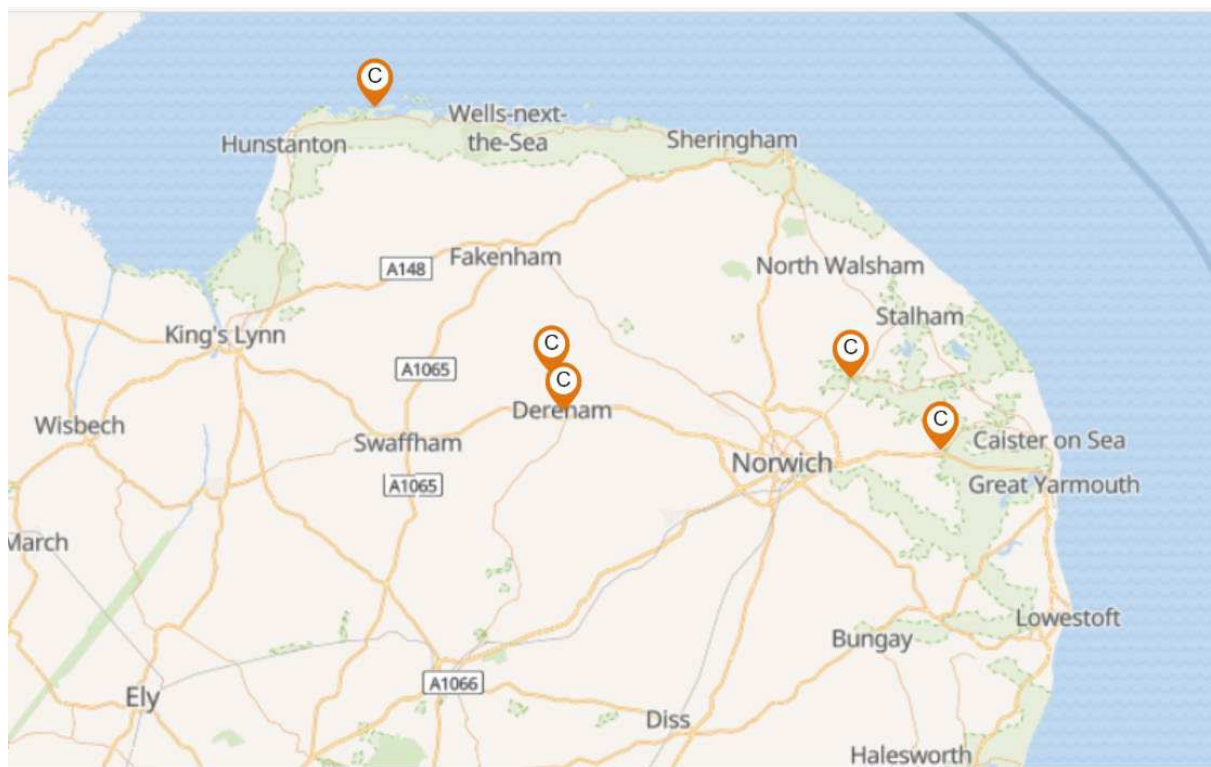
- **Considering the need of families**

Changing Places need to meet the needs of families as a whole. This means considering baby changing for disabled parents and privacy screens so that adults alone with a disabled child can use the Changing Places with dignity. This is because people need to take their disabled child into the toilet with them when they themselves need to use it.

Appendix 6 – priority Norfolk County Council locations

Location	Rationale
Acle Library (Broadland)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - NCC owned site and well-used library - Strengthen provision in Broadland as a whole - Location close to key tourism transport route out to East of the County (main arterial route to Great Yarmouth. - Feedback suggested this was also good location for access to the Broads and surrounding areas
Wroxham Library (Broadland)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - NCC owned site and well used library - Strengthen provision in Broadland as a whole - Gateway to Norfolk Broads, currently underserved with facilities - Feedback suggested this would be a good location for access to the Broads and helpful for disabled people holidaying on boats. Also supports the Aylsham to Wroxham tourist railway route.
Gressenhall Farm and Workhouse (Breckland)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - NCC owned site and well used library - Tourist destination - Location of the new Environmental Hub for Norfolk - Strengthens overall network within the whole - Feedback suggested the general accessibility of the site needs wider consideration
Dereham Library (Breckland)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - NCC owned site and well used library - Central town location - Good accessible parking nearby - Being developed into a multi-user hub - Strengthens provision of overall network - Just off main road route to west of the county
Either Brancaster Staithe, Brancaster Beach or Morston Quay (North Norfolk) – subject to further exploration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Partner opportunity with the National Trust - Tourism locations, linked in with walking and cycling strategy - Improves accessibility to the North Norfolk Coast and wider area - Access to areas of natural beauty

Below: Map showing Norfolk County Council's Phase 1 priorities (C)



Cabinet

Item No: 11

Report Title: Net Zero and Natural Norfolk Progress Update

Date of Meeting: 04 April 2022

Responsible Cabinet Members:

Cllr Grant (Cabinet Member for Environment & Waste)

Cllr Jamieson (Cabinet Member for Finance)

Responsible Directors:

Tom McCabe, Executive Director of Community and Environmental Services

Simon George, Executive Director of Finance and Commercial Services

Is this a Key Decision? No

If this is a Key Decision, date added to the Forward Plan of Key Decisions: Not applicable

Introduction from Cabinet Member

This paper provides an update on progress towards delivery of commitments relating to the Environmental Policy, which were set out in the November cabinet paper *Natural Norfolk: Progress on delivering the Environmental Policy*

<https://norfolkcc.cmis.uk.com/norfolkcc/CalendarofMeetings/tabid/128/ctl/ViewMeetingPublic/mid/496/Meeting/1796/Committee/169/Default.aspx>

Since November significant strides have been made in relation to the net zero programme. Highlights of the detail provided in this paper include:

- A Net Zero board of senior officers, chaired by the Head of Paid Service, has been established to drive progress towards achieving our net zero commitment.
- The feasibility of a digital reporting dashboard has been assessed and this work is being taken forward to prototype stage.
- The preparatory stages of a programme to decarbonise council-owned buildings is progressing well. An initial tranche of decarbonisation studies is due, and we are evaluating tenders for studies covering the rest of the estate.
- The number of council charge points is set to markedly increase as a contract has been awarded to install a further 44 electric vehicle charge-points at County Hall.
- In terms of new council vehicles, Fire and Rescue are due to lease 35 plug-in hybrid vehicles, and six full electric emergency response vehicles.
- A supply chain issue for electronics has led to slower progress on LED streetlighting conversions than anticipated. The business case for converting the remaining streetlights aims to be finalised by summer.
- Engagement has begun with our wholly owned companies on putting in place carbon reduction plans. A paper will be brought to May cabinet to specifically address this.
- As per recommendation 6a-e of the November cabinet paper, the Financial Regulations have been amended to facilitate carbon reduction activities, and changes to our Contract Standing Orders have been recommended to full Council by Corporate Select Committee. Draft guidance for an internal carbon price is under review by the Net Zero board.
- This paper proposes that Cabinet commission a Climate Action Plan to facilitate public engagement and member oversight of this broad programme of activity.

Good progress has also been made in relation to the implementation of the Natural Norfolk programme. These include:

- Progress has been made on the One Million Trees for Norfolk project through tree giveaways and partnership working with districts to deploy innovative new

strategies such as Miyawaki forests. To-date we have planted 59,178 trees and planning is underway for the 2022-2023 planting season, with an estimated 116,000 trees planted by the end of the next financial year.

- We have agreed an extension to our network of Roadside Nature Reserves, developed a Pollinator Action Plan, are working to identify new linear habitat opportunities and have deployed a new pollinator-friendly verge cutting approach.
- NCC has been nominated as the council in charge of delivering the Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) for Norfolk. As the “Responsible Authority” we will have a statutory duty to produce a Nature Recovery Strategy for Norfolk.
- To ensure we have a strategic plan for improving our walking and cycling networks Local Cycling and Walking Plans (LCWIPs) have been developed across Norfolk. The plans already completed are Norwich, Great Yarmouth and King’s Lynn, A Norfolk LCWIP is also being produced after a successful funding application on DfTs Capability Fund.
- The Norfolk Trees and Hedges Map is a first-of-its-kind interactive tool that uses publicly available data to accurately display the height of the county’s green cover. The map will be used to identify areas of Norfolk County Council’s own estate, through County Farms, for biodiversity corridors, tree planting and soil health.
- Gressenhall Environment Hub will act as a centre for learning, aimed at engaging the residents of Norfolk with the environment and climate change, and providing them with the tools to create positive change within their community. Capital works to create learning facilities on the premises are due for completion in March 2022.

Recommendations:

- 1. Acknowledge the progress being made as set out in this paper in relation to net zero and Natural Norfolk.**
- 2. Commission the Executive Director for Community and Environmental Services to produce a Climate Action Plan for Norfolk.**
- 3. Agree for Norfolk County Council to become a member of the UK100 Network. Membership will be reviewed on a biannual basis to ensure that Norfolk County Council are contributing, collaborating and benefitting from the network.**
- 4. Approve the set-up approach for delivery of Norfolk's Nature Recovery Strategy through a Natural Norfolk Map, which will use demonstrator initiatives such as the AONB, Marine Site and National Trails, to better integrate geospatial data analysis into nature recovery networks.**
- 5. Approve the Norwich, Great Yarmouth and King's Lynn Local Cycling and Walking Plan documents.**
- 6. Acknowledge that a further paper will be required which outlines how the Environment Bill will require Norfolk County Council to act in the future.**

1. Background and purpose

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide an update on the recommendations agreed by Cabinet on 8th November 2021 on the presented report "Natural Norfolk: Progress on Delivering the Environmental Policy".
- 1.2 The November 2021 report captured the essence of the Natural Norfolk programme by providing a full update on efforts to measure and report on scope 1, 2 and 3 carbon emissions. Additionally, progress reports on nature recovery efforts were presented which aim to provide help for Norfolk's residents to prosper alongside nature through inclusive and sustainable economic growth. These updates were aligned with several objectives highlighted in the Better Together for Norfolk strategy.

2. Progress and Next Steps for Net Zero

2.1 Governance and Reporting

- 2.2 A Net Zero board has been established to provide a steer from Executive Directors to guide progress towards achieving the net zero commitment. The board meets monthly and is chaired by the Head of Paid Service.
- 2.3 A feasibility study has been completed for a digital dashboard to report on progress towards the council's net zero commitment. This has been reviewed by senior officers to steer on next steps in assembling a team to build a prototype

2.3 Building decarbonisation

- 2.4 The preparatory stages of our programme to decarbonise council-owned building are progressing well.
- 2.5 The first Salix-funded decarbonisation study has been received with the remaining six due to be submitted in March.
- 2.6 The tenders for decarbonisation studies covering the rest of the council's estate have been received and are currently under evaluation. We expect to award the contracts in mid-April for delivery of the studies in the autumn.
- 2.7 Tendering is also in progress for the cost management and project management for the building decarbonisation work, with awarding of the contracts expected in late May.

2.8 Petrol and diesel vehicles owned and leased by the council

- 2.9 The provision of electric vehicle charge points at County Hall is set to substantially increase with a contract awarded for the installation of 44 more chargers on the site. The contract will also support charge-point installations at other sites across the council's estate and feasibility studies are under way.
- 2.10 Fire and Rescue plan to lease 35 plug-in hybrid and six full electric emergency response vehicles this year. The leasing contract being pursued allows for early exchange from hybrid to electric vehicles to allow for a transition to full electric over the coming four years if the charging infrastructure is feasible. A further 15 full-electric small vans are also to be added to the fleet over the coming two years as infrastructure allows. Relatedly, an assessment is under way on the charging infrastructure potential at the relevant sites to facilitate this roll out of full electric vehicles.

2.11 Streetlighting

- 2.12 The November paper committed to upgrade 15,000 streetlighting units to LED technology by July 2023. This has been progressing more slowly than anticipated, with the PFI provider facing supply chain disruption for electronic components. Additional resource has recently been procured by the PFI provider so the rate of streetlight conversions should start to increase from April/May. The completion date remains summer 2023.
- 2.13 Given the supply chain issues mentioned above and rising material and energy costs, the business case for conversion of a further tranche of 15,000 streetlights has also been set back. We are engaging with the PFI provider to resolve this issue an aim to finalise a business case in late spring/summer 2022.

2.14 Information systems / Cloud computing

- 2.15 The cloud-based Oracle HR and financial system remains on track to go live in April, paving the way for our in-house servers to be decommissioned in due course. We expect there to be significant carbon savings from this shift away from internal servers as cloud-based systems take advantage of economies of scale for improved energy efficiency in the data hosting and storage services they offer.
- 2.16 A programme is under way to reduce file storage volumes, and therefore reduce the server energy demand from NCC files.
- 2.17 Carbon reduction has been made a specific objective of the project for shifting the data warehouse to Microsoft Azure (a cloud-based system).

2.18 Business travel

- 2.19 An internal analysis provides a picture of the potential carbon reduction from getting our high mileage staff into electric vehicles. It finds that if the top 10% of private vehicle mileage claimers switched from petrol/diesel to electric vehicles by 2030, then the related business mileage emissions would approximately halve.
- 2.20 A further analysis is under way that compares vehicle running costs of petrol/diesel and electric vehicles from the perspective of employees with high business mileage. Electric vehicles are commonly perceived to be more expensive than petrol or diesel equivalents, however the analysis shows that lower running costs mean that the overall financial cost is often similar or even favourable for electric vehicles for an employee with high business mileage.
- 2.21 The IMT team are exploring how this could be translated into an interactive widget that can help employees make this cost comparison for themselves.
- 2.22 The green vehicle salary sacrifice scheme is being procured and roll-out will need to be timed with the end of Oracle change freeze

2.23 Supply chain – General

- 2.24 We are contracting the Carbon Trust to provide a baseline measurement of our Scope 3 (supply chain) emissions, with this work due to be carried out April to June this year. From measurements by other large, rural authorities, it is expected that these emissions will make up over 80% of Norfolk County Council's total corporate (Scope 1, 2 and 3) emissions footprint. The output of this work will assist the council to focus on those parts of our supply chain where we can have the largest emissions reduction impact.

2.25 Supply chain – Transport

- 2.26 The business case for Zero Emission Bus Regional Authority (ZEBRA) has been submitted to the Department for Transport, with the response expected at the end of March. If successful, this project would see infrastructure

upgraded and a fleet of electric buses to operate within the greater Norwich area.

2.27 Supply chain – Social care

- 2.28 The competitive dialogue process is currently under way for the retender of the Integrated Community Equipment Stores (ICES). This is a large 10-year contract with an annual value of around £10m. Carbon reduction has been set out as a specific part of this process, with engagement with bidders around their plans for re-use of equipment, the energy performance of storehouses, the use of electric delivery vehicles where charging permits and reducing unnecessary mileage.

2.29 Supply chain – IT

- 2.30 As previously committed to, laptops are now to be refreshed on a 5-year basis rather than 4-years as has been the case.

2.31 Norfolk Pension Fund

- 2.32 We continue to wait for the outcome of the Department for Levelling up, Housing and Communities (DLHUC) consultation on LGPS Responsible Investment before making further proposals to the Pensions Committee.

2.33 Carbon governance for wholly owned companies

- 2.34 Engagement has started with Norse on the issue of putting in place a plan for reducing its carbon emissions, including closer working with the council on those emissions relating to key services used by the council.
- 2.35 A paper on carbon reduction targets for wholly owned companies will come to May Cabinet

2.36 Financial and procurement framework for carbon reduction

- 2.37 The Financial Regulations amendments to enact recommendations 6a-6e of the November cabinet paper have been approved by full council and the changes to the regulations put in place.
- 2.38 As per recommendations 6a-6e in the November cabinet paper, amendments to the Contract Standing Orders have been recommended by the Corporate Select Committee and will now proceed to full council for approval.
- 2.39 As per recommendation 6d in the November cabinet paper, guidance for the application of an internal carbon price has been drafted. It is now being submitted to the Net Zero board for review by Executive Directors. Such an internal carbon price can assist in appraising options in a way that aligns with the net zero commitment through giving a value to avoided or reduced emissions.

2.40 Climate action plan

- 2.41 The public has shown interest in understanding the council's work towards addressing climate change and reaching net zero – not just for the Council itself, but also for Norfolk. While the council has an ambitious public commitment, it does not have a published Climate Action Plan in the form published by a majority of local authorities in the UK.
- 2.42 Given this is a broad programme of activity that reaches across the organisation and beyond, a dedicated plan would provide a clear framework to facilitate Member review of progress and to showcase the council's achievements.
- 2.43 A scoping study has been undertaken to identify what this could look like, what areas we are currently addressing, and potential gaps that exist in relation to common templates used by local authorities for this kind of plan. The Net Zero board is currently reviewing the various options should Cabinet be supportive of this approach.

2.44 UK100

- 2.45 UK100 is a network of local government leaders, which seeks to devise and implement plans for the transition to clean energy that are ambitious, cost effective and inclusive of public and business. It brings together local authorities across the country to share knowledge, collaborate, and petition the UK government with their collective power.
- 2.46 Membership Commitments include:
- A net-zero target of 2030 for estate emissions and 2045 for area-wide emissions
 - Annual emissions reporting
 - Agree to limit the use of offsets in reaching target
- See Appendix A for a more detailed paper on the UK100 membership.

3. Progress and Next Steps for Natural Norfolk

- 3.1 The Natural Norfolk team have produced a Plan on a Page and this has been agreed by senior managers within the Environment Service. Additionally, the team are in the process of developing a series of Key Performance Indicators for the Environmental Policy, including scoping the possibility of target development on a range of indicators. This will be put forward in a Red/Amber/Green (RAG) rating matrix from which we can assess the progress and risks to enacting the original aims and objectives of the Environmental Policy.

3.2 One Million Trees for Norfolk

- 3.3 We are working with communities, residents and landowners to establish 1 million new trees in five years. Progress has been achieved through tree giveaways and partnership working with districts to deploy innovative new strategies such as Miyawaki forests: these are small, highly biodiverse planting schemes. To-date we have planted 59,178 trees and are planning is underway for the 2022-2023 planting season, with an estimated 116,000 trees planted by the end of the next financial year.
- 3.4 In addition, we are developing new regional partnerships, leading funding bids to accelerate delivery, and creating public engagement opportunities via a new Environment Hub at Gressenhall Farm and Workhouse.
- 3.5 We are also seeking funding opportunities, including the National Lottery Heritage Fund, in partnership with Suffolk and Essex County Council (Trees Connect East). The bid, led by NCC, is expected to help us progress with planting activities with potential additional funding of around £500k, with around £90k from the partners. We expect to hear the results in April 2022.

3.6 Biodiversity

- 3.7 NCC's Environmental Policy recognises the importance of biodiversity as a signifier of ecosystem health, the foundation of Norfolk's identity as an agricultural heartland. We:
- Have agreed an extension to our network of Roadside Nature Reserves.
 - Have developed a Pollinator Action Plan.
 - Are working to identify new linear habitat opportunities.
 - Have deployed a new pollinator-friendly verge cutting approach
- 3.8 In addition, NCC has been nominated as the council in charge of delivering the Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) for Norfolk. As the "Responsible Authority" we will have a statutory duty to produce the strategy. This will be in the form of a "Natural Norfolk Map", which will be the result of a wider consultation over the next 18 months. It will require significant engagement and buy in from many stakeholders and communities. We are assessing the possibility of delivering this jointly with the new Green Infrastructure Strategy.
- 3.9 The successful delivery of the Natural Norfolk map is also likely to use our Protected Landscapes as demonstrator initiatives that showcase the better integration of our outstanding natural capital assets, including the AONB, Marine Site and National Trails.

3.10 Greenways to Greenspaces

- 3.11 Greenways to Greenspaces is an overarching strategy that puts habitat connectivity at the heart of green infrastructure development, informing other initiatives such as 1 Million Trees for Norfolk and the outcomes of strategic partnerships such as the Wendling Beck Environment Project.
- 3.12 Examples of how connectivity will be delivered include:
- Trail network extensions including new routes between Gressenhall Environment Hub and Dereham (Wendling Way), and Norwich and Wymondham (Ketts Country Long Distance Path).
 - The identification of target areas with geospatial analysis and collaboration with the UEA.
 - Joint working with Highways and Suffolk County Council on regional Transport Connectivity Corridors.
- 3.13 Work is also on-going to deliver the Green Infrastructure Strategy and engagement with statutory consultees such as Natural England is instrumental with training planned for NCC on the new Green Infrastructure Framework.
- 3.14 Our Greenways to Greenspaces Programme includes our Active Travel Programme to deliver against the aims of the Governments “Gear Change” strategy.
- 3.15 To ensure we have a strategic plan for improving our walking and cycling networks Local Cycling and Walking Plans (LCWIPs) have been developed across Norfolk.
- 3.16 The plans already completed are Norwich, Great Yarmouth and King’s Lynn and copies of these are found in papers published for the Infrastructure and Development Committee on 14th July 2021 here <https://norfolkcc.cmis.uk.com/norfolkcc/CalendarofMeetings/tabid/128/ctl/ViewMeetingPublic/mid/496/Meeting/1870/Committee/171/Default.aspx> .
- 3.17 A Norfolk LCWIP is also being produced after a successful funding application on DfTs Capability Fund. This will be completed by the end of the year.

- 3.18 NCC were successful in being awarded a grant under the UK Government's Community Renewal Fund to the value of £428,400. This project will support investment in communities through a feasibility study assessing opportunity and viability of a Norfolk Sustainable Travel Network. Demonstrator studies will explore a county-wide shift towards low/zero carbon travel and assess various considerations that support decarbonisation in transport across Norfolk's districts. Improvements to rural connectivity and green infrastructure will create high-quality sustainable access to public services, businesses, natural heritage and cultural assets. The successful awarding of this bid will contribute to a more significant bid with districts under the UK Government's Shared Prosperity Fund, which is in the pipeline for launch in Spring 2022.

3.19 Green Economy

- 3.20 NCC is lead partner for EXPERIENCE, a €23.3 million European Regional Development Project that seeks to use experiential travel to extend the visitor season, supporting Norfolk's tourism sector while reducing the negative environmental impact of seasonal fluctuation in visitor numbers.
- 3.21 NCC is working closely with Great Yarmouth Borough Council to tackle waste from the fast food and takeaway sector. This is part of FACET, a European partner project that uses infrastructure solutions to promote sustainable revenue models and grow the circular economy.

3.22 Data Innovation and Analysis

- 3.23 NCC is at an enhanced state of readiness for new Nature Recovery responsibilities required by the Environment Bill. The Environmental Bill will potentially require NCC to act in different ways, including through methods of reporting and analysis, and therefore a more comprehensive paper will be produced for Cabinet at a later date.
- 3.24 NCC worked with University of East Anglia to publish the Natural Capital Compendium for Norfolk and Suffolk in early 2021, a comprehensive inventory of the county's natural assets and climate and population related risks. We are currently seeking advice from the UEA and building on the compendium to deliver the Green Infrastructure Strategy.
- 3.25 The [Norfolk Trees and Hedges Map](#) is a first-of-its-kind interactive tool that uses publicly available data to accurately display the height of the county's green cover. For effective partnership working, the range of the tool is being extended to include Suffolk. The map will be used to identify areas of Norfolk County Council's own estate, through County Farms, for biodiversity corridors, tree planting and soil health. This will enable more efficient on-the-ground operations in which officers can assess the feasibility of sites that meet the criteria determined from the original mapping exercise.

3.26 Education and Engagement

- 3.27 Gressenhall Environment Hub is an education and engagement initiative delivered on the premises of Gressenhall Farm and Workhouse. It will act as a centre for learning, aimed at engaging the residents of Norfolk with the environment and climate change, and providing them with the tools to create positive change within their community.
- 3.28 Capital works to create learning facilities on the premises are due for completion in March 2022.
- 3.29 The first public engagement event “Meet Our Master Beekeeper” takes place on 22nd May.
- 3.30 An engagement programme with schools is in development with events taking place from April onwards.
- 3.31 Open Farm Sunday on 12th June is being explored as a possible “soft launch” day for the Hub.

3.32 Strategic Partnerships

- 3.33 The Wendling Beck Environment Project adjoins Gressenhall Farm. A partnership between farmers, it is one of five pioneering landscape-scale natural capital projects in the UK.
- 3.34 As a member of the Wendling Beck Alliance and steering group, Norfolk County Council is developing access between Gressenhall Environment Hub and the project land, new shelters, cycling and walking access from Dereham (the Wendling Way) and a programme of Hub events that leverage the innovative land use and regenerative agriculture techniques on display.
- 3.35 Recent discussions have highlighted the importance of creating an effective communication and engagement strategy. Members of the partnership agreed that a working group would be an effective delivery mechanism. This would work on delivery a programme for a set of events to engage with different stakeholders.

3.36 Visible Leadership- Norfolk Climate Change Partnership

- 3.37 Established on the 6th January 2020, the aim of the Norfolk Climate Change Partnership is to help develop Norfolk into an exemplar in tackling climate change and protecting and enhancing its natural environment.
- 3.38 Membership consists of officers from across Norfolk’s local authorities, the Broads Authority, the New Anglia Local Enterprise Partnership and the Norfolk Strategic Planning Framework Member Forum. Norfolk County Council is represented by Head of Environment, John Jones.

- 3.39 This partnership has a stated shared interest in supporting Norfolk's authorities, communities, public, voluntary and community organisations, businesses and residents to reduce their carbon emissions, realise economic benefits of reducing utilities consumption and adapt to and mitigate against the future impacts of climate change.
- 3.40 The partnership covers interest areas such as local authority decarbonisation, county-wide decarbonisation areas for Norfolk, governance frameworks, communication strategies and potential funding sources.
- 3.41 The partnership is in the process of investigating and reviewing a wider range of options that would aid with county-wide decarbonisation, as well as investigate behaviour change options and wider community engagement.
- 3.42 Additionally, Norfolk County Council brings together public and private partnerships to deliver progress on high-investment themes such as the transition to green energy, rural electrification, landscape-scale nature recovery, skills and training. Though joint working with other Local Authorities, we are creating a new marketplace that fosters green innovation and supports change.

4.0 Evidence and Reasons for Decision

- 4.1 The recommendation to commission a Climate Action Plan will align the council to standard practice among local authorities in the country in relation to net zero, with over 80% having a published action plan. Given that this is a topic which attracts public interest, an action plan would enable the council to demonstrate the work being done to tackle climate change. Furthermore, a Climate Action Plan can provide a useful framework for members to review what is a wide-ranging programme of activities across the organisation.
- 4.2 The evidence and reasons for the recommendation of Norfolk County Council to become a member of the UK100 Network can be found in Appendix A.
- 4.3 The evidence for the recommendation for Norfolk's Nature Recovery Strategy comes from DEFRA's England-wide system of spatial strategies that will establish priorities and map proposals for specific actions to drive nature's recovery and provide wider environmental benefits.

5. Alternative Options

- 5.1 Cabinet could decide not to commission a Climate Action Plan and continue with updates in the current format. This would result in a continuation of our work in a way that is less systematically set out and less transparent than it would be with a published Climate Action Plan.

- 5.2 Cabinet could decide not to become a member of UK100 and continue with business as normal. This would result in Norfolk County Council missing out on resources and insights from the UK100 Network which could help with the transition to net-zero and reduction in county-wide emissions.

6. Financial Implications

- 6.1 There are no direct financial implications from the recommendations of this report. The work to deliver Natural Norfolk and the Net-Zero programme is funded from a wide range of sources. The financial implications and funding are being considered by senior officers in the Net Zero board. Future investments will be considered as part of individual programmes and activities and will be reported to Cabinet.

7. Resource Implications

7.1 Staff

No implications beyond those identified in the November cabinet paper

7.2 Property

No implications beyond those identified in the November cabinet paper

7.3 IT

No implications beyond those identified in the November cabinet paper

8. Other implications

8.1 Legal implications

No direct legal implications identified

8.2 Human rights implications

No implications identified

8.3 Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA)

An EqIA was conducted as part of the paper introducing the Environment Policy to full council on 25th November 2019. A further EqIA to cover ongoing activities related to the Environment Policy is a live process, and cabinet will be notified if issues are identified.

8.4 Health and Safety implications

Nothing in addition to what was identified in the November cabinet paper

8.5 Sustainability implications

The substance of this paper is principally an update on sustainability related activities undertaken by the council.

8.6 Any other implications

No further implications identified

9. Risk Implications/Assessment

No risks identified beyond those set out in the November cabinet paper

10. Background papers

- [Environmental Policy](#)
- [November 2021 Cabinet Report](#)
- [LCWIPs for Great Yarmouth, Norwich and King's Lynn published as appendices to the Infrastructure and Development Committee's meeting on July 14th 2021](#)

Officer contact

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

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

Appendix A- UK100 Membership Paper

1. Introduction

1.1 UK100 is a network of local government leaders, which seeks to devise and implement plans for the transition to clean energy that are ambitious, cost effective and take the public and business with them. It supports decision-makers in UK towns, cities, and counties in their transition to Net Zero.

1.2 UK100 brings together local authorities across the country to share knowledge, collaborate, and petition the UK government with their collective power. They are working together to create flourishing communities - seizing the opportunities of technology to create jobs and establishing a nationwide project of renewal, focussed on local needs and ambitions.

2. Commitments

2.1 Net Zero Pledge members commit to the following:

- Set ambitious Net Zero targets for greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions of 2030 for council operations and 2045 for areawide emissions at the latest
- Report emissions annually (Scope 1 and 2 for council emissions and areawide emissions)
- Limit the use of offsets in reaching their targets.

2.2 The pledge states that signatories “*will do everything within our power and influence to rapidly reduce our greenhouse gas emissions.*” This recognises that local authorities do not necessarily have all the powers yet to reach their ambitious Net Zero targets.

3. Value in Signing Up

3.1 Access to members-only programmes and services, including research, publications and briefings, and knowledge sharing between members including meetings, webinars, roundtables and workshops.

3.2 Promotion of best practice via social media (Twitter and LinkedIn) and newsletters, which provides an opportunity for wider demonstrating of leadership.

3.3 Provision of insight, evidence and recommendation papers on the challenges and solutions to achieving local Net Zero initiatives.

3.4 Connects Local Authorities with businesses and industry that can help with planning and implementation of solutions needed to reduce emissions within the local area.

3.5 Opportunities to join campaigns on issues such as Clean Air, Communicating Climate Change, Financing Local Energy, Green Finance and Local Green Jobs.

3.6 Opportunities to join and collaborate on projects and initiatives such as UK100 Knowledge Hub, Local Climate Engagement, Countryside Climate Network, APPG on Sustainable Finance and Resilient Recovery Taskforce.

3.7 Members representing rural communities are automatically eligible to join the UK100 Countryside Climate Network (CCN):

- This is a sub-group for members who authority covers predominantly rural areas.
- The CCN includes more tailored content for councils and authorities that experience similar challenges in delivering net-zero based on their localities.

4. Implications for Norfolk County Council

4.1 No membership fee for local authorities to join UK100 and does not need to be renewed on an annual basis. If a council no longer meets the criteria, then membership can be terminated.

4.2 Resourcing implications - UK100 network meets twice a year to discuss activities and advocacy. Additionally, there are issue-specific events that members are encouraged to attend aimed at different levels (leaders, cabinet members, officers).

4.3 The Countryside Climate Network (CCN) meets quarterly. Leaders can actively participate in, or elect an appropriate cabinet member representative to participate in, quarterly CCN meetings. Expectation for members to provide regular updates via email on climate action plans and projects.

4.4 This equates to 6 days attendance by leaders per annum as a minimum, with additional issue-specific events when they occur. Officer-support relating to producing supporting documents will need to be examined in further detail. We have reached out to Suffolk County Council, who signed up to UK100 in October 2021, for an indication of resources, time and finances involved.

4.5 This is a non-legally binding pledge - UK100 will not take legal action if we do not reach targets. However, we have agreed net-zero targets through Council and have an official environmental policy which was carried at Full Council, and we are held accountable to these targets.

5. Other Considerations

5.1 Other county councils in the East of England which have signed up include Suffolk County Council, Hertfordshire County Council and Cambridgeshire County Council. City and Borough Councils that have signed up include Norwich City Council, Cambridge City Council, Stevenage Borough Council, St Albans City and District Council and Peterborough City Council.

5.2 Norfolk County Council submitted an Expression of Interest for the UK100 Local Climate Engagement programme. This was for local authorities and partnerships to express interest in joining either the coaching group or the project group. We were unsuccessful in our Expression of Interest and unable to secure feedback, but we are on a list to be contacted about similar future schemes.

5.3 There will be other options to apply for other funding, training and partnerships opportunity which will be strengthened by joining the UK100 network.

Cabinet

Item No:12

Report Title: Strategic Review

Date of Meeting: 4 April 2022

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

Responsible Director: Tom McCabe (Head of Paid Service)

Is this a Key Decision? Yes

If this is a Key Decision, date added to the Forward Plan of Key Decisions: 7 February 2022

Introduction from Cabinet Member

As I said in my introduction to Better Together, for Norfolk, “we continue to strive to be one of the highest performing counties in the country” and “we have made good progress in transforming services across the council and ensuring financial stability and sustainability”.

But as reported elsewhere on this agenda, the Council faces unprecedented financial challenges over the next few years and we need to proactively respond to these to ensure that, as an organisation, we remain fit for purpose and able to deliver the services that so many residents of Norfolk rely upon.

In approaching this task, I am aware of the need for organisational stability at a time of intense pressure, and of the need to ‘keep safe’ critical services and services that are subject to external inspection regimes - including adult and children’s services and the fire service. I am also aware of the need to put arrangements in place that support and enable our staff to maximise their performance and impact.

Our senior leadership team recognises that this is the first comprehensive review undertaken in ten years and seeks to fully exploit the opportunity to:

- Remove all areas of duplication, including in support services, especially where these now exist in both the ‘centre’ and individual directorates;
- Adjust the number of management layers; and improve spans of control

- Improve our organisational design to be more efficient in decision making and organisation of work.
- Simplify how we describe roles and organise into professional groupings for consistency and support career development and equality

Recommendations:

- 1. To agree the Council's broader ambition to prepare the organisation for significant future transformation.**
- 2. To progress a review, with an initial focus on the role and number of management layers and spans of control, to identify areas of duplication, simplification of role design and identify and deliver any resulting savings.**
- 3. To delegate to the Head of Paid Service, in consultation with the Director of Procurement and the Leader, the decision to award a contract to provide external support to this transformation activity.**
- 4. To direct the Head of Paid Service to ensure the necessary internal resources are secured in order to successfully implement the review and to ensure that ways of working are established that enable effective knowledge transfer from, and partnership working with, the external provider.**

1. Background and Purpose

- 1.1 The Council's financial position for the next three years was set out in the Full Council meeting in February 2022. Although the size of the 3-year budget gap is similar to that we have recently experienced, it is heavily weighted to year 1. As such, we need to identify and deliver some £60m savings over this next 12 months to ensure that we can set a legal and balanced budget in February 2023.
- 1.2 The challenge for every local authority is to design a sustainable funding model that doesn't overburden residents with cost of what the council delivers for them. Within this we need to create confidence that we are delivering the right services to the right level in an efficient and effective way.
- 1.3 In our approach to this we must:
 - Move at pace to reduce cost quickly, whilst building capability to transform services effectively
 - Safeguard the stability and sustain the improvement achieved in safety-critical services
 - Align to wider system changes, specifically the launch of the Integrated Care System and the potential development of a County Deal
 - Promote a digital-first capability in the way public services are provided

- 1.4 As these changes are delivered, NCC will establish a lower-cost operating arrangement where the right people, processes, structures, skills, and capabilities are in place. We will have the culture we need in order to take people with us so that change is sustained and risks are managed.
- 1.5 This ambition has a significant implication for organisational development because it demands more collaborative and innovative ways of working to address the significant funding challenges. The County Council will continue to be a large organisation that delivers a diverse range of services. But changes to the public sector landscape and funding regimes necessitate a new approach as we evolve over the next few years.

2. Proposal

- 2.1 We will review a number of specific aspects of the design of the organisation, to include:
- Optimising spans of control
 - Reducing management layers
 - Identification of duplication and removal/centralisation/combining of similar roles for improved effectiveness, quality and professional standards
 - Full implementation of career families and professional leadership including standardised and future-proofed role profiles based on outcomes and strengths and simple definable career steps
 - Aligning new career steps to our grading structure
 - Analysis of the governance, capability and process for job evaluation and designing a sustainable model and ensure knowledge transfer.
 - Shaping a pay strategy which builds on fairness, transparency and market alignment to support recruitment and retention
 - A business change plan which includes staff engagement, aligned to leadership development work, to build sustainable cultural change.
- 2.2 An initial analysis of the first three areas of work, undertaken in response to previous cabinet decisions (see Background Papers), namely spans of control, management layers and removal of duplication suggests that cost savings of in the order of £15m - £20m could be identified. This more-detailed work will test these initial figures and identify the potential range of implications of such a course of action on staff, service users and service delivery.
- 2.3 We are seeking specialist external support for this work. This will ensure we have the necessary capability and capacity to complement and supplement the internal team in organisation and job design, job evaluation, and pay strategy. The appointed advisers will have the technical capability to work within NCC's framework and methodology for how jobs are defined and

evaluated using the Korn Ferry Hay Job Evaluation Method for structural review. It is also envisaged they will provide organisational analysis using a structured methodology to support objective decision-making based on clear design principles: and will lever insight about the wider local government pay landscape and bring specialist external insight in the area of reward policy and equal pay into our specific context.

- 2.4 Within this, it will be critical to ensure that senior managers are engaged and are able to participate in shaping and implementing the work, not simply passive recipients of it. The nature of this work and its impact on staffing structures will also require individuals and teams to be consulted where any emerging proposals impact on their role. This will include formal consultation with relevant unions as required.

3. Impact of the Proposal

- 3.1 It is important to acknowledge that it has been some ten years since we instigated such a strategic review. The review will provide the opportunity to:
- Remove all areas of duplication including support services, especially where these now exist in both the 'centre' and individual directorates or where multiple directorates undertake the same or closely related tasks
 - Give greater clarity of accountability
 - Adjust the number of management layers and improve spans of control to enable appropriate levels of autonomy and responsibility for all employees that support robust and agile decision making
 - Make management and supervisory savings through a more effective organisational structure that enables performance to be maximised
- 3.2 The organisational redesign should support other, broader, objectives, including:
- Empowering and up skilling leaders and managers
 - Attracting, retaining and developing the best people
 - Supporting the rebalancing of the workforce in support of equality objectives
 - A more effective internal jobs market and clearer career paths
- 3.3 As set out in the Council's Constitution, there is no delegated responsibility to officers to determine a major employee reorganisation. Therefore, further information about the review and the findings will be presented to Members for consideration and approval once the review has progressed to an appropriate stage.

4. Evidence and Reasons for Decision

- 4.1 This review proposes a detailed analysis of the organisation's structures aligned to clear organisational design principles. This should create a

simpler and more cost-effective operating model which enables effective service delivery, decision making, clarity of role and outcome.

5. Alternative Options

- 5.1 Cabinet could decide not to proceed with a review, but this risks the organisation operating in silos with cost inefficiency and duplication of functions and so not contributing to closing the existing budget gap. Cabinet has previously decided to undertake a review and so this would be reversing that decision (See background Papers).
- 5.2 We could undertake a more expansive review of the Council's operating model, but believe the organisation is not sufficiently ready to embark on a more radical review of functions. It is deemed there is a need for appropriate organisational stability and to 'keep safe' critical services and services that are subject to external inspection regimes.
- 5.3 Rather than seek an external provider, Cabinet could decide to purely resource the programme internally. Use of external providers should be when increased capacity is required or to enhance capability. It is the view of the Executive Directors that we don't have the readily available capacity to do a project of this scale, at the desired pace, at this time. This paper is recommending we engage an organisation with the capability and experience of doing evidence based organisational design and change at pace. This would also enhance our internal capability. The paper recommends choosing a provider who will align with our wider transformation initiatives, support any knowledge and skills transfer and also ensure that we have the capacity to engage and deliver the programme from the 'client side'.

6. Financial Implications

- 6.1 The budget gap for 2023-24 identified in the updated Medium Term Financial Strategy is materially higher than the gap closed for this year's Budget. Simultaneously, there is major uncertainty linked to Government's plans to reform local government funding during 2022 (for 2023-24) and linked to the delivery of the levelling up agenda. While the Council's past success in delivering a balanced budget, coupled with a robust budget planning approach, provides a solid platform for development, this project is an essential part of prudent cost reduction.
- 6.2 It is intended that the review will deliver recurring savings of the order of £15m - £20m per annum. The cost of the external advisers will not be known until procurement is complete, but it is envisaged that it will be a fraction of annual savings. A contract will only be awarded if the ratio of costs to likely

savings offers good value for money. This will be funded from the organisational change reserve.

- 6.3 Whilst we will seek to manage the impact of a reduction of posts through staff turnover and other methods (annual turnover is in the order of 12%) as set out in section 7.1 there will need to be some redundancies to deliver the savings, for which there will be a one-off cost in line with agreed policies and procedures. A business case will need to be prepared once the review has been undertaken to understand the potential one-off costs and how these impact on the profile of savings delivery.
- 6.4 It should further be noted that a “client side” team of HR specialists and programme management expertise is required to deliver a programme of this scale and implement and maintain an appropriate governance arrangement for organisational design, job design etc. This investment for the lifetime of the project will be included in a future business case. The business case should further consider a one-off learning and development investment to enable transfer into other roles, which would offset redundancy costs

7. Resource Implications

7.1 Staff:

Our staff are critical to the delivery of services for Norfolk. The hard work and commitment of our staff is very much valued. The review will seek to harness this, engage leaders in change and recognise the uncertainty that change can bring.

It has been ten years since the last comprehensive review. Since that time, there have been significant changes to both the challenges we are facing, the context we are operating in and the way that we work, particularly the new ways of working made possible through our transformation programmes. Our organisational design is now out of step with this. There is a need to re-set our thinking and expectations for roles, in particular our expectations of management and supervisory roles versus technical and professional specialists.

The review will consider the need for, grading and reporting lines for a significant number of managerial posts. We will need to ensure there is appropriate staff consultation at each stage of this work and sufficient internal resourcing to work alongside the external advisers.

As set out above, it is expected that there will be a reduction in the number of roles in the organisation. We will ensure that we support those directly affected by these changes. This includes support for individuals to secure alternative roles and change career paths, as well as learning and

development for staff taking on new or changed roles. As far as possible, we will seek to manage the impact of the reduction in posts through turnover, redeployment and flexible working alternatives e.g. flexible retirement. We can also consider, with investment, development to move into different career opportunities. We will need also to manage our position on vacancies. Given the scope of the intended changes, it is not anticipated that we can mitigate all the impact in this way and therefore there will be a need for some redundancies. Evidence from other (smaller) organisational change projects indicates that in this situation some staff have an appetite for voluntary redundancy, reducing the need for compulsory redundancy.

7.2 Property:

It is not considered that there are any direct property implications arising from this report. Any changes in the size or nature of our workforce will need to be reflected in the future property portfolio.

7.3 IT:

It is not considered that there are any direct IT implications arising from this report. Any changes in the size or nature of our workforce will need to be reflected in the future IT strategy. Our new organisational design will need to reflect our “digital-first” approach and the progress made in automation and flexible working. There will also be a continued need to provide support, learning and development to enable our staff to effectively harness the digital tools and ways of working available.

8. Other Implications

8.1 Legal Implications:

The Council has a duty to make arrangements to secure continuous improvement in the way in which its functions are exercised, having regard to a combination of economy, efficiency and effectiveness. This review provides an opportunity to ensure that the way that we are organised internally reflects this, in the context of it being 10 years since the last comprehensive review was carried out.

Existing HR policies and procedures ensure compliance with employment and associated legislation, including organisational change processes and approach to avoiding redundancy, where possible.

The services will be procured by competitive tender within a suitable framework agreement in accordance with procurement law and Contract Standing Orders

8.2 Human Rights Implications:

The Council has a range of policies and processes in place to ensure that staffing and organisational design considerations reflect the key principles of

the Human Rights Act, e.g. dignity, fairness, respect and equality. We will make use of these policies and processes, as relevant, throughout the review and, as set out above, we will consult with those affected by the findings of the review as part of the review.

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

A full equality impact assessment will be undertaken as part of the review. At this stage, general consideration has been given to the potential impacts of the review.

There is no evidence at this stage to indicate that the proposal would have a disproportionate or detrimental impact or would more significantly disadvantage people with protected characteristics, compared to people who do not share these characteristics. This is because the review will focus primarily on internal organisational design and staffing structures. Service users will not experience reductions in the quality, standards or level of support, a change in eligibility criteria or new/increased costs as a result of the Review.

The review findings are expected to recommend changes to staffing structures and could make recommendations relating to staff terms or conditions. However, this cannot be known until the review is completed and the findings available. When the findings are developed, they will be subject to a further equality assessment, and any potential impacts on people with protected characteristics that it is not possible to predict at the present time, will be reported to decision-makers to enable next steps to be agreed before proceeding further.

8.4 Data Protection Impact Assessments (DPIA):

As part of the review, there will be a need to share staffing data with the appointed adviser which constitutes data sharing. A Data Protection Impact Assessment has been completed and whilst this data processing is considered to be low risk we will require as part of the procurement process that the successful contractor has appropriate arrangements in place to safeguard and appropriately use and store any data shared.

8.5 Health and Safety implications (where appropriate):

There are no direct health and safety implications arising from the recommendations in this report. There will be a need, as part of the review, to ensure that our organisational design and structure arrangements provide sufficient capacity and clarity of responsibility to enable effective health and safety management and leadership arrangements for both staff and service users.

8.6 Sustainability implications (where appropriate):

Promoting a digital first capability in the way public services are provided gives an opportunity to reduce a reliance on paperwork and introduce ways of working that reduce our impact on the environment e.g. reducing mileage. As set out in para 7.2, any changes in the size or nature of our workforce will need to be reflected in the future property portfolio which may provide a further opportunity to reduce our environmental impact e.g. through reduced use of electricity or gas for heating buildings.

8.7 Any Other Implications:

Officers have considered all of the implications which members should be aware of. Apart from those listed in the report (above) there are no other implications to take into account.

9. Risk Implications / Assessment

The key risks are:

- That the target savings cannot be delivered once closer analysis is undertaken – it will be essential that other savings proposals are worked up in parallel
- That staff morale may be damaged and/or that key staff may leave as a result of perceptions of the process – careful staff engagement will be critical
- That the review may excessively reduce capacity in critical areas – Executive Directors will need to be very closely engaged with the process and with reviewing recommendations.
- That we do not harness the required leadership commitment and focus to deliver what is a complex organisational change programme – it is essential that senior leaders and managers are part of the review process and are able to be part of shaping the work

These risks need to be balanced against the benefits set out in this report.

10. Recommendations:

- 1. To agree the Council's broader ambition to prepare the organisation for significant future transformation.**
- 2. To progress a review, with an initial focus on the role and number of management layers and spans of control, to identify areas of duplication, simplification of role design and identify and deliver any resulting savings.**
- 3. To delegate to the Head of Paid Service, in consultation with the Director of Procurement and the Leader, the decision to award a contract to provide external support to this transformation activity.**
- 4. To direct the Head of Paid Service to ensure the necessary internal resources are secured in order to successfully implement**

the review and to ensure that ways of working are established that enable effective knowledge transfer from, and partnership working with, the external provider.

11. Background Papers

Cabinet item 17. Strategic and Financial Planning 2022-23, 21/11/21

Cabinet item 16 2022-23 Revenue Budget and Medium Term Financial Strategy 2022-26, 31/1/22

Officer Contact

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

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

County Council

Item No: 13

Report Title: *Better Together, for Norfolk 2021-2025* – delivering our strategy

Date of Meeting: 4 April 2022

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

Responsible Director: Paul Cracknell, Executive Director for Strategy & Transformation

Executive Summary

On 29 November 2021, Norfolk County Council formally adopted the new strategy [*Better Together, for Norfolk 2021-2025*](#) as part of its policy framework. The strategy builds on the vision and ambitions set out in our 2019 corporate plan and has been updated to reflect the needs and priorities for Norfolk as we emerge from the pandemic.

The publication of the strategy also set out a commitment to develop a number of products that will contribute to the delivery of our strategic priorities, more specifically:

- An annual, rolling Corporate Delivery Plan, to contain critical activities that will contribute to the delivery of our strategy and the key areas of focus for the next performance year.
- A refreshed Communication strategy, to ensure effective and targeted communications with our residents and stakeholders across local, regional and national systems.
- A refreshed Workforce strategy, to ensure the Council has people with the skills, knowledge and experience required to achieve its strategic objectives and respond to current and future challenges.

At their meeting on 31 January 2022, Cabinet approved the proposed approach, structure and content of the draft Corporate Delivery Plan. Since then, the plan has been updated, as appropriate, to ensure it reflects any changes in policy, activity or timescales (for example, the publication of the Levelling Up White Paper on 2 February 2022 confirming Norfolk's opportunity to bid for a County Deal).

The purpose of this report is to seek Cabinet's approval of the 2022/23 the Corporate Delivery Plan, and to provide an update on the progress being made on the Communications and Workforce strategies.

Recommendations

To:

1. **Approve the 2022/23 Corporate Delivery Plan.**
2. **Provide feedback on the work being done to develop the Communication and Workforce strategies, and the proposed timescale for delivery.**

1. Introduction

- 1.1. Norfolk County Council's strategic framework consists of a number of strategic documents, which set out the Council's ambitions and priorities, are aligned to the administration's manifesto pledges, and reflect the national policy and local operating context and challenges. They also ensure that there are clear links between these and operational plans. These documents and plans are underpinned by a Performance Management Framework, which links council activity with performance outcomes and measures at a department, team and individual level.
- 1.2. The process for developing the Council's strategy [**Better Together, for Norfolk 2021-2025**](#) in the wake of the Covid-19 pandemic, has enabled the Council to reaffirm its vision and ambitions for the County and the Council, and review its strategic priorities. Furthermore, it has created an opportunity for the business planning and performance framework to be reviewed and realigned to the needs of the organisation.
- 1.3. The Council also committed to developing a Workforce strategy and a Communications strategy, as enablers to the delivery of the corporate strategy.

2. Better Together, for Norfolk 2021-25

- 2.1. The strategy outlines the Council's definition of "levelling up" in Norfolk and is structured around these five key strategic and interlinking priorities:
 - **A vibrant and sustainable economy** – this priority is about growing the economy inclusively, so that everyone has opportunities to benefit. It is about growing the skills the County needs and creating high value jobs; drawing down investment; and developing our infrastructure and digital connectivity
 - **Better opportunities for children and young people** – this priority is about raising educational standards and attainment in our County, improving the lives of families and children, and creating better employment opportunities for young people
 - **Healthy, fulfilling and independent lives** – this priority focuses on the themes of levelling up health, ensuring people who face disadvantage and poor health can live well, and have access to better services where they live
 - **Strong, engaged and inclusive communities** – this priority focuses on improving the relationships between communities and public service provision, so that people and communities are supported, empowered,

enabled to help themselves, and have a voice in how services are designed and delivered

- **A greener, more resilient future** – this priority recognises the critical importance of climate change and the environment, as well as the role that our physical and social infrastructure play in creating stronger communities that people can be proud of

2.2. These strategic priorities seek to address challenges and opportunities arising from the pandemic and the government's policy agenda and priorities. They reflect the Council's ambition to support the county to emerge stronger and more sustainable, meet people's needs more effectively, and seize opportunities to embed positive change for the future.

2.3. The strategy will inform what we do within Norfolk County Council as well as beyond and with partners. Internally, it offers the opportunity for the leadership to agree common priorities and objectives, achieve organisational alignment against those, inform our investment choices and form the basis for delivery plans with clear measures of success. Externally, it provides the platform and opportunity for further conversations with our partners and government on how we might work better together to achieve common goals to deliver a better future for Norfolk, for example through a County Deal.

2.4. On 2 February 2022, the government published the long awaited Levelling Up White Paper, containing 4 strategic objectives and 12 missions aimed at addressing and improving geographical inequalities across the UK. The White Paper sets out the policy landscape and initiatives that government will put in place to achieve the 12 missions. One of the key levers of change is a desire to empower local leaders through County Deals to make decisions on a range of issues for the benefit of their residents through devolution of certain powers and associated funding. Norfolk is one of nine counties invited to negotiate an early County Deal under the new published framework, and we will be working with central government on the content of that over the coming months. Achieving a County Deal for Norfolk' is reflected in the overarching strategy and our commitment to 'levelling up Norfolk', and is a specific area of focus on our Corporate Delivery Plan 2022/23.

3. NCC Strategic Framework

3.1. At NCC, our strategic framework consists of a number of strategic documents which ensure alignment across the organisation. The latest addition to the framework is the Corporate Delivery Plan, which is described further in the following sections. Briefly, the framework now consists of:

- The Council's **corporate strategy** *Better Together, for Norfolk 2021-25*, which sets out the Council's vision for our county and the council, focuses on mid to long-term goals and explains the basic strategies for achieving them. It is a central part of the policy framework setting out the corporate priorities and outcomes that the council aims to achieve over the next three years and the ethos for doing so.

- The **Corporate Delivery Plan**, which acts as the single business plan for NCC, and sets out the most significant activities which will contribute to the delivery of the outcomes and objectives in our corporate strategy. This is a new element to the planning framework and is described further in the following sections.
- **Cross-cutting priorities**, which will ensure that large-scale activities which affect the whole Council are coordinated across the organisation (e.g. Net Zero, Smarter Working)
- The **Departmental plans**, which are produced by each of our Departments annually and show what they will do to contribute to the achievement of outcomes within the corporate strategy, as well as outlining key operational actions and activities for service delivery.
- The **plans on a page**, which are developed annually at whatever business unit level is deemed appropriate within a department – mostly at Director and Assistant Director level. These plans summarise teams' key priorities and targets for the next performance year and are used to set individual performance goals.
- Finally, the **individual performance goals** contain personal objectives that will help to achieve actions within the relevant department plan, plan on a page and/or the priorities and outcomes in the corporate strategy as appropriate.

5. Corporate Delivery Plan 2022/23

- 5.1. In order to have a clear grip and focus on priorities over a period, the Council needs a single whole-council view of key activities.
- 5.2. The Corporate Delivery Plan 2022/23 reflects the council's priorities for the coming year, its response to central government policy, and the Council's transformation programme.
- 5.3. The Plan is structured around our 5 strategic priorities and sets out a narrative of how we will seek to respond to and deliver these priorities, starting with the new financial year. This includes the major programmes and initiatives for the Council over this period as well as how we will respond to political changes and financial pressures.
- 5.4. The Corporate Delivery Plan does not seek to describe everything that the Council does, instead, it focuses on the most significant "big ticket" activities, which:
 - Support the delivery of political ambitions, outcomes and objectives in our strategy
 - Deliver our Medium Term Financial Strategy
 - Are business critical
- 5.5. Essential, day-to-day service delivery will continue to be captured in our departmental plans and plans on a page, which will be refreshed in 2022 as part of the 2023/24 budget planning cycle, to ensure alignment with our Medium Term Financial Strategy.

- 5.6. In addition to the 5 strategic priorities in our strategy, the Corporate Delivery Plan also contains a section on Operational Effectiveness, which captures activity aimed at transforming our property, technology, engagement approach, and workforce, to make us the most efficient we can be, ensuring we are on a sustainable financial footing and can offer our residents value for money services.
- 5.7. The implementation detail of activities contained in the Corporate Delivery Plan will continue to sit in departmental plans, programme and project plans and relevant business cases.
- 5.8. The Corporate Delivery Plan is owned by the Leader, Cabinet and Executive Directors. It has been collectively developed with Department Senior Leadership Teams, reflecting Cabinet members' priorities.
- 5.9. The Corporate Delivery Plan is part of the corporate business planning cycle. The Council will report annually against the Corporate Delivery Plan.

6. Managing performance

- 6.1. The launch of our new strategy, the Corporate Delivery Plan, and the reassessment of our strategic priorities and financial challenges, has provided us with the opportunity to review the existing framework, measures and associated management tools, to ensure it is fit for purpose and aligned with our strategy.
- 6.2. Over the past few weeks, a draft of the performance framework has been developed, shaped by the 'Better Together, for Norfolk' strategy and our business planning processes, and following review of our existing management practices. The draft provides an overview of key areas that require further development, much of which centres around developing our culture and accountability organisationally.
- 6.3. Priorities have been shared with Executive Directors to ensure alignment with business requirements, and proposals for the journey moving forward have been endorsed, with a view to enhancing our governance around Performance Management. We continue to work as a Leadership Team on linking in our performance with our strategy outcomes, and as such, the development of the Framework will be in line with planning activities across the year. In the meantime, thought is being given to the implementation of further development of the Corporately Significant Vital Signs Dashboard and our associated Performance Measures.

7. NCC Workforce strategy

- 7.1. A draft of the strategy has been created, influenced by the 'Better Together, for Norfolk' strategy, NCC workforce data and horizon scanning, input from Executive Directors, and testing with the Departmental Management Teams. The draft provides a 'strawman' as agreed with Executive Directors for the themes where there is clear understanding and a consensus about the

strategic approach. Gaps remain where a small number of themes require more exploration, development and decision-making by the ED team.

- 7.2. The current draft is ready to be shared with EDs and time has been allocated later in March to receive their comments and to explore and make decisions about the remaining themes. It is anticipated that a complete draft will come to Corporate Select Committee in May 2022. In the meantime thought is being given to implementation planning requirements and how delivery of the workforce strategy will be governed in way that is aligned with other large corporate change initiatives.

8. NCC Communications strategy

- 8.1. The draft new communications strategy is being developed alongside departments to ensure all objectives match the council's ambition for Better Together for Norfolk. This is happening alongside an internal communications approach, so our staff and elected members are clear on, and are advocates for, Better Together for Norfolk in the community.
- 8.2. As laid out previously, aim of the strategy is to create a 'one team' approach working side by side to create a culture with departments that harnesses a more focussed and joined up approach that improves message delivery for service users and shows communication with residents is the responsibility of all officers and elected member. Work has been completed to identify communications roles across the Council which need to be integrated with the central Communications team to ensure this focused and joined up approach. The next steps are to co-ordinate these roles via Four Departmental Communications Groups which are being established with terms of reference and working programmes being created for ED sign off in April.
- 8.3. Work on detailed communications plans, co-produced with our services has begun with a master plan being developed to integrate communication planning across both individual departments and throughout the council.
- 8.4. Work has begun on outlining how the council maximises its communication channels and channels of key stakeholders to maximise effectiveness for both reach and cost.
- 8.5. External partner communications groups have been established or re-established for commonality of message delivery and engagement.
- 8.6. Joint communications roles with partners to maximise effectiveness of delivery have been created with more to follow.
- 8.7. The Communication strategy is expected to be reviewed by the Corporate Select Committee and finalised in the first quarter of the financial year 2022/23.

9. Financial Implications

- 9.1. The financial context for the strategy will be set through our annual budget planning process and Medium Term Financial Strategy.

10. Resource Implications

10.1. **Staff:** N/A

10.2. **Property:** N/A

10.3. **IT:** N/A

11. Other Implications

11.1. **Legal Implications:** N/A

11.2. **Human Rights Implications:** N/A

11.3. **Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) (this must be included):** The Corporate Delivery Plan consolidates projects and business activity required to deliver our strategy ***Better Together, for Norfolk***. Each project will be distinct in its own right, and will have a different level of impact on people with protected characteristics and the armed forces, depending on its nature and focus. All project managers and business leads will therefore be required to ensure that due regard is given to the equality duty in designing, reporting on and delivering their activities. If any negative impacts are identified that cannot be mitigated, these will be reported to Cabinet for determination.

11.4. **Data Protection Impact Assessments (DPIA):** N/A

11.5. **Health and Safety implications (where appropriate):** N/A

11.6. **Sustainability implications (where appropriate):** N/A

11.7. **Any Other Implications:** N/A

12. Risk Implications / Assessment

12.1. Prioritising key activities, to ensure understanding of and focus on what is absolutely critical within the Council strategy is the major feature of the development of the Corporate Delivery Plan. This prioritisation process provides clarity to staff and our residents about what matters to the Council, and also provides a manageable set of strategic activities for Cabinet and Leadership teams to monitor throughout the year.

12.2. The Council maintains a Corporate Risk Register that identifies the most significant corporate and strategic risks. The register contains details of the principal risks to the achievement of the objectives of our strategy. Each of these risks is assessed for likelihood and impact and has a responsible owner and programme of mitigating actions/controls. The register is updated throughout the year and reported quarterly to Cabinet.

13. Recommendations

To:

1. **Approve the 2022/23 Corporate Delivery Plan.**

2. Provide feedback on the work being done to develop the Communication and Workforce strategies, and the proposed timescale for delivery.

14. Background Papers

- 14.1. Better Together, for Norfolk 2021-2025
- 14.2. Strategy development and business planning at NCC (page 45)
- 14.3. Better Together, for Norfolk 2021-2025 – delivering our strategy (page 144)
- 14.4. Minutes of the Cabinet Meeting held on Monday 31 January 2022 (page 8)

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► CORPORATE DELIVERY PLAN

2022-23

BETTER TOGETHER, FOR NORFOLK





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INTRODUCTION

On 29 November 2021, Norfolk County Council adopted the refreshed strategy Better Together, for Norfolk 2021-25 as part of its Council Policy Framework.

The strategy outlines the Council's definition of "levelling up" in Norfolk and is structured around these five key strategic and interlinking priorities:

- **A vibrant and sustainable economy** – this priority is about growing the economy inclusively, so that everyone has opportunities to thrive. It is about growing the skills the County needs and creating high value jobs; drawing down investment; and developing our infrastructure and digital connectivity
- **Better opportunities for children and young people** – this priority is about raising educational standards and attainment in our County, improving the lives of families and children, and creating better employment opportunities for young people
- **Healthy, fulfilling and independent lives** – this priority focuses on the themes of levelling up health, ensuring people who face disadvantage and poor health can live well, and have access to better services where they live
- **Strong, engaged and inclusive communities** – this priority focuses on improving the relationships between communities and public service provision, so that people and communities are supported, empowered, and enabled to help themselves, and have a voice in how services are designed and delivered
- **A greener, more resilient future** – this priority recognises the critical importance of climate change and the environment, as well as the role that our physical and social infrastructure play in creating stronger communities that people can be proud of

The Council also committed to develop a Corporate Delivery Plan, to provide a whole-Council view of the critical activities that will delivery our strategy as well as our Medium Term Financial Strategy and operational targets.





OUR CORPORATE DELIVERY PLAN

In order to have a clear grip and focus on priorities that deliver our strategy and objectives, the Council needs a single whole-council view of key activities.

The Corporate Delivery Plan will be structured by the 5 strategic priorities outlined in the corporate strategy document and will be focused on NCC's most significant "big ticket" activities, which:

- Support the delivery of the outcomes and objectives in our strategy, and our Medium-Term Financial Strategy
- Are business critical

In the context of the Corporate Delivery Plan, "significant activities" are:

- Areas of significant service activity (e.g. transformational changes in service delivery and business change projects, new services etc.)
- Significant commissioning activities for infrastructure (e.g. highways, property, digital infrastructure) and people services (e.g. children's, adults and public health services)
- Capital delivery (e.g. delivering new education, property and community assets in our capital programme)
- Strategy and policy development (e.g. new strategies, responding to changes in national policy and lobbying)

The Corporate Delivery Plan is not intended as an exhaustive guide of everything we do, but instead provides a clear sense of how the Council will respond to changes in our operating environment to deliver significant activity successfully. Essential day-to-day service delivery continues to be captured in our departmental plans (divisional/service business plans) and plans on a page.

In addition to the 5 strategic priorities in our strategy, the Corporate Delivery Plan also contains a section on Operational Effectiveness, which describes that significant activity which aim to transform the Council - our property, technology, ways of working, engagement,

and workforce. These activities are essential for strategic and corporate services and often require a cross-cutting approach across the Council.

The detail of how and when activity in the Corporate Delivery Plan will be achieved will continue to sit in underpinning documents, such as business cases and programme/project plans.

The plan is owned by the Leader, Cabinet and the Council's Executive Directors. It has been collectively developed with Department Senior Leadership Teams, reflecting Cabinet members' priorities. It is a rolling plan to be updated each year to help the Council to focus on what needs to be delivered over the next short to medium term to improve the quality of life in Norfolk. It is not meant to be only a passive document, instead it is a live document to be reviewed internally quarterly and reported on annually.

▶ OPERATING CONTEXT

Our strategic priorities and the activities outlined in the corporate delivery plan arise from and are influenced by a range of factors, all of which constitute our current operating environment.

As we move slowly out of the grip of the coronavirus pandemic, our operating environment remains volatile and prone to change. In this document, we outline the key drivers of our operating context as we understand them at the time of writing. These will be reviewed regularly, and the corporate delivery plan updated accordingly, should the need arise.

Impact of Covid-19:

The pandemic has had a significant impact on our economy, our communities and the Council, much of which is ongoing. The local economy has started to recover, making up £3bn of the £4.5bn of Gross Value Added (GVA) lost during the year 2020/21. However, a number of sectors such as food and accommodation, leisure and entertainment, health and social care, agriculture and manufacturing remain more vulnerable to change, the latter two being affected by ongoing disruption to supply chains, and global shortages of key goods. Covid-19 has also highlighted the vulnerability of many groups like people with pre-existing conditions, disabilities or mental health problems, requiring us to work in a more focused way to improve health outcomes for our residents. It has also brought into focus the difficulties of many disadvantaged children and families, with learning severely disrupted, the gap with non-disadvantaged children growing and hardship continuing to affect many people and families.

Climate change and Net Zero:

The momentum on the climate change created by COP26 and the government's Net Zero strategy, as well as the benefits experienced by so many countries over the past 2 years means we must accelerate action on environmental issues, including climate resilience, renewable energy and more cuts to carbon emissions. We have a three-fold role to play: direct action within our own estate and operations to meet the long term net zero carbon targets, influence with partners and our supply chains to promote greener transport, infrastructure, and economic growth, and finally a community leadership role to work with residents, partners and communities on climate action and resilience.

We continue to bring agencies and partners together to address these issues.

Digital technology:

Digital and mobile technology continues to change the way we live and work. We are committed to supporting innovation and research that will empower and connect communities and increase productivity. Technology also has powerful potential to radically change the way we work within Norfolk County Council to become a more modern, efficient council.

Local government finances:

The financial outlook for local government remains challenging, with growing demand for services set against ongoing uncertainty of funding and workforce pressures. Although the Government has announced reforms to Adult Social Care and some additional funding in the Spending Review 2021, it will take time for their implications for the Council to become clear, meaning the immediate pressure remains squarely on local authorities. We also know there are still major demand and demographic pressures on social care and children's services and areas of significant financial risk such as high needs funding. This will need continued strong financial management and sustainable medium term budget solutions.

National policy:

Government have announced a range of policy initiatives and legislation which impact on us as a Council and as a County. "Build Back Better – a plan for growth", the Health & Care Bill 2021-22, and the Health & Social Care Levy Bill all already impact on how we operate and work with our partners in the local system. In June 2021, the UK became the first major economy to pass a Net Zero emissions law, with a target that will require the UK to bring all greenhouse gas emissions to net zero by 2050. More national policy announcements are due in 2022.

The Levelling Up White paper, published on 2 February 2022, sets out 12 missions that government wishes to achieve by 2030. Overall, the missions have a strong economic focus, but are not just about the economy – they require us to address a number of factors that affect peoples' lives. The White Paper also trails more future policy, and although we have already put many of the 12 missions at the centre of our strategy and our plans, we will continue to look for opportunities afforded by further legislation, guidance and frameworks, once published.

► STRATEGIC PRIORITY 1

A VIBRANT AND SUSTAINABLE ECONOMY

Economic growth, which creates quality jobs with good wages and delivers prosperity back into local communities, has a vital role to play in improving the health and wellbeing of residents.

We want Norfolk to move from being a low-skill, low-wage and low-productivity economy, to high-skill, high-wage, high-value businesses, which are innovative and can capitalise on our strong digital connectivity. We will work closely with our partners and the business community to ensure that growth is inclusive and builds investment and social value into the local economy.

Activity title	Headline summary
Growth and Development	
Deliver a 5-year investment framework for Norfolk.	In conjunction with a countywide stakeholder group, we will develop a 5-year investment framework of investment priorities for Norfolk, which enables us to compete nationally for funding to support growth. The Framework will develop a sound evidence base to help identify the specific investment opportunities and projects that will have the greatest impact on sustainable economic growth in the county. This will drive a delivery programme of projects in due course.

Activity title	Headline summary
Support the delivery of the Norfolk Rural strategy.	<p>Since 2013 Norfolk County Council has led a steering group of public, private and voluntary sector partners to produce and deliver a three-year Rural Economic Strategy for Norfolk. The 2021-24 strategy has been consulted on with partners is currently going through the review and adoption process with the County Council's Infrastructure and Development Committee and its Cabinet.</p> <p>The strategy's priorities are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New rural economy and market towns • World class environment and the green economy • Community resilience • Skills and rural innovation • Digitalisation and technology adoption • Modern infrastructure
Continue to roll out our economic plan for recovery and growth.	<p>Our economic plan for recovery and growth offers programmes of support for business planning and development, innovation, digitalisation and business incubation.</p> <p>Specific programmes include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Go Digital; • Innovation Grant Mentoring Programme, and • A proposed new Enterprise and Business Start-Up Programme. <p>The Enterprise programme will build on the Community Renewal Fund (CRF) self-employment support project and self-employment strand in the FCE C-Care Project (CRF will end June 2022 and FCE funding will end in March 2023). The project will run over 3 years and provide one-to-one support to 1800 people considering setting up a business.</p>

Activity title	Headline summary
Enable the development of sites supporting new technologies.	<p>We will continue to enable the development of sites supporting new technologies, such as the O&M campus in Great Yarmouth.</p> <p>Such strategic sites support the creation of higher value jobs for local people and inward investment opportunities.</p>
Business and Intellectual Property Centres – Norfolk Network.	<p>BIPC Norfolk is part of the British Library Business and Intellectual Property Centre national network offering support to small businesses including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Free and low-cost access to £5 million worth of business intelligence • Business publications - both in branch and online • One-to-ones, workshops and networking events • Intellectual property (IP) support <p>The main centre is the Norfolk and Norwich Millennium Library with BIPC Locals now operating in our libraries at Cromer, Great Yarmouth, King's Lynn, Thetford, Wroxham and Wymondham.</p>

Activity title	Headline summary
Skills and employment	
Deliver the CHANCES programme.	<p>We will continue to deliver Chances, our support to employment project. Chances is part financed by the European Social Fund and we work with the longer-term unemployed residents of the county to support them into work or closer to the labour market through 1:1 bespoke support. Participants of the programme include the longer-term unemployed, those with health issues (both mental and physical) and those who have other barriers to employment such as caring responsibilities or returning to work after career breaks.</p> <p>We work with our delivery partners who currently employ over 20 Chances Advocate who provide the support for our participants, plotting a journey to reach their goals that can include confidence building, increasing job search skills as well as sourcing reskilling and upskilling opportunities across a number of sectors. The participants receive regular support from the Advocates and can be given financial support where needed to help with things such as travel, childcare, specialised courses and equipment as they search for work.</p> <p>The project runs to September 2023 and aims to support 2,602 people throughout its lifetime.</p>
Continue to deliver the NCC Employer Training Incentive Project.	<p>This programme has been highly successful, committing nearly £300,000 of funds for training in less than 6 months, generating over 1300 training interventions to reskill and upskill individuals. It has also generated in excess of £115K employer match funding.</p> <p>With a waiting list of 200 businesses, we will explore further funding opportunities to continue the programme.</p>

Activity title	Headline summary
Launch the Skills, Progression, Adaptability and Resilience (SPAR) programme.	<p>We will launch the SPAR project in 2022. A European Social Fund project in partnership with Suffolk County Council, it will complement other programmes such as ETIP and CHANCES by providing the Pathways Fund.</p> <p>This is a delegated grant scheme to enable and incentivise businesses to access training, with a focus on key skills needs including: Digital Skills, Leadership & Management and Customer Services & Relationship Management.</p> <p>A further strand, Pathways 50+, is designed to support both SMEs and participants aged 50 or over, through a combination of expert information, advice and guidance, business support services and grant funding, creating 3-month paid work placements for people who are unemployed, under-employed or economically inactive.</p>
Launch the Green Skills Roadmap.	<p>Decarbonisation and Green Energy and Skills is a growing priority across all areas of Government and there is great potential for job creation in this area in Norfolk.</p> <p>The Green Skills Analysis and Roadmap Research project will consolidate existing project information and research to determine the existing and emerging skills gaps across the green economy. This will involve engagement and skills analysis with experts in key sectors, including Low Carbon Services, Nuclear, Off-Shore wind, Solar and Retrofit/Construction. The project will deliver a Green Skills Roadmap for the county, including key actions to develop scalable provision to meet employer demand, and ensure a whole of county approach to the breadth of decarbonisation activities required in the short, medium and long term across Norfolk.</p>

Activity title	Headline summary
Library and Learning Hub in Great Yarmouth.	Working in partnership with Great Yarmouth Borough Council, NCC has committed to the relocation of the GY Library with the introduction of a refreshed Adult Learning Offer, and further education links with East Coast College to create a comprehensive Library and Learning Hub. The project is still at feasibility stage with £2m capital committed from NCC alongside GY Future High Street and Town's Deal money.
Construction and Environmental Sustainability Hubs in Norwich and King's Lynn.	In the current academic year, the Adult Learning Service has implemented a new construction and environmental sustainability curriculum, which provides a creative response to local challenges in the sector and aims to address the deficit of skilled workers and respond to the needs of adult residents who are economically inactive, unemployed and low skilled. In addition, this new curriculum responds to Norfolk's net zero ambitions. The first courses started in January 2022 and the service has secured £560,000 from the Community Renewal Fund to establish two construction training hubs in Norfolk (Norwich and King's Lynn). This work is underway and will be complete by June 2022.
Adult Learning Digital Leaders Programme.	Adult Learning are also taking the national lead in the development of the use of technology in further education. In September 2021, the service secured a £500,000 Further Education Professional Development Grant from the Department for Education to lead a digital leaders project which aims to improve the use of technology across the further education sector. Together with 9 local authority partners, this ground-breaking work positions Norfolk at the forefront of the use of cutting-edge technology to deliver learning.

Activity title	Headline summary
Infrastructure and digital connectivity	
Implement the priorities in the annual Strategic Delivery Infrastructure Plan.	<p>The Norfolk Strategic Delivery Infrastructure Plan sets out Norfolk's high-level strategic infrastructure priorities for the next 10 years. This list of projects has been compiled in conjunction with stakeholders/local partners including internal county council departments, district councils, utility companies and government agencies.</p> <p>These projects are selected on the basis that they deliver considerable housing and jobs growth.</p> <p>Priority strategic projects include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A47 improvements £2-300m (delivered by National Highways) • Great Yarmouth Third River Crossing -£120m • Transforming Cities as part of the Transport for Norwich programme - £66m (all funding sources) • Long Stratton Bypass • West Winch Housing Access Road • Norwich Western Link

Activity title	Headline summary
<p>Deliver the Highways Capital Programme, investing in maintaining and improving this essential asset across Norfolk.</p>	<p>In addition to the major infrastructure improvements, significant annual investment is made each year in maintaining and improving the 6,200 miles of road, 2,800 miles of footway and cycleway, 3,400 miles of Norfolk Trails and public footpath. A well maintained and improved network is essential for all business and residents.</p> <p>Annual maintenance programmes include road resurfacing, dressing, patching and pothole repairs which have been boosted by an additional investment from the Council of £10m, plus a further £6m for the Flood Reserve fund to boost the amount the Council spends on drainage maintenance, repairs, and improvements to reduce the risk of flooding.</p> <p>A new £1m Road Safety Community Fund has been launched to deliver 100 additional safety schemes across Norfolk over the next four years.</p> <p>The Local Member Fund has also been expanded to enable tree planting and the installation of Electric Vehicle Charging Points as part of the Council's Net Zero action plan.</p>

Activity title	Headline summary
Deliver fibre broadband infrastructure.	<p>Strong digital connectivity is seen as key enabler for NCC to meet its core corporate strategy.</p> <p>It will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allow existing Norfolk business to develop and new business to be attracted to Norfolk • Encourage housing, infrastructure and job growth across Norfolk • Reduce digital and social exclusion for the residents and workforce across Norfolk. Allowing improved access to services, encourage innovative ways to; work, learn, and access health/ social care services • Allow the implementation of Assistive Technology to support independent living • Reduce our impact on the environment. <p>Fibre Broadband Infrastructure is integral to this and will focus on the delivery of 3 key programmes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local Full Fibre Network – aiming to deliver Fibre To The Premise to 393 public buildings in 2022 • Better Broadband for Norfolk – aiming to deliver FTTP to 8821 premises by 2024 • Project Gigabit – aiming to deliver gigabit capable infrastructure to 20% of hardest to reach rural premises by 2025/26

Activity title	Headline summary
Deliver the Shared Rural Network.	<p>This programme supports the implementation of a shared mobile infrastructure by the four mobile network operators in rural communities across Norfolk, with the overall aim of improving mobile coverage in the hardest to reach locations.</p> <p>It directly supports the government's target of achieving 95% 4G coverage across the UK by 2025, which is also the target for Norfolk.</p>
Deliver the Norfolk and Suffolk Innovation network.	<p>This project sees the implementation of a Long-Range Wide Area Network (LoRaWAN) across Norfolk and Suffolk to enable business, public sector, educational organisations and the public to explore, trial and implement Internet of Things (IoT) technology. The infrastructure provides the foundation for a whole ecosystem that could transform our economy using sensor technology and actionable data.</p> <p>The project is a key enabler for the Smart City / Communities agenda enabling the connection of IoT devices (sensors) for public sector innovation, efficiency & service transformation, business growth, carbon reduction initiatives and our digital inclusion ambitions. It drives inclusion and skills by providing the base infrastructure foundation (the accelerator) that can be used free of charge to teach young people and small businesses to experiment, to develop business ideas and to test them.</p>

► **STRATEGIC PRIORITY 2**

BETTER OPPORTUNITIES FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

Norfolk's children and young people are the future of the county and we would not want to see them labelled as "the Covid generation". We are ambitious for them and want to ensure that this generation of children do not have to live with the knock-on effects of the pandemic for the rest of their lives, either in terms of their own wellbeing or aspirations for the future.

We want all children and young people in Norfolk to flourish, have a safe and supportive home, high aspirations, better educational outcomes and access to well-paid jobs. It is by investing in them to achieve their full potential and develop skills which prepare them for life and work, that we lay the foundations for a more resilient future for them and for our county.

Activity title	Headline summary
Levelling up outcomes for families	
Continue to embed our New Roads Service.	<p>This service was launched in June 2021 and takes a non-traditional approach to working with adolescents experiencing complex journeys - with an innovative residential 'Hub' at the heart of the service. It provides short term placements and edge of care support through a range of specialist and wrap around services to help young people on their journey, supporting our vision to reduce the number of looked after Norfolk children.</p> <p>Each young person will have a dedicated key worker and have access to the specialist support embedded within the hub.</p> <p>Each hub will also be supported with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two dedicated supported accommodation trainer flats for 16-18 year olds • Two High Needs Supported Lodgings (HNSL) hosts. The hosts will be able to provide a room within their home and be the stepping stone for young people moving towards living independently. • Two Hub Community Families. These will be supported and supervised by our fostering team and can call on any of the specialist hub support at any time. <p>Norfolk County Council successfully obtained £5m funding from the DfE to implement and embed the New Roads service. We are being supported by North Yorkshire County Council (NYCC), who are the innovator authority for the "No Wrong Door" model that we have adopted for the New Roads Service.</p>

Activity title	Headline summary
<p>Continue to embed our Targeted Youth Support Service.</p>	<p>This service was set up in March 2021 and is aimed at supporting young people at risk of harm outside the family home, through criminal or sexual exploitation. It continues to build on the work already being carried out by the council's detached youth work service in Norwich, as well as support provided across police, social care, the Youth Offending service and voluntary sector services.</p> <p>Specifically:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Detached youth workers will support young people across the county, in the places and spaces where young people choose to meet up. • Social workers and family support practitioners working with young people will also be able to call on support from youth workers where they believe young people are at risk of harm outside the home • Practitioners will undertake return home interviews for young people who have gone missing, to explore reasons for going missing, understand any risk or harm experienced and reduce the likelihood of further missing episodes. <p>We will continue to work closely with other voluntary and commissioned services that work with young people across Norfolk.</p>

Activity title	Headline summary
Deliver the Healthy Child Programme.	<p>The Healthy Child Programme offers every family a programme of activities, including screening tests, immunisations, developmental reviews, and information and guidance to support parenting and healthy choices.</p> <p>The programme aims to have contact with every child in Norfolk at key points in their life in domestic, community, and education settings. Included in the programme are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Health Visiting & School Nursing services • Delivery of Just One Norfolk • Specialist, targeted support for groups such as teenage parents <p>As part of Covid recovery, we will work with commissioned services and wider partners to understand the impact of COVID on children's health & wellbeing and to implement appropriate, joined-up approaches to address these.</p>
Joined up networks for support.	<p>Since the beginning of the Coronavirus pandemic, partners across the Norfolk system have been working together to provide community support to our residents. This has included support to shield and self-isolate, and more recently to receive information and advice and hardship support.</p> <p>A system has been put in place to facilitate this work, called the Norfolk Vulnerability Hub and work will continue to stabilise, refresh and embed this system to provide a long-term solution to respond to resident needs</p>

Activity title	Headline summary
Hardship Support Programme.	<p>Working as a whole-system with our partners across local government and the voluntary sector, Norfolk County Council will continue to develop sustainable sources of support for Norfolk households experiencing hardship.</p> <p>This will be through a county-wide network of community supermarkets (as part of the Nourish Norfolk plan), as well as supported information and advice pathways to ensure residents have access to the right information, advice and support.</p>
Libraries and Adult Learning – Families offer.	<p>Adult Learning and Libraries offer a range of learning opportunities for families to support their literacy, numeracy, and wider wellbeing. We will continue to develop this across our library network and in partnership with schools, the ECFS and early years settings to ensure that as many families as possible are able to benefit and the support raised aspiration and achievement.</p>

Activity title	Headline summary
Raise educational attainment for children and young people	
Norfolk as an Education Investment Area.	<p>In February 2022, Norfolk was selected by the Department for Education to be one of 55 local authorities to become Education Investment Areas Norfolk's involvement is a positive recognition of what has already been achieved through the local Opportunity Area, as well as of the challenges we continue to face in some parts of the county, particularly as we emerge from Covid. We welcome the focus it places on rural and coastal communities and the recognition of the challenges faced by Norfolk schools in recruiting for key subjects.</p> <p>The plans for Education Investment Areas will seek to target investment, support and action - in and outside of school that help children from all backgrounds to succeed at the very highest levels. They sit alongside those of the Norwich Opportunity Area, which has been and continues to be effective, with its funding extended up to the end of August 2022.</p> <p>Over the coming year, we will continue to work with the Department for Education to understand the size of the opportunity for Norfolk and to develop plans to improve attainment and outcomes for children and young people in Norfolk.</p>
Deliver the £120m investment in new special schools across the county.	<p>Continue with our plans to deliver new special schools across the county. To date, two new schools have been completed and a further two are planned – one in Norwich and one in a location yet to be identified. Our ambitious plans will enable more local children to have their special educational needs met in a high-quality Norfolk school closer to where they live, minimising the need to travel long distances across the County for adequate provision.</p>

Activity title	Headline summary
Implement the Norfolk Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Written Statement of Action Plan.	The statutory need for this piece of activity continues, with future inspection expected. The current priority is to deliver the Action Plan to successfully deliver the improvement required, working closely with Education and Health partners.
Embed the enhanced inclusion service.	<p>The consequences of the pandemic on children's education is well documented. On returning to school in September 2020, many children experienced a number of adjustment difficulties, which has led to schools significantly increasing referrals to the inclusion line, which has been strengthened and enhanced.</p> <p>We will continue to embed the enhanced inclusion service to strengthen the ability of mainstream settings to meet needs and access additional support where necessary so that more children are able to remain in appropriate local educational placements.</p>

Activity title	Headline summary
Roll out the 2022 Schools Local Growth and Investment Plan.	<p>The Schools' Local Growth and Investment Plan (SLGIP) provides a snapshot of NCC plans to fulfil its statutory responsibility to ensure sufficient school places for Norfolk children aged 4-16.</p> <p>Our aim is always to provide school places locally, whilst ensuring schools are of sufficient size (ideally 420 pupils for primary and 900 students for secondary). Norfolk's education landscape has developed over time and is characterised by large numbers of small schools in rural areas.</p> <p>Our plan also seeks to address our core duty of promoting high standards of education.</p> <p>To achieve this, we will use a combination of approaches to either grow or decrease the number of school places for any given local area, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commissioning new schools • Promoting DfE Free School proposals • Expanding the age range and size of existing schools • Agreeing changes to the planned admission number with associated change to accommodation

Activity title	Headline summary
Create better employment opportunities for young people	
Deliver our apprenticeships strategy.	<p>Apprenticeships continue to play an important part in upskilling individuals and supporting business growth. Our successful Recruit Retain Reward will continue to offer a grant of £1000 to an SME who employs a young apprentice (aged 16-24).</p> <p>Additionally, two other projects have just been launched.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access to Apprenticeships (A2A) a FCE C-Care funded programme, it provides bursary grants of up to £500 to improve the opportunity for those aged 16-24 in Norfolk, to be able to start an apprenticeship. • Progression to Apprenticeships (P2A) is a project aiming to increase the number of young people aged 16-24 moving into an apprenticeship by joining up existing initiatives and helping to decrease the number of young people returning to Universal Credit or other benefits following completion of a feeder programme, reducing the 'revolving door' scenario.

► STRATEGIC PRIORITY 3

HEALTHY, FULFILLING AND INDEPENDENT LIVES

We want Norfolk to be a place where everyone has the opportunity to live their lives to the full, with independence, and access to the right support at the right time.

We want to lead the system in Norfolk to focus on prevention and early help, to improve and sustain good health and wellbeing, as well as work with willing partners to create a more accessible Norfolk. We will strive to accelerate health and social care integration to respond to new demands and remove barriers to equal lives, tackling the issues which contribute to widening health inequalities.

Activity title	Headline summary
Levelling up health	
Adult social services “front door” and prevention programme.	<p>Adult Social Care currently spends over £1million per day on meeting the eligible needs of Norfolk residents. It is our duty to be ambitious and progressive in how we meet these needs in a sustainable way.</p> <p>Going forward, we will work with a strategic partner to develop a comprehensive and clear strategy for prevention and early help. Using advanced analytical techniques, we will develop a deeper understanding of Norfolk’s residents, their needs, and the local support they require. Our strategy will aim to proactively leverage community support, with targeted interventions, and a re-purposed ‘front door’.</p>

Activity title	Headline summary
No homelessness in Norfolk strategy.	<p>We will continue to support and contribute to the Norfolk Strategic Housing Partnership strategy “No Homelessness in Norfolk”.</p> <p>We are currently in the process of developing an action plan focusing on the 4 strategic priorities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduce Homelessness by focussing on homeless prevention services • Improve access to homelessness support services across Norfolk • Continue to develop person-centred services with a focus on co-production • Continue to build partnership working to improve collaboration and whole system change <p>The programme is currently developing a more detailed action plan for February 2022.</p>

Activity title	Headline summary
Deliver the Public Health and Wellbeing programme.	<p>Our focus on prevention drives our public health and wellbeing programme of activities, aimed at improving population health, reducing fragility in people and delaying the need for critical health and social care interventions.</p> <p>Key initiatives include:</p> <p>NHS Health Checks A health check-up for adults in England aged 40 to 74, designed to spot early signs of stroke, kidney disease, heart disease, type 2 diabetes or dementia</p> <p>Stop Smoking Services Offer practical and treatment support to aid quitting smoking through accurate information, advice and individual support by experts, as well as re-establish and lead the Tobacco Control Alliance</p> <p>Weight Management Services Practical support including advice, information and intervention programmes for adults in Norfolk struggling with their weight</p> <p>Drug & Alcohol Misuse and Dependence Offer specialist clinical treatment and behaviour change approaches to support individuals across Norfolk struggling with drug and alcohol use.</p>

Activity title	Headline summary
Implement Project ADDER.	<p>Project ADDER (Addition, Diversion, Disruption, Enforcement and Recovery) commenced in 2020/21 as a nationally funded pilot; a joint initiative between the Home Office (HO) and the Office for Health Improvement and Disparities (OHID).</p> <p>Greater Norwich was selected as a target location and the ADDER programme has been operating in the locality since March 2021, overseen by a joint delivery group co-chaired by NCC and Norfolk Constabulary. ADDER, with an annual budget of £1.35m, is delivered in addition to Norfolk's core Alcohol & Drug Behavioural Change Service, through which NCC invests £6.6m per year of its Public Health Grant income (circa 16%).</p> <p>The project brings together co-ordinated law enforcement activity, alongside expanded diversionary activity and treatment/recovery provision, and seeks to expand multi-agency partnership working in the Greater Norwich area.</p> <p>The ADDER programme was due to end in March 2023, but this has now been extended to at least March 2025 as an outcome of the strategic spending review, and is a key feature of the governments new 10-year drug strategy From harm to hope.</p> <p>The programme is underpinned by a national evaluation and monitoring framework, to help and inform an evidence base for future Government intervention and national investment.</p>

Activity title	Headline summary
Healthy libraries.	<p>Norfolk Libraries play a key role is supporting the health and wellbeing of residents, with a key focus on health information and social isolation, with well-established initiatives like</p> <p>Just a Cuppa in place in every library. Projects currently in train include Digital Health with the NHS, and further development of our emotional and mental health support offers. The service also delivers specific activities to support children and families such as “feed and read”.</p> <p>The library network also supports addressing period and hygiene poverty and is part of the community collect model for Covid testing.</p>
Living well	
Deliver the capital housing programmes.	<p>This is a 10-year capital contribution programme to facilitate building of new specialist housing of a variety of types and sizes across Norfolk (Independent Living and Supported Living), which meet the needs of older people and working-age people with learning or physical disabilities.</p> <p>The programme has a number of delivery dates for the different builds and will aim to be completed overall by 2028.</p>
Review of community services.	<p>There is a health and social care review of community beds which we want to ensure strengthens current out-of-hospital services and gives people access to therapy-led recovery. Part of this work will be the continued transformation of our in-house Norfolk First Response service which offers reablement to people help keep them independent for longer.</p>

Activity title	Headline summary
Changing places toilets initiative.	The previously committed £600k for changing places toilets has been reviewed in light of additional funding provision at district level. A proposal will be brought to Cabinet in the Spring to finalise the locations for NCC investment.
Better local services	
Home Support Transformation.	<p>We will continue to transform and re-shape the Home Support Market to deliver services that meet the needs of people in Norfolk through the development of a “home first” home support model, including a dementia offer, that builds on the strengths of the person, supporting resilience and independence.</p> <p>Aspects of the programme have been delayed due to the Covid pandemic and milestones will be redefined in 2022.</p>
Care Market Quality Improvement.	<p>It is part of our statutory responsibility to provide a sufficient social care market to deliver quality services for local people. We must promote choice through a diverse social care market, working with a range of independent and voluntary, community and social enterprise sector providers.</p> <p>Our ambition is for a stable, modern care market in Norfolk where 85% of providers are judged Good or Outstanding by the Care Quality Commission (CQC).</p> <p>Aspects of the programme have been delayed due to the impact of the Covid pandemic on the social care market, and it will be reviewed fully in 2022 in the context of other transformation activity.</p>

Activity title	Headline summary
Fulfil our leadership role in the Norfolk and Waveney Integrated Care System.	<p>We will continue to play a leading role in Norfolk and Waveney's Integrated Care Systems (ICS) to improve population health and care, tackle unequal outcomes, enhance value for money and support social and economic development.</p> <p>Key priorities include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establishing an Integrated Care Partnership tasked with strengthening integration between the NHS, local government and wider partners to serve and improve our community's health and care • Developing a place-based approach to service delivery, taking health and care decisions at a more local level and plan how to address the root causes of health inequalities. <p>Our Integrated Care System will be established in July 2022.</p>
Multi User Hub development programme	<p>Building on the strong community asset base that our libraries provide, we are undertaking a programme to transforming existing Libraries into Multi-User hubs. As a starting point we will be delivering Adult Learning from the majority of sites, as well as strengthening offers from partners within the NHS and voluntary sector.</p> <p>A pilot site exists in Attleborough with additional plans in place for Great Yarmouth, King's Lynn and Great Yarmouth. Dereham is also being reviewed.</p>

Activity title	Headline summary
Delivery of Active Travel and Public Transport Improvements.	<p>Norfolk has been keen to play an active role in enhancing the walking and cycling network across the County and improving sustainable transport.</p> <p>The Government's Active Travel programme has seen investment in Norfolk of over £3m and further funding bids have been submitted. Phase 2 schemes are being delivered in 2022, with more to follow in future years.</p> <p>The sustainable transport improvements from the Transforming Cities programme will continue to be delivered over the next year, along with Norfolk's Bus Service Improvement Plan and the new Enhanced Partnership currently being developed.</p>
Prepare for social care reform.	<p>Putting People at the Heart of Care sets out reform proposals for Adult Social Care. The wide ranging reforms cover housing, carers, technology, workforce and a change to the way people pay for social care.</p> <p>The Government has also confirmed new assurance and inspection arrangements for Adult Social Service. A programme of work to prepare for these changes will be put in place.</p>
Deliver excellent Norfolk Fire and Rescue Services.	<p>The forthcoming Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP) for 2023-6 will be informed by the current Concept of Operations programme, which is reviewing how the Norfolk Fire and Rescue Services resources, enables and delivers services.</p> <p>The CRMP will incorporate all significant strategic implications on the delivery of the Norfolk Fire and Rescue Services for the communities of Norfolk and a full consultation process will be undertaken ahead of finalising the plan.</p>

► STRATEGIC PRIORITY 4

STRONG, ENGAGED, AND INCLUSIVE COMMUNITIES

Individuals, families, and communities are the best guardians of their own interests. We want to deliver a fundamental shift in how we work in partnership, supporting, facilitating, and empowering our many diverse communities to help themselves, building capacity and capability, while improving participation in each place and ensuring that those at risk are protected.

We will work with our partners in the public and voluntary sector and other key stakeholders, such as our armed forces community, to ensure that all our residents have access to good services, information, advice, and guidance which enables them to always be in control of their lives.

Activity title	Headline summary
Involvement and participation	
VCSE engagement.	As part of NCCs commitment to VCSE infrastructure support, we will embed an engagement charter with the VCSE sector, outlining how, when, and where we will engage. We will do this at an early stage in service transformation or where we shape new services. This will mean that we take a whole system approach to the way we support residents in the county to reach their full potential.

Activity title	Headline summary
Norfolk Armed Forces Covenant.	<p>Norfolk County Council has signed the Covenant Pledge to demonstrate its support, as an employer, to the armed forces community.</p> <p>We have been awarded a Gold Award from the Ministry of Defence in national recognition of our commitment to support the armed forces community through our employment practices. We will continue to contribute to the Norfolk Armed Forces Covenant Board's Action Plan 2019-22 with a particular focus on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Building communities • Health, welfare and housing • Education, employment and skills
Building capacity	
VCSE infrastructure support and integration with ICS VCSE Assembly.	<p>A refreshed infrastructure support offer has been provided by NCC to the Voluntary Sector over the next 3 years, focused on the following key outcome areas:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Funding and finance 2) Advice and support 3) Volunteer recruitment and deployment 4) Training opportunities 5) Forums and networking <p>In recognition of the increased demand that will be placed on the sector in the forthcoming 2 years, we propose extending the funding to £250,000 per annum for 2 years (previously £172k) to provide enhanced capacity for support in these key areas.</p> <p>It is also proposed to add a single, one off "support grant" pot of £150,000 to be managed as part of the overall infrastructure grant, to provide grant funding capacity. This £150,000 is in addition to the £250,000 annual grant detailed above.</p>

Activity title	Headline summary
Empowering our communities	
Joining up our information and signposting.	<p>Across a number of our programmes including VCSE support, Digital Inclusion and our Multi Use Community Hubs we will work with partners and stakeholders to join together the support offers we commission; making it simpler for residents to access the help they need across debt, advice, skills, mental health and wellbeing using seamless methods of referral. We will also make sure that we engage with the voluntary and community sector across the county so that they can easily understand the help that is available and can access it easily and quickly.</p>
Digital Inclusion Strategy.	<p>We have an ambitious 3 year plan to ensure that Norfolk residents have the opportunity to access the skills development opportunities and connectivity they need to become digitally included. By providing support across our Libraries, Adult Learning and the voluntary sector residents will be able to access programmes of learning that enable them to develop digital skills and confidence for life and work. Programmes will be targeted at cohorts of people who are identified as digitally excluded using shared data from across the system, who have been disproportionately affected by the pandemic.</p> <p>In particular:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • older people • people with acute health conditions and disabilities • job seekers and low income households • children and young people • people experiencing multiple inequalities <p>Delivery of the strategy is underpinned by a strategic plan the details of which are appended in the Digital Strategy document</p>

► **STRATEGIC PRIORITY 5**

A GREENER, MORE RESILIENT FUTURE

Norfolk has many areas of outstanding beauty and it is a clean and safe place to live for our residents. It is also a county with nationally important heritage, both natural and in terms of historic buildings and scheduled monuments. We want to keep it that way and to preserve its quality and integrity for future generations.

We also want our communities to be resilient, able to enjoy and benefit from sustainable, inclusive and accessible social infrastructure, including high-quality local facilities to make our communities resilient and rewarding places to live.

Activity title	Headline summary
Protecting and enhancing our environment	
Deliver a 5-year investment framework for Norfolk.	<p>The Council's Environmental Policy was launched in November 2019 and takes as its starting point the Government's own 25-year Plan, published in 2018, and is structured to reflect the key environmental concerns embodied in that plan. In addition, it is framed to reflect the increasing importance that climate change has on all aspects of the environment, whether the landscape itself, the species within it, or the rich cultural heritage that occupies it.</p> <p>This policy reflects the areas that the Council sees as key to protecting and maintaining the health of Norfolk's distinctive environment and its occupants.</p> <p>Our key priorities in 2022/23 will focus on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Active and greener travel, which will deliver a Norfolk-wide local cycling and walking infrastructure plan, as well as on-street EV chargepoints in areas with limited off-street parking • Our 1 million trees initiative, with plans to roll out the next phase of the project in 2022/23 • Continuing to grow and expand the new Environmental Hub at Gressenhall Farm and Workhouse, which acts as a centre for learning of our environmental aims

Activity title	Headline summary
<p>Implement our Environmental policy – Net Zero programme.</p>	<p>Both the Council’s strategy and its Environmental policy commit us to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Achieve ‘net zero’ carbon emissions on our estates by 2030 • Work towards ‘carbon neutrality’ by 2030 <p>We are committed to working with our partners in local government, health and business, as well as our communities to reduce and offset carbon emissions wherever possible. We have established a ‘Net Zero’ Programme overseen by a newly established programme board which agrees actions to resolve issues, assigns resources and provides endorsement to secure funding for key initiatives.</p> <p>Our focus for 2022/23 will be to continue to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Install electric vehicle charging points across our estate • Cease to buy gas boilers for our estate and replace with heat pumps or other low-carbon alternatives for those that come to end of life. • Continue with the transition to low-energy lighting in council buildings by 2024, and our target to convert a further 15,000 street lighting units to LED by July 2023. • Develop a business case to convert all remaining street lighting to LED. This would result in all the Council’s 53,000 streetlights being LED. • Use our pipeline of expiring contracts and break points to identify opportunities for supply chain decarbonisation. • Seek to minimise carbon emissions from the retendered Norwich Park and Ride Service. • Set carbon reduction objectives for our wholly owned companies in the same way as we currently set financial objectives.

Activity title	Headline summary
Access to quality spaces	
Castle Keep.	<p>We will continue our work to deliver “Norwich Castle: Royal Palace Reborn”, our £13.5m project to transform Norwich Castle’s iconic Norman Keep - one of Europe’s most important early medieval castles - by rebuilding its medieval floors and rooms to so that everyone can experience a Norman royal palace and its stories.</p> <p>This restoration is one of the largest heritage projects of its kind currently underway in the UK.</p> <p>In addition to reinstating the principal floor level, offering unique views and creating learning spaces, the Keep will also have a new gallery designed in partnership with the British Museum, to showcase national medieval treasures alongside Norfolk’s own. As part of our commitment to an “accessible Norfolk”, the work will also see the installation of a new lift, ensuring that all five levels of the keep are fully accessible, for the first time in its history.</p>
Greenways to Greenspaces.	<p>“Greenways to Greenspaces” is an umbrella concept that encompasses all work to improve Norfolk’s green travel networks for the benefit of both people and the environment.</p> <p>Greenways aims to improve connectivity between market towns by providing safe, low-carbon travel options while also functioning as linear 62 habitats, linking the county’s Greenspaces into an extensive network and integrating biodiversity enhancement. The work includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A Pollinator Action Plan for Norfolk and the future development of a Pesticide Policy for the County Council. • Designation of 112 roadside nature reserve sites with an extension to 300 over the next three years

Activity title	Headline summary
Dark Skies.	<p>The Norfolk Coast Partnership (NCP) in conjunction with our partners and other organisations, focuses on celebrating the dark skies and landscapes of the Norfolk Coast Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), while raising awareness of the vital benefits that the dark brings to people and biodiversity, and conversely, the impacts of light pollution. The protected areas of the Norfolk Coast and Broads contain some of the last remaining dark landscapes in the UK, so we aim to conserve and enhance those valuable nightscapes for future generations.</p> <p>In 2022/23:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We will continue to work closely with a range of partners, local and national specialists, parish councils, local groups and businesses, and actively participate as a member of the UK Dark Skies Partnership in order to deliver our dark skies aims and objectives. • A 4th Norfolk Dark Skies Festival working with partners, schools and local organisations to host a range of online and in-person public events and activities • Training sessions for specific audiences - parish councils, local businesses and planning officers to encourage their active participation to help reduce light pollution in their area. • Awarding Dark Skies Friendly Accreditation to businesses and organisations which demonstrate their ability to be Dark Sky Ambassadors for the coast.

Activity title	Headline summary
Water Management strategy.	<p>We will continue to play a leading role within the Norfolk Strategic Flooding Alliance (NSFA) and support the delivery of its Strategy through effective collaboration with key partners across the region and sector.</p> <p>This includes identifying priority sites for joint intervention, delivering education and public awareness campaigns, and working together to access funding and resource opportunities from regional/national bodies and central government.</p> <p>Our support builds on the commitment of £1.5m per annum Flood Reserve from the Norfolk County Council budget which supplements the existing drainage maintenance and repair budgets of £4.5m per year.</p> <p>This all aims to ultimately increase the confidence of the residents of Norfolk that flood risks are as low as reasonably practicable and are being appropriately managed.</p> <p>Work has already begun on 16 priority flood sites and the Alliance is in the process of identifying a second tranche of key sites across the county.</p>

Activity title	Headline summary
Deliver Highways, Transport & Waste improvements.	<p>These improvements aim to reduce the impact of these services on the environment, and will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improvement to streetlighting, the benefit of which is captured as part of our Net Zero programme. • Boost recycling rates at the Council's 20 Recycling Centres through a range of waste reduction and reduce, re-use, recycling initiatives. Continue with the major upgrades and improvements to recycling centres including Sheringham & Wymondham sites. • Through the above Waste initiatives, reduce the amount of waste per household per week. • Planning and delivery of sustainable transport schemes including Active Travel, Bus Services Improvement Plans, and Transport for Norwich which includes the Beryl e-scooter/e-bikes/bike hire schemes. • Support the take up of electric vehicles by implementing the new Electric vehicle strategy, which will result in an increase in the number of charging points across Norfolk. In addition, support bus operators and take advantage of funding opportunities (ZEBRA) to encourage the replacement of the Norfolk bus fleet with electric vehicles.

Activity title	Headline summary
Implement the NCC Libraries and Information Service strategy.	<p>In March 2020, Norfolk County Council adopted a strategy for Norfolk Library and Information Service with a vision for our libraries to make a real difference to the people of Norfolk by being there when they need them at the heart of the community, supporting individuals, communities and businesses to be the best they can be.</p> <p>With implementation being impacted by Covid related closures, the service now aims to achieve the service vision by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offering private PC space with video-enabled equipment for people to attend remote job interviews and online health conversations • Re-introducing study space for students and young people catching up on educational gaps • Increasing accessibility for those most in need and the most vulnerable • Continuing to roll he Norfolk Reading Pathway programme to support literacy • Implement the national programme “Learn my way” to help digitally excluded people learn digital skills. • Working with Devices dot Now to distribute devices, provide connectivity and offer digital support to vulnerable adults • Offering support for early years and families with programmes such as “bounce and rhyme” and “story time” • Helping reduce social isolation through initiatives such as “Just a cuppa” and “Reading Friends” • Offering code clubs, summer reading challenges, and work experience for young people



OPERATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS

The Council continues to face a number of challenges in the way it is funded, how it is able to manage demand for services and demographic pressures, and how it responds to policy and legislative changes. At the same time, new technology and ways of working represent opportunities to transform our business processes and systems; working in more modern and productive ways.

In order to drive through change and deliver our strategy, we must also be clear about how we can transform our services and workforce to increase capacity and skills, continuously review the way we are organised to ensure the most efficient operating model and have strong and integrated programme governance that enables us to realise our desired benefits and outcomes.

Activity title	Headline summary
Recovery from backlog.	Frontline services have experienced significant disruption to usual workflows during the pandemic, with significant backlogs of assessments, reviews and new cases needing to be addressed. We will review our workplans regularly and consistently to ensure that we have the right capacity to deliver the best service we can.
Preparing for inspection (Adults / Children's).	In 2022/23 we expect to see Children's Services department inspected by Ofsted, as well as a new inspection regime for Adult Social Services.

Activity title	Headline summary
Smarter Working programme.	<p>The Smarter Working Programme was established following the adoption of the 2020-2024 Medium-Term Financial Strategy with the aim of achieving savings through implementing more business-like Smarter Working, utilising physical space and technology to maximise flexibility for customers and staff whilst effectively delivering good outcomes. While phase 1 has focused inwardly on Council staff and hybrid working, phase 2 in 2022/23 will focus on transformation of the way Directorates deliver outcomes to residents, communities, service users and businesses in collaboration with partner organisations.</p> <p>A number of areas of the Smarter Working programme overlap or connect to the implementation of the Environmental Policy and the reduction of carbon emissions. The two programmes will work together to deliver the most benefit.</p>
Transformation and Innovation integrated governance.	<p>The council has a dedicated Innovation Team which provides practical innovation support to complement the existing innovation and transformation work underway within departments. In line with the council's Innovation Strategy, the team's priorities over the next year will focus on embedding the use of innovation methods – such as prototyping, user research, co-production, service design and behavioural insights - across council priority projects to help them achieve their goals. The team will also continue to help front line staff to build their confidence and capacity to use new technologies, sourcing external funding for new solutions, and trialling new ways to build a culture within the council which is supportive and enabling of innovation.</p>

Activity title	Headline summary
Embed the approach to cross-cutting priorities.	<p>Our programme of transformation includes a number of cross-cutting priorities, where no single department has exclusive accountability or where the impact affects the whole of the Council.</p> <p>We will embed planning processes and disciplines to ensure these priorities have clear ownership and accountability for delivery and performance.</p>
Workforce strategy.	<p>The refreshed workforce strategy will describe how the organisation and its workforce must change over the next few years, in support of its strategic ambitions and in response to the challenges and opportunities coming over the horizon. The strategy timescale will be to 2025, in support of 'Better Together, for Norfolk', and will relate to all colleagues engaged in delivering NCC services.</p> <p>The strategy will focus on 5 broad issues:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Council's future size, shape and role within the Norfolk system • Leadership and management development • Developing our talented people • Being a diverse and inclusive employer • Developing an engaging and high-performing culture <p>The strategy will be developed by April 2022</p>

Activity title	Headline summary
<p>Implement our “Digital strategy & roadmap for the 2020s”.</p>	<p>The 2018-2021 Digital Norfolk Strategy oversaw many improvements to the Council's technological and digital infrastructure as well as connectivity for Norfolk's residents and businesses.</p> <p>Our refreshed strategy therefore builds on solid foundations as we look forward to how technology and digital services should evolve during the 2020's.</p> <p>The internal aspect of the strategy will focus on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff having access to the right technology and data, and the skills to use them effectively. • Taking a systematic approach to transactions and redesigning internal systems to be digital by design, improving productivity and taking out cost across the organisation. • More effective use of data and business insight for operational and strategic purposes, and data-driven decision making to enhance our ability to target services more effectively <p>The plan to deliver the strategy will centre on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data Centre Infrastructure • Collaboration & End User Technologies • Cloud & Edge Computing • Customer Relationship Management Strategy & Customer Experience • Data Analytics & Artificial Intelligence • Security Management Programmes • Security Technology, Infrastructure & Operations

Activity title	Headline summary
Strategic Property Asset Management Framework 2021/22 - 2026/27.	<p>In November 2021 NCC adopted the Strategic Property Asset Management Framework 2021/22 - 2026/27 with an overarching aim to maintain and develop an economic, efficient and effective property and land portfolio.</p> <p>This framework supports the delivery of NCC's priorities and outcomes detailed in the Councils Corporate plan "Better Together, for Norfolk 2021-2025" by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensuring NCC's property assets are fit for purpose and in the right location to support service delivery. • Exploiting and reusing property no longer required for operational purposes. <p>Operational policies and an annual action plan flow from the framework and will be the basis for measuring overall performance.</p>
Service Transformation.	<p>There is a significant programme of transformation taking place across a number of departments and services, looking at how we deliver services, how we further develop customer-focused processes and systems, how we manage increased demand arising from demographic and other pressures, and how we meet changing customer expectations and accessibility needs.</p> <p>These programmes sit mainly in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adult Social Services (Promoting Independence) • Children's Services (Safer Children and Resilient Families, Special Educational Needs and Disabilities) • Customer Services (Customer Services Strategy) <p>Programmes have both their own programme governance and corporate oversight, and will further link to the Transformation & Innovation Governance activity above.</p>

Activity title	Headline summary
Organisational Design.	<p>The Council faces unprecedented financial challenges over the next few years, and we need to proactively respond to these to ensure that, as an organisation, we remain fit for purpose and able to provide the services upon which our residents rely.</p> <p>To achieve this, we will implement a review of the way we are structured and operate to ensure our organisational design is the most efficient, eliminating duplication, simplifying our decision making, and reducing our operational costs, while at the same time increasing our focus on collaboration and innovation, to improve our service delivery.</p>
A County Deal for Norfolk.	<p>On 2 February, government published its “Levelling Up White Paper”, outlining its approach to addressing geographical inequalities across the UK. One key strand of the White Paper is further devolution of centrally held powers to local areas. Norfolk has been invited to be one of 9 “front-runners” to negotiate an early devolution deal in line with the published framework for devolution.</p> <p>“A deal for Norfolk” will be focusing on a number of key priorities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Skills, employment and economic development • Housing and sustainable communities • Transport and infrastructure • Climate, net zero and the environment • Social care, health and social infrastructure <p>Over the next 6-9 months, we will be working with central government to develop appropriate and evidence-based proposals to government to ensure we have the powers and the funding to make the best decisions and choices for Norfolk.</p>

► GOVERNANCE AND OVERSIGHT

The Corporate Delivery Plan is supported and underpinned by a number of internal processes and systems, to ensure timely oversight successful delivery of the benefits defined within.

- Programmes and Projects: Programme-specific boards in departments and directorates provide oversight of change activity including programmes and projects. This includes reporting to individual Cabinet Members and to Corporate Board. Some programmes are linked to Corporately Significant Vital Signs. Work is underway to review all our Vital Signs to ensure alignment to the strategy delivery.
- Departmental Plans: Activity within the Corporate Delivery Plan continues to be reflected in departmental and service plans, which cover both strategic activity and essential service delivery, acting as important business planning documents for the Council. The delivery of this is monitored through departmental performance indicators, which are also being reviewed.
- Risk management: Activities within the Corporate Delivery Plan will continue to require robust risk management, reflected in both the Corporate Risk Register and the Departmental Risk Registers which are reported through management and formal governance processes. Risks for individual activity may also, at times, be reflected in programme/project risk registers.
- Governance and decision making: Significant activity identified in the Corporate Delivery Plan will progress through the Council's governance and decision-making process, with oversight and input from Elected Members, as set out in the Council's Constitution.
- Transformation & Innovation Governance Board: We are working towards implementing a Transformation & Innovation Board to strengthen the overarching governance of NCCs' transformation portfolio. This will improve the NCC leadership's ability to ensure we gain best value from our investment and improve certainty of outcomes. The main objectives of the Board will be to direct investment decisions, when action is to be taken due to programmes and projects being outside the agreed tolerance in

terms of timescale or spend, ensure plans are viewed from a pan-organisational perspective, and ensure appropriate assurance activity takes place to provide insight and recommendations to improve certainty of outcomes. We aim for this to be in place in early 2022.



Norfolk County Council

BETTER TOGETHER, FOR NORFOLK

Cabinet

Item No. 14

Report title:	Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 and Investigatory Powers Act 2016
Date of meeting:	04 April 2022
Responsible Cabinet Member:	Cllr Margaret Dewsbury (Cabinet Member for Communities & Partnerships)
Responsible Director:	Tom McCabe (Executive Director, Community & Environmental Services)
Is this a key decision?	No
<p>Introduction from Cabinet Member</p> <p>Since 2010, members have received regular reports of the Council's use of the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 (RIPA) and approved the Council's policy and guidance. Since 2020 this report has also covered the Investigatory Powers Act 2016 (IPA) and there have been separate policies for each piece of legislation. Although the legislation is currently only used by Trading Standards, the policies are corporate policies, applicable to the Council as a whole. Compliance with the legislation ensures that the Council's use of investigatory powers is in accordance with the Human Rights Act 1998.</p> <p>Executive Summary</p> <p>This report details the use of RIPA and the IPA by the Council for 2021 and seeks approval of the current policies, which have been reviewed and slightly amended (RIPA policy only).</p> <p>Recommendations</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. To note the use of RIPA and the IPA by the Council for 2021, as set out in Appendix A; and2. To approve the revised policy documentation provided at Appendix B and Appendix C.	

1. Background and Purpose

- 1.1. The current RIPA and IPA policy and guidance was first approved in 2020, replacing the RIPA policy and guidance first developed in 2010. It provides a framework to ensure the Council's use of investigatory techniques regulated by the legislation (directed surveillance, the use of covert human intelligence sources and the acquisition of communications data) is compliant with the law. The policy and guidance is regularly updated and approved by members.

2. Proposals

2.1. Cabinet notes the use of RIPA and the IPA by the Council for 2021

A report setting out the use of the legislation by the Council is attached at Appendix A. The report gives the date, general purpose or reason for which authority was granted together with the grade of senior manager that granted the authority. It is not possible to give further details as this may breach confidentiality or legislation, offend the sub-judice rules, interfere with the proper investigation of potential offenders, or disclose other operational information which could hinder past, current or future activities, investigatory techniques or investigations. In summary, the total number of authorisations granted in this period was as follows: -

- Surveillance: 3
- Covert Human Intelligence Source :0
- Acquisition of communications data: 1

It can be seen from the information in Appendix A that, across the whole of the Council, the only activities covered by the legislation were authorised in relation to Trading Standards' investigations.

2.2. Cabinet approves the revised policy documentation provided at Appendix B and Appendix C

These policies have been reviewed in conjunction with Trading Standards and minor changes have been made to the RIPA policy only, the only notable addition being reference to the Covert Human Intelligence Sources (Criminal Conduct) Act 2021, at section 18. In general, the policies refer the reader to the Codes of Practice for more detailed guidance in relation to specific issues. The two policies are cross referenced.

Consultation and user engagement has not been necessary.

3. Impact of the Proposal

- 3.1. The revised policies will help to ensure that the Council's use of investigatory powers remains compliant with the relevant legislation, including the Human Rights Act 1998 and that evidence gathered as a result of the use of these techniques is admissible under law in criminal prosecutions.

4. Evidence and Reasons for Decision

- 4.1. The two Acts, the associated Regulations and Codes of Practice set out expectations for local authorities in relation to the oversight of RIPA authorisations for directed surveillance and CHIS and for the acquisition of communications data under the IPA. The recommendations set out in this report meet the requirements of the legislation. There are no other reasonably viable options to the recommendations above.

5. Alternative Options

- 5.1. These corporate policies are considered to be the most effective way to ensure the Council fulfils its legal responsibilities, when using covert investigatory techniques to gather intelligence for the purposes of one of its regulatory functions.

6. Financial Implications

- 6.1. There are no direct financial implications arising from this report.

7. Resource Implications

- 7.1. **Staff:** N/A

- 7.2. **Property:** N/A

- 7.3. **IT:** N/A

8. Other Implications

8.1. Legal Implications

The legislation sets out the expectations for local authorities in relation to covert surveillance and the acquisition of communications data.

8.2. Human Rights implications

The legislation ensures that, in conducting surveillance, public authorities have regard to the Human Rights Act 1998 and to Article 8 of the European Convention on Human Rights (the ECHR) – the right to a private and family life.

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

The legislation requires the authority's decision makers to take into account a person's human rights, including any potential discrimination. Monitoring of the use of RIPA and the IPA in relation to individuals could be considered for the future but is not considered necessary at this stage. The policies will continue to be reviewed periodically to ensure they reflect changes to legislation and that they safeguard the interests and rights of all.

8.4. Any other implications

Officers have considered all the implications which members should be aware of. Apart from those listed in the report (above), there are no other implications to take into account.

9. Risk Implications/Assessment

- 9.1 The proposed policies set out expectations for the Council's use of RIPA and the IPA. Compliance with the policies will help to ensure that the Council's use of investigatory powers remains compliant with the relevant legislation, including the Human Rights Act 1998.

10.

10.1 Select Committee comments

None.

11.

11.1 Recommendations

1. To note the use of RIPA and the IPA by the Council for 2021, as set out in Appendix A; and
2. To approve the revised policy documentation provided at Appendix B and Appendix C.

12.

Background Papers

12.1

The Council's current RIPA and IPA policy and guidance can be accessed on the intranet [here](#) and [here](#).

Officer Contact

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

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

Appendix A

RIPA AND IPA AUTHORISATIONS 2021

NO	DATE	NATURE OF AUTHORISATION	REASON FOR AUTHORISATION	GRADE OF AUTHORISING/ SENIOR OFFICER	DEPT.
1.	23.09.21	Directed Surveillance	Underage sale of alcohol	Section Manager (Shaun Norris)	CES
2.	25.11.21	Directed Surveillance	Underage sale of alcohol	Section Manager (Shaun Norris)	CES
3.	01.12.21	Directed Surveillance	Underage sale of alcohol	Section Manager (Shaun Norris)	CES
4.	20.12.21	Communications Data	Food Safety Act/Consumer Protection Act offences	Section Manager (Shaun Norris)	CES



Directed Surveillance and the use of Covert Human Intelligence Sources

Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000

Policy and Guidance Notes

nplaw
Norfolk Public Law

Last Updated February 2022

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The main purpose of the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 (RIPA) is to ensure that public bodies use their investigatory powers in accordance with the Human Rights Act 1998. The investigatory powers covered by the legislation are: -
 - (a) intrusive surveillance (on residential premises/in private vehicles) (NB: The Council is not permitted to engage in intrusive surveillance);
 - (b) covert surveillance in the course of specific operations;
 - (c) the use of covert human intelligence sources (agents, informants, undercover officers);
- 1.2 For each of these powers RIPA ensures that the law clearly covers the purposes for which they may be used, which authorities can use the powers, who should authorise each use of power, the use that can be made of the material gained, independent judicial oversight and a means of redress for any individual aggrieved by use of the powers.
- 1.3 In addition to the legislation itself, the Home Office has issued Codes of Practice dealing with covert surveillance and covert human intelligence sources. This guide is designed to cover the aspects of RIPA that regulate the use of investigatory powers by the Council.
- 1.4 Directed Surveillance can only be undertaken if it is for the purpose of preventing/detecting a criminal offence which is punishable (whether on summary conviction or on indictment) by a maximum term of **at least 6 months of imprisonment** - or would constitute an offence under sections 146, 147 or 147A of the Licensing Act 2003 or section 7 of the Children and Young Persons Act 1933 (sale of tobacco and alcohol to underage children).

2. What is regulated by RIPA

- 2.1 The monitoring, observing or listening to persons, their movements, their conversations or their other activities or communications where this is done in a manner calculated to ensure that the subject of surveillance is unaware that they are being monitored or observed etc.
- 2.2 The recording of anything monitored observed or listened to during surveillance.
- 2.3 Use of a surveillance device, e.g. a hidden video camera, a listening device.
- 2.4 See paragraph 19 below for further advice on activities/operations considered to involve directed surveillance.

3. What is not regulated by RIPA?

- 3.1 Local authorities are only able to seek authorisations under RIPA for covert surveillance carried out **for the purposes of preventing or detecting crime**. No RIPA authorisations can be sought for covert surveillance being undertaken for other purposes, nor should they be sought for crime prevention or detection purposes, if that purpose is not linked to one of the authority's regulatory functions. This was stated by the Investigatory Powers Tribunal in the case of *C v The Police and the Secretary of State for the Home Department* (14/11/2006, No: IPT/03/32/H), who held that surveillance of employees is unlikely to be for a regulatory function of the authority.
- 3.2 This means that there may be circumstances when the Local Authority wishes to carry out surveillance and will not be able to rely on a RIPA authorisation (e.g. surveillance of employees). Not being able to seek an authorisation under RIPA means there is a greater risk of a human rights challenge, as privacy rights under Article 8 European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) are likely to be interfered with. This can be reduced by following a similar self-authorisation process, which can be achieved by using the non-RIPA authorisation form available from nplaw and which should be completed by the officer and authorised by a person identified in Appendix A.
- 3.3 The Authorising Officer should consider the same issues as if he were responding to a request under RIPA, particularly the necessity of the operation, whether it is proportionate and whether there are any other methods of obtaining the information. If there is any doubt as to the issue of a Local Authority regulatory role and its ordinary functions, then advice should be sought from nplaw.
- 3.4 Directed surveillance does not include covert surveillance carried out by way of an immediate response to events or circumstances which, by their very nature, could not have been foreseen. Thus, a local authority officer would not require an authorisation to conceal himself and observe a suspicious person that he came across in the course of his duties.
- 3.5 Overt CCTV surveillance systems are not normally covered by RIPA as their use is obvious to the public. There may, however, be occasions where public authorities use material obtained from overt CCTV systems for the purpose of specific investigation or operation. In such cases authorisation for directed surveillance may be necessary.
- 3.6 The Investigatory Powers Act 2016 regulates investigatory actions in respect of the acquisition of communications data. This is therefore outside the scope of this guide and reference should be made to the Council's "Investigatory Powers Act 2016" guidance.
- 3.7 See paragraph 22 below for further advice on activities/operations considered **not** to involve directed surveillance.

4. Rules of Evidence

- 4.1 Material obtained through covert surveillance may be used as evidence in criminal proceedings. Provided that surveillance has been properly authorised, the evidence gathered should be admissible under law and in accordance with Section 78 of the Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984 (PACE) and the Human Rights Act 1998 (HRA). Material gathered as a result of surveillance authorised under RIPA is subject to the ordinary rules for retention and disclosure of material and the Criminal Procedure and Investigations Act 1996 (CPIA).

5. Some Definitions

- 5.1 “Covert”: Concealed, done secretly
- 5.2 “Covert surveillance”: Surveillance which is carried out in a manner calculated to ensure that the persons subject to the surveillance are unaware that it is or may be taking place.
- 5.3 “Directed surveillance”: Surveillance which is covert, but not intrusive, and is undertaken for the purposes of a specific investigation or specific operation, in such a manner as is likely to result in the obtaining of private information about a person (whether or not one specifically identified for the purposes of the investigation or operation) and otherwise than by way of an immediate response to events or circumstances.
- 5.4 “Intrusive surveillance”: Is covert surveillance that is carried out in relation to anything taking place on any residential premises or in any private vehicle and involves the presence of an individual on the premises or in the vehicle or is carried out by means of a surveillance device.
- 5.5 “Private information”: Includes any information relating to a person’s private or family life. Private information should be taken generally to include any aspect of a person’s private or personal relationship with others, including family and professional or business relationships.
- 5.6 “Confidential Information”: Confidential information consists of communications subject to legal privilege, communications between a Member of Parliament and another person on constituency matters,

confidential personal information, or confidential journalistic material.

6. Entering onto or interfering with property, or with wireless telegraphy or postal communications

- 6.1 Only members of the intelligence services are able to make applications to enter onto or interfere with property or with wireless telegraphy. Council staff are not permitted, under any circumstances, to engage in such activity.
- 6.2 It is an offence to intercept communications sent by public postal service and public telecommunication systems. Interception of communication can be done with lawful authority, however only a limited group can grant a warrant for such an activity (Secretary of State or his representative to such persons as the Directors-General of the Security Service and Director of GCHQ, the Chief of Secret Intelligence Service and the Chief Constables of Police). Therefore, it is not envisaged that the Local Authority would ever be permitted to make a lawful interception of a communication.

7. Authorisations

7.1 Purpose of Authorising surveillance

- 7.1.1 An authorisation under RIPA, with subsequent appropriate approval by a Justice of the Peace, provides lawful authority for a public authority to carry out surveillance. Responsibility for authorising surveillance investigations is given by an "authorising officer". Approval is then required by a Justice of the Peace. Surveillance must not be carried out without prior authorisation and approval (but see 2.1 above).
- 7.1.2 The consequence of not obtaining an authorisation and approval under RIPA may be that the action is in breach of the Human Rights Act/European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) and that any evidence so gained could be excluded in any proceedings that arise.
- 7.1.3 Authorisation should be obtained for any covert surveillance that is likely to interfere with a person's rights to privacy under Article 8 ECHR by obtaining private information about that person, whether or not that person is the subject of the investigation or operation.

7.2 Basis for Authorising Surveillance Activities

- 7.2.1 Authorisation can only be granted where there is justifiable interference with an individual's human rights, i.e. it is necessary and proportionate for surveillance activities to take place.

- 7.2.2 The authorising officer must believe that the authorisation is necessary in the circumstances of the particular case for the statutory grounds for directed surveillance to exist (See paragraph 12.1).
- 7.2.3 The authorising officer must also believe that the activity is proportionate to what is sought to be achieved. They must balance the intrusiveness of the activity proposed on both the target and others who may be affected, against the need for the activity in operational terms.
- 7.2.4 Before authorising surveillance, the authorising officer must also take into account the risk of intrusion into the privacy of persons other than those who are the target of the investigation. This is known as collateral intrusion. The authorisation procedures allow for an assessment of collateral intrusion which the authorising officer will be required to consider prior to granting authorisation. In order to decide whether to grant authorisation the authorising officer must have a full picture of the operation, the proposed method(s) of observation and the Human Rights Act implications of the operation.
- 7.2.5 Where one agency acts on behalf of another, for example, this authority acts on behalf of a neighbouring authority, it will be the responsibility of the lead authority to obtain the authorisation.
- 7.2.6 Once authorisation is obtained, approval by a Justice of the Peace must be granted before the relevant surveillance activity can be undertaken. The requirement for Magistrates' approval applies to both authorisations and renewals.

8. The Senior Responsible Officer's Role

8.1 The Council's Senior Responsible Officer (SRO) is the Director of Governance and Monitoring Officer.

8.2 The SRO is responsible for:

- The integrity of the process in place within the Council for the management of Covert Human Intelligence Sources and Directed Surveillance
- Compliance with Part II of RIPA and the Codes of Practice
- Oversight of the reporting of errors to the Investigatory Powers Commissioner's Office (IPCO) and the identification of both the cause(s) of errors and the implementation of processes to minimise repetition of errors
- Engagement with IPCO inspectors when they conduct their inspections
- Oversight of the implementation of any post-inspection action plan approved by the IPCO

- Ensuring that all Authorising Officers are of an appropriate standard in light of any recommendations in the inspection reports by the Investigatory Powers Commissioner's Office.

8.3 Specific responsibilities

- 8.3.1 The Senior Responsible Officer is responsible for ensuring this **Policy Guidance is reviewed** on a regular basis with Cabinet. Cabinet is responsible for ensuring the Policy Guidance remains fit for purpose; they are not involved in making decisions on specific authorisations.
- 8.3.2 The Senior Responsible Officer is responsible for submitting **annual statistics** to the IPCO in relation to authorisations.
- 8.3.3 The Senior Responsible Person is also responsible for communicating to the IPCO any **unauthorised activity** that might come to the attention of the authority. This must be done within 5 working days. The records, documentation, and associated documentation relating to this unauthorised activity must be retained by the Senior Responsible Officer and disclosed to the IPCO upon request, and certainly to an inspector from the IPCO at the commencement of the next scheduled inspection.
- 8.3.4 The Senior Responsible Officer must also undertake a regular review of **Errors**. The Codes of Practice provide that a written record must be made of each review and include requirements to report relevant and serious errors to the IPCO.

Officers should familiarise themselves with the requirements in the Codes of Practice relating to errors.

9. **Records**

- 9.1 The Senior Responsible Officer is responsible for ensuring a central record of authorisations and approvals is maintained. Each application must be given a Unique Reference Number, which will then be used to locate the application on the Central Record.
- 9.2 The central record and all associated documents relating to authorisations and approvals, reviews, cancellations, or renewals and refused applications should be retained in an auditable format, with each particular authorisation and approval allocated a unique reference number.
- 9.3 Records should be retained for a period of five years from the ending of the authorisation and should contain information as specified in the Codes of Practice.

10. **Retention and destruction of results of investigations**

- 10.1 Material obtained in the course of criminal investigations and which may be relevant to the investigation must be recorded and retained in accordance with the Criminal Procedure and Investigations Act 1996.
- 10.2 The authority must have in place arrangements for handling, storage and destruction of material obtained through the use of covert surveillance and compliance with the appropriate data protection requirements must be ensured.

11. Confidential Information

- 11.1 Confidential information consists of; communications subject to legal privilege, (i.e. matters arising from the confidential lawyer – client relationship), communications between a Member of Parliament and another person on constituency matters, confidential personal information or confidential journalistic material. Special consideration must be given to authorisations that involve confidential information. If the use of surveillance may result in confidential information being acquired, the use of surveillance will be subject to a higher level of authorisation. (i.e. the Head of Paid Service)
- 11.2 Confidential personal information is information held in confidence relating to the physical or mental health or spiritual counselling of a person (whether living or dead) who can be identified from it. Examples include consultations between a health professional and a patient, or information from a patient's medical records. Such information is held in confidence if it is held subject to an express or implied undertaking to hold it in confidence or it is subject to a restriction on disclosure or an obligation of confidentiality contained in existing legislation.
- 11.3 Material which is legally privileged is particularly sensitive and an application for surveillance which is likely to result in the acquisition of legally privileged information should only be authorised in exceptional and compelling circumstances. The person authorising must also be satisfied that the proposed covert surveillance or property interference is proportionate to what is sought to be achieved.
- 11.4 Legal privilege is defined in section 98 of the Police Act 1997 . This definition should be used to determine how to handle material obtained through surveillance authorised under RIPA. Special safeguards apply to matters subject to legal privilege and legal advice should be sought.
- 11.5 If there is any doubt as to the handling and dissemination of confidential information, legal advice should be sought before any further dissemination of material takes place.

12. Grounds for Authorisation

- 12.1 Section 28(3) of RIPA allows for authorisation for directed surveillance to be granted by an authorising officer where he believes that the authorisation is

necessary in the circumstances of the particular case. In the case of a Local Authority the only circumstances allowed are: -

28(3) b for the purpose of preventing and detecting crime.

- 12.2 The authorising officer must also believe that the surveillance is proportionate to what it seeks to achieve. "Proportionality" is defined by paragraph 3.6 of the Covert Surveillance and Property Interference Revised Code of Practice: -

3.6 *The following elements of proportionality should therefore be considered:*

- *balancing the size and scope of the proposed activity against the gravity and extent of the perceived crime or offence;*
- *explaining how and why the methods to be adopted will cause the least possible intrusion on the subject and others;*
- *considering whether the activity is an appropriate use of the legislation and a reasonable way, having considered all reasonable alternatives, of obtaining the necessary result;*
- *evidencing, as far as reasonably practicable, what other methods had been considered and why they were not implemented.*

- 12.3 Authorisation must be given in writing.

- 12.4 Authorising officers should not ordinarily give authorisations in investigations or operations in which they are directly involved unless this is unavoidable.

13. Information to be provided in applications for authorisation

- 13.1 An application for authorisation for directed surveillance should be made in writing and should describe any conduct to be authorised and the purpose of the investigation or operation. The application should include:

- (a) the reasons why the authorisation is necessary;
- (b) the grounds upon which it is sought, including specifying the offence(s) under investigation;
- (c) the reasons why the surveillance is considered proportionate to what it seeks to achieve; (see paragraph 12.2) e.g. could the information be achieved by other means?
- (d) the nature of the surveillance; e.g. where will officers be located, will they use a vehicle, what equipment will be used?
- (e) the identities, where known, of those to be the subject of the surveillance;

- (f) an explanation of the information which it is desired to obtain as a result of a surveillance;
- (g) the details of any potential collateral intrusion and why the intrusion is justified;
- (h) the details of any confidential information that is likely to be obtained as a consequence of the surveillance;
- (i) the level of authority required (or recommended where that is different) of the surveillance;
- (j) a subsequent record of whether authority was given or refused, by whom and the time and date.

14. Duration of authorisations

- 14.1 A written authorisation/approval ceases to have effect unless renewed and approved at the end of a period of three months beginning with the date on which it took effect (12 months for CHIS). Note: an authorisation takes effect on the date judicial approval is granted.

15. Reviews

- 15.1 Authorisations should be reviewed regularly to assess the need for surveillance to continue. The results of a review should be recorded on the relevant form in the central record of authorisations. Particular attention should be paid to reviews where the surveillance provides access to confidential information or involves collateral intrusion.
- 15.2 It is the responsibility of the authorising officer to determine how often a review should take place and this should be as frequently as is considered necessary and practicable.

16. Renewals

- 16.1 If at any time before an authorisation would cease to have effect the authorising officer considers it necessary for the authorisation to continue for the purpose for which it was given, he may renew it in writing for a further period of three months. Magistrate approval must then be obtained prior to expiry of the original authorisation in order for activity to continue.
- 16.2 All applications for renewal of an authorisation should record:
 - (a) whether this is the first renewal or every occasion on which the authorisation has been renewed previously;

- (b) any significant changes to the information contained in the original application;
- (c) the reasons why it is necessary to continue the surveillance;
- (d) the content and value to the investigation or operation of the information so far obtained from the surveillance;
- (e) the result of regular reviews of the investigation or operation.

16.3 Renewal records should be kept as part of the central record of authorisations.

17. Cancellations

- 17.1 The authorising officer who granted or last renewed the authorisation **must** cancel it if he is satisfied that the directed surveillance no longer meets the criteria upon which it was authorised. Where the authorising officer is no longer available, this duty will fall on the person who has taken over the role of authorising officer. If in doubt about who may cancel an authorisation, please consult nplaw. Cancellations are to be effected by completion of the cancellation [RIPA forms available on the government website](#).
- 17.2 It is essential that there is a completed cancellation for each authorisation once surveillance has been completed. An authorisation cannot simply be left to expire. Those acting under an authorisation must keep their authorisations under review and notify the authorising officer if they consider that the authorisation is no longer necessary or proportionate.
- 17.3 As soon as any decision is taken to discontinue surveillance, instruction must be given to those involved to stop all surveillance. The date and time of such an instruction must be included in the Notification of Cancellation form.
- 17.4 It is also good practice to retain a record of the product obtained from the surveillance and whether or not objectives were achieved. The Authorising Officer should give directions on the handling, storage or destruction of the product of surveillance and record those details on the cancellation form.

18. Authorising the Use of Covert Human Intelligence Sources (CHIS)

- 18.1 In most cases a human source that volunteers or provides information that is within their personal knowledge, without being induced, asked or tasked by a public authority, will not be a CHIS and therefore will not require authorisation. However, the tasking of a person is not the sole benchmark in seeking a CHIS authorisation. It is the activity of the CHIS in exploiting a relationship for a covert purpose which is ultimately authorised by RIPA, whether or not that CHIS is asked to do so by a public authority. It is possible therefore that a

person will become engaged in the conduct of a CHIS without a public authority inducing, asking or assisting the person to engage in that conduct.

18.2 Local Authorities are permitted to use CHIS.

18.3 A person is a CHIS if:

- a) he establishes or maintains a personal or other relationship with a person for a covert purpose or facilitates the doing of anything within paragraph b) or c).
- b) he covertly uses such a relationship to obtain information or to provide access to any information to another person; or
- c) he covertly discloses information obtained by the use of such a relationship or as a consequence of the existence of such a relationship.

18.4 The grounds for authorisation and approval under Section 29(3) of RIPA are broadly similar to those in S28(3) (see paragraph 12.1 above). However, note there is no requirement to meet the serious crime threshold for CHIS.

18.5 In line with section 29(5)(a) and (b) of RIPA a “handler” and a “controller” will be appointed for each CHIS.

The person referred to in section 29(5)(a) of RIPA (the “handler”)

- will have day to day responsibility for dealing with the CHIS.
- directing the day to day activities of the CHIS;
- recording the information supplied by the CHIS; and
- monitoring the CHIS’s security and welfare.

The handler of a CHIS will usually be of a rank or position below that of the authorising officer.

The person referred to in section 29(5)(b) of RIPA (the “controller”) will normally be responsible for the management and supervision of the “handler” and general oversight of the use of the CHIS.

The authorising officer must ensure that there is a satisfactory risk assessment in place.

18.6 Detailed records must be kept of the authorisation and approval and use made of a CHIS. Section 29(5) of RIPA provides that an authorising officer must not grant an authorisation for the use or conduct of a CHIS unless he believes that there are arrangements in place for ensuring that there is at all times a person with the responsibility for maintaining a record of the use made of the CHIS. The Regulation of Investigatory Powers (Source Records) Regulations 2000; SI No: 2725 details the particulars that must be included in these records. The records kept by public authorities should be maintained in

such a way as to preserve the confidentiality, or prevent disclosure of the identity of the CHIS, and the information provided by that CHIS.

Particulars to be contained in records

The following matters are specified for the purposes of paragraph (d) of section 29(5) of the 2000 Act (as being matters particulars of which must be included in the records relating to each source):

- the identity of the source;
- the identity, where known, used by the source;
- any relevant investigating authority other than the authority maintaining the records;
- the means by which the source is referred to within each relevant investigating authority;
- any other significant information connected with the security and welfare of the source;
- any confirmation made by a person granting or renewing an authorisation for the conduct or use of a source that the information in paragraph (d) has been considered and that any identified risks to the security and welfare of the source have where appropriate been properly explained to and understood by the source;
- the date when, and the circumstances in which, the source was recruited;
- the identities of the persons who, in relation to the source, are discharging or have discharged the functions mentioned in section 29(5)(a) to (c) of the 2000 Act or in any order made by the Secretary of State under section 29(2)(c);
- the periods during which those persons have discharged those responsibilities;
- the tasks given to the source and the demands made of him in relation to his activities as a source;
- all contacts or communications between the source and a person acting on behalf of any relevant investigating authority;
- the information obtained by each relevant investigating authority by the conduct or use of the source;

- any dissemination by that authority of information obtained in that way; and
 - in the case of a source who is not an undercover operative, every payment, benefit or reward and every offer of a payment, benefit or reward that is made or provided by or on behalf of any relevant investigating authority in respect of the source's activities for the benefit of that or any other relevant investigating authority.
- 18.7 Vulnerable adults and minors are the subject of special provisions when used as CHIS. Authorisation will not be given for the collation of information from a CHIS under the age of 16 for the purpose of gathering information against his parents.
- 18.8 The Covert Human Intelligence Sources (Criminal Conduct) Act 2021 provides statutory powers to certain organisations to authorise criminal conduct by a CHIS. These powers are **not** granted to local authorities and The Council cannot authorise criminal conduct.
- 18.9 Where the use of a CHIS is being contemplated, the need to seek legal advice should be considered. Consideration should be given, in any case likely to place the CHIS at any risk of danger or of violence, to seeking assistance from Norfolk Constabulary.

19. Activities/operations involving directed surveillance

- 19.1 It is safest to assume that any operation that involves planned covert surveillance of a specific person or persons (including Council employees) likely to obtain private information, of however short a duration, falls within the definition of directed surveillance and will, therefore, be subject to authorisation under RIPA.
- 19.2 The consequence of not obtaining an authorisation may render the surveillance action unlawful under the HRA/ECHR, or any evidence obtained may be inadmissible in Court proceedings.
- 19.3 It is strongly recommended that Council Officers seek an authorisation, where the surveillance is likely to interfere with a person's Article 8 ECHR rights to privacy. Obtaining an authorisation will ensure that the surveillance action is carried out in accordance with the law and is subject to stringent safeguards against abuse.
- 19.4 Proper authorisation of directed surveillance should also ensure the admissibility of evidence under the common law, PACE and the Human Rights Act. Directed surveillance might be used, for example:

- For fraud or similar offences, where there is a need to observe premises in order to establish who the owner/occupier is, to find out who the occupier has associations with, or to establish whether or to what extent they are being used as business premises.
- Where the Council directs another person/organisation to act as its 'agent' for the purposes of obtaining private information e.g. where Council Officers specifically ask residents to maintain diary notes of the incidence of sales of alcohol to young persons.
- By placing a stationary mobile or video camera outside a building or the use by officers of covert recording equipment to record suspected illegal trading activity, such as the sale of counterfeit goods or 'mock' auctions.

19.5 It will not be necessary to obtain authorisation for directed surveillance when using surveillance devices such as standard video cameras, still cameras, or binoculars, which are utilised on an overt basis.

20. Online covert activity, including covert surveillance of Social Networking Sites

- 20.1 Wherever possible officers should continue to adopt overt methods in seeking to achieve business compliance. However, as a result of the scale of online trading the need to make online test purchases and investigation checks is inevitably increasing. It is therefore recognised that from time to time covert methods will need to be employed. Whenever it is intended to carry out covert activity online, officers must first consider whether the proposed activity is likely to interfere with a person's Article 8 ECHR rights, including the effect of any collateral intrusion. 'General' test purchases from an open internet site or marketplace (such as Ebay) are unlikely to require RIPA authorisation. However, any covert activity likely to interfere with an individual's Article 8 ECHR rights should only be carried out when it is necessary and proportionate to meet the objectives of a specific case. Where it is considered that private information is likely to be obtained, a directed surveillance authorisation must always be sought, as set out elsewhere in this guidance.
- 20.2 Although social networking and internet sites are easily accessible, if they are going to be used during the course of an investigation, consideration must be given as to whether a RIPA authorisation should be obtained.
- 20.3 Viewing of open source material does not require authorisation unless and until it is repeated or systematic, at which stage a directed surveillance authorisation should be considered.
- 20.4 Passing an access control so as to look deeper into the site, for example by making a 'friend request', requires at least directed surveillance authorisation. If the investigator is to go further and pursue enquiries within the site, thereby establishing a relationship with the site host in the guise of a member of the public, this requires CHIS authorisation.

- 20.5 The Home Office Revised Codes of Practice on Covert Surveillance and Property Interference and Covert Human Intelligence Sources provide detailed guidance in relation to online covert activity, including covert surveillance of Social Networking Sites. [View the RIPA codes on the government website.](#)

21. Test Purchasing of Age Restricted Products

- 21.1 It has long been the view that the use of young persons, pursuant to an arrangement with an officer of a public authority, to conduct test purchasing exercises attracts the desirability to obtain RIPA authorisation for directed surveillance. The Covert Surveillance and Property Interference Revised Code of Practice states that if covert recording equipment is worn by the test purchaser, or an adult is observing the test purchase, it will be desirable to obtain an authorisation for directed surveillance.
- 21.2 Local authority use of directed surveillance under RIPA is now limited to the investigation of crimes which attract a six month or more custodial sentence, with the exception of offences relating to the underage sale of alcohol and tobacco. The majority of other age restricted products already attract a six month or more imprisonment penalty, for example gas lighter refills, fireworks, knives and solvents all attract those penalties and so RIPA would be triggered.
- 21.3 This means that in most cases a directed surveillance application would be required for test purchasing of age-restricted products. However, there may be circumstances where different age restricted products are under consideration for which a test purchasing operation is being considered. In these circumstances it is good practice to record the reasons for the decision on the 'non-RIPA' form which has been devised to cover this eventuality.
- 21.4 It is unlikely that authorisations will be considered proportionate without demonstration that overt methods have already been attempted and failed, or that they would not be appropriate given the circumstances. This may include where advice visits to establishments have taken place and subsequent intelligence of sale to minors is being received.
- 21.5 Premises identified for a test purchase may be combined within a single directed surveillance application on a 'per operation' basis, provided that each premises is clearly identified at the outset and the intelligence sufficient to prevent "fishing trips".
- 21.6 It is important that those individuals involved in the planning and conduct of test purchasing exercises avoid inciting, instigating, persuading or pressurising a person into committing an offence that, otherwise, would not have been committed. This includes giving due consideration to the impact of instructing an underage test purchaser to lie about their age if challenged by the seller of an age restricted product. The application for directed

surveillance or the CHIS application must fully consider the impacts this might present together with the mitigation measures of any additional risks that may emerge as a result of the change in approach.

The individual making the test purchase is not classed as a CHIS for single transaction operations. This is because he/she does not establish or maintain a personal or other relationship with a person for the covert purpose of facilitating the obtaining of information. The one-time act of making a purchase in a shop open to the public, where there may even be no verbal exchange, cannot reasonably constitute establishing a relationship, personal or otherwise – other than a momentarily fleeting one in which no information is obtained, which could reasonably constitute an interference with the privacy of the retailer/proprietor.

- 21.7 These assumptions are equally valid in circumstances where it is appropriate to evidence systematic breach of legislation at any given premises by using a number of different test purchasers, each making a one-off purchase. There are, however, some important qualifications to this advice. Firstly, different considerations would apply where the test purchaser has made previous visits to the premises, or is to make repeated visits, and in doing so, has established or is seeking to establish a relationship with the retailer/occupier prior to the attempted test purchase. In this case the juvenile would be revisiting in a way that encourages familiarity and as such they would be deemed a CHIS. Secondly, different considerations would apply, if the attempted test purchase is made other than from business premises open to the public, for example from a person's home including parts of their home adjacent to retail premises.
- 21.8 In circumstances where the test purchaser is not deemed to be a CHIS, it is nevertheless considered good practice to follow the requirements to ensure that:
- The safety and welfare of the test purchaser has been fully considered;
 - Any risk has been properly explained to, and understood by the test purchaser; and
 - A risk assessment has been undertaken, covering the physical dangers including any moral and psychological aspects of the test purchaser's deployment.
- 21.9 In the vast majority of test purchase operations, it is likely that there will be minimal risk to the test purchaser involved. Where an operation differs in the standard approach, for example where the test purchaser of an age restricted product may be asked to lie about their age, a directed surveillance or CHIS application must fully consider the mitigation of any additional risks that may emerge as a result of the change in approach.

22. Activities/operations not involving directed surveillance

- 22.1 Directed surveillance is conducted where it involves the observation of a person or persons with the intention of gathering private information to

produce a detailed picture of a person's life, activities and associations. Private information includes any information relating to the person's private or family life.

- 22.2 However, it does not include general observation which is part of an Enforcement Officer's normal work.
- 22.3 General observation duties of the Council's Enforcement Officers whether overt or covert, frequently form part of their day to day activities and the Council's legislative core functions – such activities will not normally require a directed surveillance authorisation as the obtaining of private information is highly unlikely.
- 22.4 Examples of activities/operations which are unlikely to involve directed surveillance are:
- Enforcement officer's attendance at a car boot sale where it is suspected that counterfeit goods are being sold. In such a case, the officer is not carrying out surveillance of particular individuals - the intention is, through enforcement, to identify and tackle offenders;
 - A one-off identification/confirmation of the existence of a premises address by officer observation;
 - Anything which constitutes an immediate response e.g. a council officer with regulatory responsibilities may by chance be present when an individual is potentially infringing the law and it is necessary to observe, follow, or engage in other surveillance tactics as an instant response to the situation to gather further information or evidence. Once this immediacy has passed, however, any further directed surveillance of the individual, must be subject to a RIPA authorisation.
- 22.5 In circumstances where such activities/operations are considered to fall outside the scope of RIPA, it is good practice to record the reasons for this decision.

23. Investigatory Powers Commissioner's Office

- 23.1 The Investigatory Powers Commissioner is an independent person who has oversight of the operation of RIPA. Public bodies are liable to inspection on behalf of the Investigatory Powers Commissioner and have a duty to produce records and comply with requests for information made by the Investigatory Powers Commissioner or his inspectors.

24. Safeguarding Surveillance Material Obtained

- 24.1 The revised Codes set out significant requirements relating to the handling of any material obtained as a result of surveillance or the use of a CHIS. Officers

should familiarise themselves with the requirements in the Codes relating to safeguarding. Officers should also refer to any Departmental policies regarding evidential material.

25. Complaints

25.1 Where any person expresses their dissatisfaction with a surveillance operation carried out by the Council or with a communications data issue and they are either unwilling to accept an explanation or are dissatisfied with the explanation offered or they wish to complain about any other aspect of the Council's operations under RIPA, they must be informed of the existence of the Investigatory Powers Tribunal.

25.2 Every assistance shall be given to the person to complain to the Council's Corporate Complaints Officer or to contact the Tribunal and make their dissatisfaction known to it.

25.3 The address for the Investigatory Powers Tribunal is:

PO Box 33220
London
SW1H 9ZQ.
Tel: 0207 035 3711
Website address: www.ipt-uk.com

PROCEDURE FOR OBTAINING AUTHORISATION FOR DIRECTED SURVEILLANCE OR USE OF CHIS UNDER RIPA

DIRECTED SURVEILLANCE

1. Applying for Authorisation

- 1.1 Where an Investigating Officer believes that there is a need for Directed Surveillance during the course of an investigation, the Investigating Officer must complete an Application for Authority for Directed Surveillance [see appendix B] after discussion with his line manager, if appropriate.
- 1.2 The completed form must be submitted to the Authorising Officer [see appendix A for departmental Authorising Officers.]
- 1.3 The Authorising Officer can only approve an application where the statutory grounds for doing so are met.
- 1.4 Where the Authorising Officer is satisfied that the criteria for granting authorisation are met, he will approve the application and return a copy of the endorsed application to the Investigating Officer. In authorising the application, the Authorising Officer will set the first review date and specify the expiry date in accordance with the prompts provided on the authorisation forms (3 months less one day for directed surveillance; 12 months less one day for CHIS).

2. The judicial approval process

- 2.1 Once an application has been authorised by an authorising officer, it will not take effect until it has been approved by a Justice of the Peace (JP).
- 2.2 The process for seeking judicial approval is as follows: -
 - The local authority must contact HMCTS to arrange a hearing, or to deal with the matter administratively.
 - The JP should be provided with a copy of the authorisation/notice, all supporting documentation and a partially completed judicial approval/order form. (The original authorisation/notice should be provided to the JP.)
 - Unless dealt with administratively, a hearing will usually take place in private, usually attended by the case investigator, who will be best placed to answer the JP's questions about the investigation. However, in some cases, for example where there are sensitive issues, it may be appropriate for the Authorising Officer to attend to answer questions.
 - The JP will consider the application and record his/her decision on the order section of the application/order form.

2.3 The JP may decide to: -

- Approve the grant or renewal of the authorisation/notice;
- Refuse to approve the grant or renewal of the authorisation/notice;
- Refuse to approve the grant or renewal and quash the authorisation/notice.

2.4 For the form for seeking judicial approval, see Appendix B.

2.5 Once approved by a JP, the Authorising Officer must ensure that a copy of the completed application and approval documentation is included within the central record of authorisations and send a notification to nplaw.

3. Reviewing Authorisations

3.1 The Authorising Officer, in granting the Authorisation, will endorse it with a review date. At the review the Investigating Officer will complete the Review of Directed Surveillance Authorisation form [see appendix B] for consideration by the Authorising Officer. The Authorising Officer is responsible for determining whether the grounds for continued surveillance remain. If not, the application should be cancelled.

3.2 It is recommended that authorisations are reviewed on at least a monthly basis. The maximum period that may elapse between reviews is 3 months.

3.3 The Authorising Officer must ensure that a copy of the Review of Directed Surveillance Authorisation documentation is included within the central record of authorisations and send a notification to nplaw.

4. Refusing Authorisations

4.1 Where the Authorising Officer is not satisfied that the criteria for granting an authorisation for directed surveillance are met, he will refuse the application and endorse the application accordingly.

5. Cancelling Authorisations

5.1 Any activity authorised under RIPA must be kept under review. Where surveillance is completed the IO will complete a Cancellation of Directed Surveillance form [see appendix B] and forward it to the Authorising Officer for approval.

5.2 The Authorising Officer must ensure that a copy of the cancellation documentation is included within the central record of authorisations and send a notification to nplaw.

6. Renewals

- 6.1 Authorisations last for a maximum of 3 months in the first instance and must be renewed if surveillance is to continue beyond this time limit. The Investigating Officer is responsible for ensuring that any application for a renewal is made in a timely manner.
- 6.2 Where it is necessary to renew an authorisation, the Investigating Officer will complete a Renewal of Directed Surveillance Authorisation form and forward it to the Authorising Officer for approval. The investigating officer must then obtain approval for the renewal from a Justice of the Peace, using the specified form and supplying the required authorisation documentation, before the expiry of the original authorisation in order for the activity to continue.
- 6.3 The Authorising Officer will arrange for the original application and renewal approval documentation to be included within the central record of authorisations and send a notification to nplaw.

7. Retention of Authorisation Records

- 7.1 The SRO will retain records relating to authorisations under RIPA for 5 years from the date authorisation was granted or renewed.

8. COVERT HUMAN INTELLIGENCE SOURCES

- 8.1 Applications, Reviews, Cancellations and Renewals apply in relation to CHIS as above, and there are separate forms applicable to such applications [See appendix B.]
- 8.2 The Authorising Officer should not grant any such application without first considering whether to take legal advice.

APPENDIX A OFFICERS

Head of Paid Service

- Tom McCabe (Authorising Officer for confidential information)

Senior Responsible Officer (SRO)

- Helen Edwards, Director of Governance and Monitoring Officer

Authorising Officers

- Sophie Leney, Head of Trading Standards
- Shaun Norris, Section Manager – Trading Standards
- Alice Barnes, Section Manager – Trading Standards
- Jon Peddle, Section Manager – Trading Standards
- Nick Johnson, Head of Planning

APPENDIX B RIPA FORMS

You can download all [RIPA forms available on the government website](#).
It is your responsibility to ensure that you are using the current version of the RIPA forms.

The form to be used for applications for Magistrate approval, in both the Directed Surveillance and CHIS sections is under [Changes to local authority use of RIPA on the government website](#).

Directed Surveillance

1. Application for Directed Surveillance Authorisation
2. Review of Directed Surveillance Authorisation
3. Cancellation of Directed Surveillance Authorisation
4. Renewal of Directed Surveillance Authorisation
5. Magistrate approval of authorisation/renewal.

Covert Human Intelligence Sources

6. Application for Use of CHIS
7. Review of CHIS Authorisation
8. Cancellation of CHIS Authorisation
9. Renewal of CHIS Authorisation
10. Magistrate approval of authorisation/renewal.

Please also see:

[Download the Home Office Guidance to Local Authorities](#)

The application process to the Magistrates is explained from page 10 onwards.



Accessing Communications Data

Investigatory Powers Act 2016

Policy and Guidance Notes

nplaw
Norfolk Public Law

Last Reviewed February 2022

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 The Investigatory Powers Act 2016 (IPA) regulates access to Communications Data. This policy should be read in conjunction with the current Home Office Code of Practice on Communications Data. [Download the Code of Practice on Communications Data from the Gov.uk website.](#)
- 1.2 The Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 (RIPA) regulates investigatory actions involving surveillance and the use of covert human intelligence sources. These actions are therefore outside the scope of this guide and reference should be made to the Council's "Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000" guidance.
- 1.3 Communications data includes the 'who', 'when', 'where', and 'how' of a communication but not the content i.e. what was said or written. It includes the way in which, and by what method, a person or thing communicates with another person or thing. It excludes anything within a communication including text, audio and video that reveals the meaning, other than inferred meaning.

It can include the address to which a letter is sent, the time and duration of a communication, the telephone number or email address of the originator and recipient, and the location of the device. It covers electronic communications including internet access, internet telephony, instant messaging and the use of applications. It also includes postal services.

Communications data is generated, held or obtained in the provision, delivery and maintenance of communications services including telecommunications or postal services.

Application to the County Council

- 1.4 The County Council is only entitled to seek the acquisition of communications data defined as Entity data and/or Events data. Both these terms are defined within the Code of Practice at paragraph 2.38 through to 2.43 for Entity Data, and from para 2.44 to 2.45 for Events Data.

The interception of postal, telephone, email and other electronic communications

- 1.5 There is no legal means for the County Council to 'intercept communications data' under the IPA.

2.0 Authorising the acquisition and disclosure of communications data

Authorisation

- 2.1 It is crucial that the acquisition of communications data is properly authorised. No officer may seek the acquisition of any form of communication data unless he is authorised to do so, an Approved Rank Officer is aware of the Application, and the application has been provided to the Single Point of Contact (SPoC) and approved by the Office for Communications Data Authorisations (OCDA) in accordance with the Code of Practice.

Failure to secure proper approval and to comply with this procedure could lead to evidence being excluded by Courts, complaints against the Council, and in some cases the commission of criminal offences. The Council is subject to audit and inspection by the Investigatory Powers Commissioner's Office and it is important that we demonstrate compliance with the IPA.

Acquisition of communications data

- 2.2 Where an authorisation for the acquisition of communications data has been granted, persons within a public authority may engage in conduct relating to a postal service or telecommunication system, or to data derived from a telecommunication system, to obtain communications data.

The following types of conduct may be authorised:

- conduct to acquire communications data - including obtaining data directly or asking any person believed to be in possession of or capable of obtaining such data to obtain and disclose it; and/or
- giving of a notice – requiring a telecommunications operator to obtain and disclose the required data.

- 2.3 In the case of Norfolk County Council the physical acquisition of communications data will be facilitated through our membership of the National Anti-Fraud Network (NAFN), with NAFN providing a comprehensive SPoC service.

- 2.4 It will be the responsibility of NAFN to ensure all requests to a telecommunications/postal operator for communications data, pursuant to the granting of an authorisation, comply with the requirements of the Code of Practice, specifically para's 6.1 to 6.18.

3.0 Roles & Responsibilities

- 3.1 Acquisition of communications data under the IPA involves four roles:

- (a) Applicant;
- (b) Approved Rank Officer (ARO)
- (c) Single point of contact (SPoC);
- (d) Senior Responsible Officer in a Public Authority (SRO)

The Applicant

- 3.2 The applicant is a person involved in conducting or assisting an investigation or operation within a relevant public authority who makes an application in writing or electronically for the acquisition of communications data.

Any person in a public authority which is permitted to acquire communications data may be an applicant, subject to any internal controls or restrictions put in place within public authorities.

Approved Rank Officer (ARO)

- 3.3 The Approved Rank Officer is a person who is a manager at service level or above within the Public Authority. The ARO's role is to have an awareness of the application made by the Applicant and convey this to the SPoC when requested to do so.

The ARO does not authorise or approve any element of the application and is not required to be 'operationally independent'. The AROs for Norfolk County Council are identified in **Appendix I**.

The Single Point of Contact (SPoC)

- 3.4 The SPoC is an individual trained to facilitate the lawful acquisition of communications data and effective co-operation between a public authority, the Office for Communications Data Authorisations (OCDA) and telecommunications and postal operators. To become accredited an individual must complete a course of training appropriate for the role of a SPoC and have been issued the relevant SPoC unique identifier.

Public authorities are expected to provide SPoC coverage for all communications data acquisitions that they reasonably expect to make. Norfolk County Council is a member of the National Anti-Fraud Network (NAFN). NAFN is an accredited body for the purpose of providing data and intelligence under the IPA for all public bodies. As part of their portfolio they offer a comprehensive SPoC service.

Authorising Agency (OCDA)

- 3.5 The Office for Communications Data Authorisations (OCDA) is the independent body responsible for the authorisation and assessment of all Data Communications applications under the IPA. They undertake the following roles:

- Independent assessment of all Data Communications applications.
- Authorisation of any appropriate applications.

- Ensuring accountability of Authorities in the process and safeguarding standards.

The Senior Responsible Officer (SRO)

- 3.6 The Senior Responsible Officer (SRO) is a person of a senior rank, a manager at service level or above within the Public Authority. The SRO for Norfolk County Council is identified in **Appendix 1**.

The SRO is responsible for:

- the integrity of the process in place within the public authority to acquire communications data;
- engagement with authorising officers in the Office for Communications Data Authorisations (where relevant);
- compliance with Part 3 of the IPA and with the Code of Practice, including responsibility for novel or contentious cases;
- oversight of the reporting of errors to the Investigatory Powers Commissioner's Office (IPCO) and the identification of both the cause(s) of errors and the implementation of processes to minimise repetition of errors;
- ensuring the overall quality of applications submitted to OCDA;
- engagement with the IPCO's inspectors during inspections; and
- where necessary, oversight of the implementation of post-inspection action plans approved by the IPCO.

4.0 Necessity & Proportionality Test

When should an Application for Communications Data be made?

- 4.1 Applications for the acquisition of Communications Data should only be made where it is **necessary** for an '**Applicable Crime Purpose**', as defined by Section 60(A) of the IPA.

This allows for applications to be made for '**Entity data**', previously referred to as subscriber data, where the purpose of obtaining the data is for the **prevention and detection of crime**. This definition permits the obtaining of Entity data for 'any' crime, irrespective of seriousness.

Applications for '**Events data**', previously referred to as service or traffic data, requires a higher standard, and applications for this data should only be made where the purpose is the 'prevention and detection of **serious crime**'. Serious crime is defined in Section 86(2A) of the IPA, and includes, but is not limited to the following;

- Any crime that provides the potential for a 12mth+ sentence of imprisonment. (Either way or indictable offences)
- Offences committed by Corporate Bodies

- Any offence involving, **as an integral part**, the sending of a communication OR a breach of a person's privacy.

Applications should only be made where they are proportionate, and alternative means of obtaining the information are either, exhausted, not available or considered not practical to obtain the same information.

However, use of applications to obtain data **should not be considered a last resort**. Where applications are 'proportionate & necessary' the IPA should be used as a tool to advance criminal investigations efficiently and quickly, and where this is considered by the Local Authority to be in the public interest, and in the interest of suspects.

Any Applicant must ensure clear explanation is provided to demonstrate the necessity and proportionality test in any application, and the Approved Rank Officer must be satisfied that such explanation has been provided. Where any explanation is insufficient it should be referred back to the applicant for rework by the Approved Rank Officer.

How should we demonstrate Necessity?

4.2 A short explanation must be provided in every application explaining:

- (a) The event under investigation, such as a crime.
- (b) The person whose data is sought, such as a suspect **AND** a description of how they are linked to the event.
- (c) The communications data sought, such as a telephone number or IP address, and how this data is related to the person and event.

The application must explain the link between the three aspects to demonstrate the acquisition of communications data is necessary.

How should we demonstrate Proportionality?

4.3 Applications should include the following key explanations;

- (a) An outline of how obtaining the data will benefit the investigation. The relevance of the data being sought should be explained and anything which might undermine the application.
- (b) The relevance of time periods requested.
- (c) How the level of intrusion is justified against any benefit the data will give to the investigation. This should include consideration of whether less intrusive investigations could be undertaken.

- (d) A consideration of the rights (particularly to privacy and, in relevant cases, freedom of expression) of the individual and a balancing of these rights against the benefit to the investigation.
- (e) Any details of what collateral intrusion may occur and how the time periods requested impact on the collateral intrusion, if applicable.
- (f) Where no collateral intrusion will occur, **such as when applying for entity data**, the absence of collateral intrusion should be noted.
- (g) Any circumstances which give rise to significant collateral intrusion.
- (h) Any possible unintended consequences. This is more likely in more **complicated requests for events data** or in **applications for the data of those in professions with duties of confidentiality**. E.G journalists/doctors/solicitors.

Type of Data not permitted to be requested by the Local Authority

4.4 The following data is not permitted to be applied for by the Local Authority:

- Internet Connection Records
- Content of data communications e.g. content of text messages, emails etc.

5.0 The Application Procedure

Applying for authority to acquire communications data

- 5.1 Applicants must submit applications through the central NAFN (SPoC) portal. Applicants will need to be registered with NAFN to access the portal and have valid login and security details (currently a randomised number/alphabet grid card). An allocated SPoC officer will then check all applications for legal compliance and, where necessary, provide feedback. NAFN will then request confirmation from a local authority Approved Rank Officer (ARO) of their awareness of the application before submitting for authorisation to the OCDA.
- 5.2 The OCDA will independently assess each application and will undertake one of the following actions;
 - Authorise the application
 - Require reworking of the application
 - Reject the application

Authorised Applications

- 5.3 Where the OCDA authorises the data request, this decision is communicated to the SPoC (NAFN) and actions are taken to request the data from the

relevant telecommunications providers and other agencies holding such communications data to provide the necessary data.

Reworking Applications

- 5.4 Where rework is required, the application will be returned to the applicant, via the SPoC and the **applicant will have 14 calendar days to rework** the application and resubmit. Failure to rework the application within the 14 days will result in the application being automatically rejected.

Rejected Applications

- 5.5 Where the OCDA rejects an application, the Authority has three options;
- Cease to proceed with the application
 - Re-submit the application with revised justification and/or revised course of conduct to acquire the data
 - Re-submit the application without alteration and request a review of the decision by the OCDA.

In the case of seeking a review, or effectively appealing against the original determination **the Authority has 7 calendar days to seek the review**. Any appeal must be made by the Authority's SRO. The OCDA will provide guidance on this process.

Notices in Pursuance of an Authorisation

- 5.6 The giving of a notice is appropriate where a telecommunications operator or postal operator can retrieve or obtain specific data, and disclose that data, and the relevant authorisation has been granted. A notice may require a telecommunications operator or postal operator to obtain any communications data, if that data is not already in its possession.
- 5.7 For Local Authorities the role to issue Notices to telecommunications/postal operators sits with the SPoC (NAFN), and it will be the SPoC's role to ensure notices are given in accordance with the Code of Practice meeting the requirements of 6.19 to 6.29 of the Code.

Duration of authorisations and notices

- 5.8 An authorisation becomes valid on the date the authorisation is granted by the OCDA. It remains valid for a maximum of one month. Any conduct authorised or notice served should be commenced/served within that month.
- 5.9 Any notice given under an authorisation remains in force until complied with or until the authorisation under which it was given is cancelled.
- 5.10 All authorisations should relate to a specific date(s) or period(s), including start and end dates, and these should be clearly indicated in the authorisation.

Where the data to be acquired or disclosed is specified as 'current', the relevant date is the date on which the authorisation was granted.

Please note however that where a date or period cannot be specified other than for instance; 'the last transaction' or 'the most recent use of the service', it is still permitted to request the data for that unspecifiable period.

- 5.11 Where the request relates to specific data that will or may be generated in the future, the future period is restricted to no more than one month from the date of authorisation.

Renewal of authorisations and notices.

- 5.12 A valid authorisation may be renewed for a period of up to one month by the grant of a further authorisation and takes effect upon the expiry of the original authorisation. This may be appropriate where there is a continuing requirement to acquire or obtain data that may be generated in the future.
- 5.13 The Applicant will need to consider whether the application for renewal remains 'necessary and proportionate' and should reflect this in any renewal application made. The Authorising body (OCDA) will need to consider this carefully in authorising any renewal.

Cancellation of an Authorisation where it is no longer Necessary/Proportionate

- 5.14 Where it comes to the Authority's attention after an authorisation has been granted that it is no longer necessary or proportionate, the authority is under a duty to notify the SPoC (NAFN) immediately.
- 5.15 It is the SPoC's (NAFN) responsibility to cease the authorised action and take steps to notify the telecommunications service provider. E.g. Such a scenario may occur where a legitimate application has been made for Entity data to identify and locate a suspect, but subsequently, and before the data has been acquired the Authority becomes aware by some other legitimate means of the suspect's name and address etc.

6.0 Offences

- 6.1 Under section 11 of the IPA, it is an offence for a person in a public authority knowingly or recklessly to obtain communications data from a telecommunications operator or postal operator without lawful authority.
- 6.2 The roles and responsibilities laid down for the Senior Responsible Officer and SPoC are designed to prevent the knowing or reckless acquisition of communications by a public authority without lawful authorisation. Adherence to the requirements of the IPA and this Code, including procedures detailed in this Policy, will mitigate the risk of any offence being committed.

- 6.3 An offence is not committed if the person obtaining the data can show that they acted in the reasonable belief that they had lawful authority.
- 6.4 It is not an offence to obtain communications data where it is made publicly or commercially available by a telecommunications/postal operator. In such circumstances the consent of the operator provides the lawful authority. However, public authorities should not require, or invite, any operator to disclose communications data by relying on this exemption.

7.0 Keeping of records

- 7.1 Applications, authorisations, copies of notices, and records of the withdrawal and cancellation of authorisations, must be retained in written or electronic form by the Council for 5 years. A record must be kept of the date and, when appropriate, the time each notice or authorisation is granted, renewed or cancelled.
- 7.2 Records kept must be held centrally by the SPoC and be available for inspection by the Investigatory Powers Commissioner's Office upon request and retained to allow the Investigatory Powers Tribunal (IPT), to carry out its functions. The retention of documents service will be provided by NAFN. In addition, the ARO must provide the SRO with copies of the records referred to in 7.1 above, for the purposes of the SRO monitoring role.
- 7.3 Nothing in the Code or this policy affects similar duties under the Criminal Procedure and Investigations Act 1996 requiring material which is obtained in the course of an investigation and which may be relevant to the investigation to be recorded, retained and revealed to the prosecutor.
- 7.4 For full details of the level of information expected to be retained by the SPoC reference should be made to the Code, para's 24.1 to 24.9.

8.0 Recordable/Reportable Errors

- 8.1 Where any error occurs in the granting of an authorisation or because of any authorised conduct a record should be kept.
- 8.2 Where the error results in communications data being acquired or disclosed incorrectly, a report must be made to the IPCO by whoever is responsible for it. ('reportable error'). E.g. The telecommunications operator must report the error if it resulted from them disclosing data not requested, whereas if the error is because the public authority provided incorrect information, they must report the error. The SRO would be the appropriate person to make the report to the IPCO.
- 8.3 Where an error has occurred before data has been acquired or disclosed incorrectly, a record will be maintained by the public authority ('recordable error'). These records must be available for inspection by the IPCO.

- 8.4 A non-exhaustive list of reportable and recordable errors is provided in the Code at para 24.25.

9.0 Notification of serious errors under the IPA

- 9.1 There may be rare occasions when communications data is wrongly acquired or disclosed and this amounts to a 'serious error'. A serious error is anything that **'caused significant prejudice or harm to the person concerned.'** It is insufficient that there has been a breach of a person's human rights.
- 9.2 In these cases, the public authority which made the error, or established that the error had been made, must report the error to the authority's Senior Responsible Officer and the IPCO.
- 9.3 When an error is reported to the IPCO, the IPC may inform the affected individual subject of the data disclosure, who may make a complaint to the IPT. The IPC must be satisfied that the error is a) a serious error AND b) it is in the public interest for the individual concerned to be informed of the error.
- 9.4 Before deciding if the error is serious or not the IPC will accept submissions from the Public Authority regarding whether it is in the public interest to disclose. For instance, it may not be in the public interest to disclose if to do so would be prejudicial to the 'prevention and detection of crime'.

10.0 Notification in criminal proceedings

- 10.1 When communications data has been acquired during a criminal investigation that comes to trial an individual may be made aware data has been obtained.
- 10.2 If communications data is used to support the prosecution case it will appear in the 'served' material as evidence and a copy provided to the defendant.
- 10.3 Where communications data is not served but retained as unused material it is subject to the rules governing disclosure under the Criminal Procedure and Investigations Act 1996 (CPIA). The prosecution should reveal the existence of communications data to a defendant on a schedule of non-sensitive unused material, only if that data is relevant, and copies of the material may be provided to the defendant if it might reasonably be considered capable of undermining the prosecution case and/or assisting the defence.
- 10.4 Where communications data is acquired but not directly relied on to prove offences, the material may alternatively be listed in the schedule of 'Sensitive' unused material and not disclosed to the defendant. The CPIA sets out exemptions to the disclosure obligation. Under section 3(6) of that Act, data must not be disclosed if it is material which, on application by the prosecutor, the Court concludes it is not in the public interest to disclose. Any communications data which comes within the scope of this exemption cannot

be disclosed. E.g. Material that reveals a 'method of investigation' is usually not disclosable.

- 10.5 If through any of the above notification processes, an individual suspects that their communications data has been wrongly acquired, the Investigatory Powers Tribunal ("IPT") provides a right of redress. An individual may make a complaint to the IPT without the individual knowing, or having to demonstrate, that any investigatory powers have been used against them.

APPENDIX 1

Officers

Head of Paid Service

- Tom McCabe

Senior Responsible Officer (SRO)

- Helen Edwards, Director of Governance and Monitoring Officer

Approved Rank Officers

- Sophie Leney, Head of Trading Standards
- Shaun Norris, Section Manager – Trading Standards
- Alice Barnes, Section Manager – Trading Standards
- Jon Peddle, Section Manager – Trading Standards
- Nick Johnson, Head of Planning

SPoC Service provided by NAFN

Cabinet

Item No: 15

Decision making report title: Strategic and financial planning 2023-24

Date of meeting: 4 April 2022

Responsible Cabinet Member: Cllr Andrew Jamieson (Cabinet Member for Finance)

Responsible Director: Simon George (Executive Director of Finance and Commercial Services)

Is this a key decision? No

If this is a key decision, date added to the Forward Plan of Key Decisions: n/a

Introduction from Cabinet Member

This report marks an earlier than usual start to the Council's budget setting process, reflecting the scale of the task to be addressed in 2023-24. There is significant uncertainty about funding for 2023-24 onwards, particularly in light of the Government's intention to take forward funding reform during 2022-23. Nevertheless, in the context of a forecast £60m gap for the forthcoming year, it remains essential for the Council to have a robust plan in place to enable the preparation of a balanced and sustainable budget to safeguard the delivery of the essential local services which are so important for all Norfolk's people, businesses and visitors.

This report therefore sets out the framework for how the Council will approach budget setting for 2023-24, and should be read in conjunction with the reports *Better Together, for Norfolk – delivering our strategy* and *Norfolk County Council – Strategic Review*, elsewhere on the agenda. Taken together, these three reports represent key elements that will contribute to setting the strategy and direction for the Council over the next few years.

Executive Summary

While the Council has a well-established process for annual budget setting, the size of the forecast gap for 2023-24 demands a revision to ensure that there is a robust approach to developing savings proposals and other budget changes at the scale and pace required. This report therefore sets out proposals for how this will be achieved to deliver a prudent and transparent approach to budgeting for 2023-24, whilst

incorporating the required key elements such as public consultation and engagement with Select Committees.

Reflecting these considerations, this report proposes the Budget planning cycle for 2023-24 to start immediately in April 2022 and to work in parallel with the full strategic review of how the Council operates to deliver its future services and strategy. As part of 2023-24 Budget setting, a thorough interrogation of identified future cost pressures will also be required. It is particularly important to recognise that the 2022-23 position has been supported through significant one-off measures including use of reserves, which will represent a major challenge to be addressed in future years.

At the same time, the wider budget position remains the subject of extremely high levels of uncertainty. As such, this report sets out details of a proposed budget planning process for 2023-24, but recognises that as always there may be a need for some flexibility. In this context, the report provides a summary of key areas of wider risk and uncertainty for Cabinet to consider. This report should also be read in conjunction with the latest 2021-22 monitoring position reported to Cabinet, and the Strategic Review report, as set out elsewhere on this agenda.

Recommendations:

Cabinet is recommended:

- 1. To consider the overall budget gap of £96.676m included in the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) set by Full Council in February 2022, and agree:**
 - a) the gap of £59.927m to be closed for 2023-24; and**
 - b) the extension of the MTFS by a further year (to 2026-27) and the resulting overall gap for planning purposes of £115.814m. (Section 4).**
- 2. To review the key budget risks and uncertainties as set out in this report. (Section 4).**
- 3. To consider the principles of the proposed approach to budget setting for 2023-24, noting that there may be a need for flexibility within both the process itself and the assumptions applied, and agree:**
 - a) the process and indicative timetable set out in Section 5, including the proposed two stage consultation process for 2023-24 to support in the early securing of deliverable saving proposals.**
 - b) the savings targets allocated to each Department to be found (Table 10), and that these will be kept under review through the budget process.**

1. Background and Purpose

- 1.1. At the time of 2022-23 budget setting, the Section 151 Officer recommended that: *“...early planning is undertaken in respect of 2023-24 and the scope to address pressures within the constraints of the overall budget should be reviewed in the round during 2022-23. This should be informed by, but cannot be contingent upon, the progress of any local government funding reform brought forward for 2023-24. It may be that further specific details of the longer term funding allocations for the Council are not known until late in 2022-23. **In this context it will be essential that the Council is able to produce a realistic plan for reducing the budget requirement in future years through the early identification of saving proposals for 2023-24, or the mitigation of currently identified pressures, and that all proposals are considered in the context of the significant budget gap identified for that year.**”*
- 1.2. There continues to be a growing gap between funding and service pressures. This is driven by demographic changes, unfunded burdens such as the National Living Wage, and the needs of the people who draw upon social care services becoming increasingly complex. Children’s services, in both social care and education (particularly the High Needs Block), are also under very significant stress. Other Council services remain subject to significant financial pressures, for example as a result of increasing fuel costs which have a widespread impact across service delivery and commissioned services. In turn these have a knock on effect by increasing the pressure placed on discretionary and preventative services.
- 1.3. The Council’s February 2021 MTFS therefore made it clear that the Council, in common with other upper tier local authorities, faces a significant budget shortfall to be addressed in 2023-24, which is materially higher than the gap closed for the 2022-23 Budget. Simultaneously, as detailed below, there is major uncertainty linked to Government’s plans to reform local government funding during 2022 (for 2023-24) and linked to the delivery of the levelling up agenda. While the Council’s past success in delivering a balanced budget, coupled with a robust budget planning approach, provides a solid platform for development, it is prudent to begin planning for 2023-24 as early as possible.
- 1.4. Cabinet recognised this in November 2021, when it agreed to undertake a full review of how the Council operates to deliver its future services and strategy. Details of the scope and next steps for this work are set out in the Strategic Review report elsewhere on this agenda. It is anticipated that this review will make a material contribution to closing the forecast gap.
- 1.5. In common with recent years, it is highly likely the Council will not receive detailed information about funding allocations for 2023-24 until autumn 2022 at the earliest. This is particularly likely in light of the Government’s intention to deliver funding reform ahead of the 2023-24 Settlement, as confirmed by the commitment in the [Levelling Up White Paper](#)¹ to *“ensuring that funding allocations for councils are based on an up-to-date assessment of their needs and resources”*. It is anticipated that the Government will publish further details

¹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/levelling-up-the-united-kingdom>, page 143.

of its intentions in spring 2022, with any formula changes to be made ahead of 2023-24 funding announcements. However, the scope of this work has not been defined at the time of preparing this report and, in comparison with the approach to the Fair Funding Review, there is very limited time to develop and consult on proposals for fundamental reform. Ministers in the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) have also indicated that implementation of funding reform is a prerequisite for any longer-term funding allocations being announced. It therefore remains to be seen whether the 2023-24 Settlement will provide a multi-year allocation which would enable greater planning certainty. As a result, the overall level of uncertainty means that budget setting for 2023-24, and the wider financial environment for local government, is set to remain highly challenging. Government announced the 2022 Spring Statement on 23 March 2022 and further details are provided in section 2 below, but this did not include further significant policy announcements in terms of local government funding, which would impact on the budget position.

1.6. As in previous years, this report represents the start of the Council's process for setting the 2023-24 Budget and developing the supporting Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS). The report sets out the context and a proposed approach to budget setting including:

- A summary of the Budget and MTFS approved by Full Council in February 2022, including the savings already planned for future years.
- An overview of the significant remaining uncertainties facing local government finances.
- The MTFS position for 2022-23 onwards as agreed in February 2022, extended for a further year to support 2023-24 Budget setting.
- A proposed timetable for 2023-24 Budget setting including the recommended two stage approach to consultation.
- Proposed savings targets by Department.

1.7. Ultimately this report is intended to support the Council in preparing the 2023-24 Budget and identifying savings which will assist in delivering a balanced budget for the year.

2. Spring Statement 2022

2.1. The Chancellor announced the Government's [Spring Statement](https://www.gov.uk/government/news/chancellor-announces-tax-cuts-to-support-families-with-cost-of-living)² on 23 March 2022. There were limited announcements which will impact on the County Council's budget position directly, although there were some measures which will require administration by local authorities including an extension of the Household Support Fund from April 2022 (a further £500m nationally) and various business rates changes.

² <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/chancellor-announces-tax-cuts-to-support-families-with-cost-of-living>

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2.2. The Office for Budget Responsibility assessed the Spring Statement position as follows: *“The public finances have emerged from the pandemic in better shape than expected. But Russia’s invasion of Ukraine will push inflation to a 40-year high of almost 9 per cent, and living standards are set for a historic fall over the next 12 months. The Chancellor used his Spring Statement to deliver rebates and tax cuts that reduce that fall by a third to just over 2 per cent and a pair of personal tax cuts that undo one-sixth of the total tax rises he has previously announced. This leaves him with £30 billion of headroom against his fiscal targets.”*³

2.3. The key economic forecasts from the Spring Statement were:

- GDP growth forecasts for 2022 have been reduced from 6% to 3.8%.
- CPI inflation is expected to peak in the 4th quarter of this year at around 8.7%, and is currently 6.2%. RPI is consistently higher than CPI.
- Borrowing is forecast to increase to £99bn for 2022-23, reducing to £32bn in 2026-27.

2.4. The key policy announcements made as part of the Spring Statement include:

- **Fuel duty will be reduced by 5p a litre** from 6pm 23 March 2022 until March 2023. This is estimated to mean a reduction of just over £3 on a standard tank of fuel;
- The **National Insurance Primary Threshold and Lower Profits Limit (for employees and the self-employed respectively) will be raised** by £3,000, from £9,880 to £12,570 from July 2022. This aligns the NI threshold with the threshold for income tax, meaning people must earn £12,570 per year before paying income tax or NI. This increase is forecast to benefit almost 30 million people, with a typical employee saving over £330 in the year from July. Around 70% of NICs payers will pay less NICs, even after accounting for the introduction of the Health and Social Care Levy;
- **VAT will be reduced to 0% on home energy-saving measures** such as insulation, solar panels and heat pumps for five years from April 2022;
- The **Household Support Fund will be extended** with an additional £500m from April 2022, on top of the £500m already provided since October 2021, bringing total funding to £1 billion. The fund will continue to be administered by local authorities in England;
- The Chancellor confirmed a number of existing business rates measures and including that **SMEs in the retail hospitality and leisure sectors will receive a 50% discount in business rates** up to £0.110m, alongside **targeted business rate exemptions to support the decarbonisation of non-domestic buildings which would be brought forward**;
- A **reduction in the basic rate of income tax** from 20% to 19%, however this will not be implemented until April 2024; and

³ <https://obr.uk/>

- Opening the **second round of bidding to the £4.8 billion Levelling Up Fund**.

2.5. Alongside the Spring Statement, the Chancellor published a “[Tax Plan](#)”⁴, setting out a three part plan to strengthen the economy over the remainder of the Parliament. It is intended to:

- help families with the cost of living;
- support growth in the economy, and
- ensure the proceeds of growth are shared fairly.

2.6. The Council will need to respond to any specific consultations arising from the Tax Plan as they are published, and will consider the detailed implications of the Spring Statement for the Council’s 2023-24 Budget as they emerge over the coming weeks and months.

3. Budget context

3.1. On 21 February 2022, the County Council approved the 2022-23 Budget and Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) to 2025-26. Based on currently available information, that MTFS set out a budget gap of £96.676m over the period, with a gap of £59.927m to be addressed in 2023-24. The current MTFS is based on an assumption that the funding allocations set out in the 2022-23 final Local Government Finance Settlement⁵ will be broadly “rolled over” for 2023-24 and beyond. However, given the Government’s intention to deliver funding reform in time for the 2023-24 settlement⁶, there is some considerable uncertainty attached to this as described previously.

3.2. A summary of the Net Budget provided for by Department in the MTFS approved in February 2022 is shown in Table 1 of this report. The following table (Table 2) sets out a summary of the cost pressures provided for in the February MTFS, with additional detail of the pressures assumed for 2022-23 in Table 3. Full details of all pressures currently assumed within the MTFS are provided in the [2022-23 Budget report to Full Council](#). A number of pressures within the Council’s budget are driven by Central Government decisions, including elements of pay and price market pressures which are linked to the National Living Wage, social care reform, and pressures relating to assumed reductions in funding (for example the New Homes Bonus grant in 2023-24).

⁴https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1062583/SS_Tax_Plan.pdf

⁵ <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/final-local-government-finance-settlement-england-2022-to-2023>

⁶ <https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/kemi-badenochs-speech-to-the-lga-local-government-finance-conference-2022>

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Table 1: Net Budget by Department

	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26
	£m	£m	£m	£m
Adult Social Services	263.184	288.295	304.104	319.203
Children's Services	189.065	200.006	212.072	221.078
Community and Environmental Services	166.162	176.758	183.976	191.494
Strategy and Transformation	8.759	9.214	9.572	9.931
Governance Department	1.960	2.316	2.503	2.697
Finance and Commercial Services	33.424	34.542	36.070	37.598
Finance General	-198.432	-168.421	-164.141	-165.111
Total Net Budget	464.123	542.710	584.157	616.890
Council Tax	-464.123	-482.783	-500.110	-520.214
Budget Gap (cumulative)	0.000	59.927	84.047	96.676

3.3. The key elements driving the budget gap for 2023-24 onwards are shown in the following table. One significant factor is the reliance on one-off resources and savings including the use of reserves in 2022-23 which creates a pressure in the following year.

Table 2: Budget pressures by type in MTFS 2022-23 to 2025-26

	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26
	£m	£m	£m	£m
Cost pressures	51.007	95.848	49.647	32.484
Funding decreases	34.649	1.833	0.000	0.250
Savings identified	-28.434	-9.159	-8.200	0.000
Funding increases	-32.194	-9.936	0.000	0.000
Change in Council Tax / Taxbase / Collection Fund	-25.029	-18.660	-17.327	-20.104
Remaining gap	0.000	59.927	24.120	12.630

Table 3: Detail of 2023-24 pressures in MTFS

	2023-24 £m	Detail
Economic and inflationary pressures	22.119	Pay assumed at 3% equates to £9.3m, price inflation of £12.8m includes £6.8m Adult Social Care, £2.4m Children's Services.
Legislative requirements	16.225	£6.7m relates to Adult Social Care pay and price market pressures (including National Living Wage). £7.6m also within Adults relates to anticipated pressures linked to social care reform (offset by equivalent grant). Balance relates to pension fund valuation assumptions.
Demand and demographic pressures	21.270	£6.7m relates to older people demographic growth. £8.0m Children's Services demographic growth including ongoing pandemic impact (plus £3.5m Home to School transport pressures). £1.7m relates to waste tonnages and £1.2m contractual GY third river crossing maintenance.
Council policy decisions	36.234	Policy decisions include £7m within Adults which may ultimately relate to demography and legislative items and cost pressures within Finance General budgets relating to MRP (minimum revenue provision) of £6m, treasury pressures £2.9m, and significantly the reversal of £18m of one off resources used in 2022-23.
Net total pressures	95.848	
Funding decreases	1.833	Reflects assumed loss / removal of New Homes Bonus Grant. Significant risk also exists in relation to the £10.687m one off 2022-23 "services Grant" broadly assumed to continue in 2023-24 via funding reform.
Total pressures and funding decreases	97.682	

3.4. The following table provides a summary of the agreed savings included in the MTFS and detailed in the February budget papers. Further savings will be required to close the identified budget gap in addition to these. It should be noted that the level of savings included in the Budget for future years is substantial and, as set out above, overall pressures in 2023-24 include the impact of the reversal of the £18m of one-off resources being applied to support a balanced budget in 2022-23. In the current context of significant inflationary pressures, particularly related to fuel and energy, the risk of further cost pressures emerging during the 2023-24 budget process remains high.

Table 4: Planned savings by Department in MTFS 2022-23 to 2025-26

	2022-23 £m	2023-24 £m	2024-25 £m	2025-26 £m	Total £m	% of total MTFS savings
Adult Social Services	-10.465	-4.175	-5.700	0.000	-20.340	44.4%
Children's Services	-12.088	-4.900	-2.500	0.000	-19.488	42.6%
Community and Environmental Services	-3.496	-0.236	0.000	0.000	-3.732	8.1%
Strategy and Transformation	-0.439	0.102	0.000	0.000	-0.337	0.7%
Governance	-0.200	0.100	0.000	0.000	-0.100	0.2%
Finance and Commercial Services	0.134	-0.300	0.000	0.000	-0.166	0.4%
Finance General	-1.880	0.250	0.000	0.000	-1.630	3.6%
Grand Total	-28.434	-9.159	-8.200	0.000	-45.793	

3.5. The following table sets out the net revenue budget forecast for 2023-24 agreed at February 2022 budget setting and incorporating the current pressures and assumptions as detailed within this report.

Table 5: Forecast 2023-24 Net Revenue Budget (as at February 2022)

	Adult Social Services	Children's Services	Community and Environmental Services	Strategy and Transformation	Governance	Finance and Commercial Services	Finance General	Norfolk County Council
	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m
Base Budget 2022-23	263.184	189.065	166.162	8.759	1.960	33.424	-198.432	464.123
Growth								
Economic and inflationary	8.858	5.351	5.103	0.353	0.070	1.471	0.914	22.119
Legislative requirements	14.354	0.000	-0.190	0.000	0.000	0.000	2.061	16.225
Demand and demographic	6.700	11.500	2.990	0.000	0.080	0.000	0.000	21.270
Policy decisions	7.000	-0.960	2.929	0.000	0.105	-0.052	27.212	36.234
Funding reductions	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	1.833	1.833
Cost neutral increases	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.050	0.050
Total budget increase	36.912	15.891	10.832	0.353	0.255	1.419	32.071	97.732
Reductions								
Total savings	-4.175	-4.900	-0.236	0.102	0.100	-0.300	0.250	-9.159
Funding increases	-7.626	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	-2.310	-9.936
Cost neutral decreases	0.000	-0.050	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	-0.050
Total budget decrease	-11.801	-4.950	-0.236	0.102	0.100	-0.300	-2.060	-19.145
Base Budget 2023-24	288.295	200.006	176.758	9.214	2.316	34.542	-168.421	542.710
Funded by: Council tax								-480.783
Collection Fund surplus								-2.000
Total								-482.783
2023-24 Budget Gap								59.927

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4. Medium Term Financial Strategy

4.1. The table below sets out the high level MTFS position as agreed in February 2022 and reflecting the addition of a further financial year (for 2026-27) to the planning period. The inclusion of a further year in MTFS planning based on the same broad assumptions adds £19.137m to the forecast gap, bringing it to £115.814m for the MTFS period. The forecast budget gap for 2023-24 remains £59.927m.

Table 6: Updated Medium Term Financial Strategy 2023-24 to 2026-27

	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27	Total
	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m
<u>Growth Pressures</u>					
Economic and inflationary	22.119	23.016	23.016	23.670	91.821
Legislative requirements	16.225	6.760	-0.200	0.000	22.785
Demand and demographic	21.270	17.050	11.650	11.000	60.970
Policy decisions	36.234	2.821	-1.732	0.124	37.447
Funding decreases	1.833	0.000	0.000	0.000	1.833
<u>Savings and funding increases</u>					
Identified savings	-9.159	-8.200	0.000	0.000	-17.359
Funding increases	-9.936	0.000	0.000	0.000	-9.936
Council tax changes	-18.660	-17.327	-20.104	-15.658	-71.749
Forecast Gap (Surplus)/Deficit	59.927	24.120	12.630	19.137	115.814

4.2. The key assumptions underpinning the forecast gap in the current MTFS position include:

- That a balanced outturn position is delivered for 2021-22 and that all the savings proposed and included for 2022-23 can be successfully achieved – planned savings of £45.793m being delivered over the MTFS period.
- Government funding will be broadly flat in 2023-24 (i.e. essentially a rollover of 2022-23 funding levels). This assumption includes Settlement Funding (RSG, business rates), Rural Services Delivery Grant, Social Care Grant, Better Care Fund / improved Better Care Fund, Public Health Grant and [critically] the one-off 2022-23 “Services Grant”. Essentially, the Council has assumed that transitional arrangements will “smooth” some of the impact of such funding changes but details of any proposed approach remain to be announced by Government.
- Cost pressures for 2023-24 including:
 - 3% for pay inflation in 2023-24 to 2026-27. Uncertainty remains about the level of the 2022-23 pay award, with the 2021-22 pay

- award only having been agreed at 1.75% (2.75% at the lowest grade) in March 2022.
- Non-pay inflation in line with contractual rates or CPI forecasts where appropriate totalling £12.8m in 2023-24. This may be an underestimate in light of cost pressures particularly around energy and fuel (with a knock on impact on both NCC activity and services delivered by third parties).
 - Demographic growth pressures for Adults, Childrens, Waste totalling £21.2m in 2023-24.
 - The High Needs Block overspend and brought forward DSG deficit position can continue to be treated in line with the accounting treatment set out by Government, and as such places no pressure on the “core” Council budget.
 - Assumed increases in council tax over the MTFS period as set out in the table below (1.99% for general council tax in all years and 1% for the Adult Social Care precept up to 2025-26). The level of the ASC precept available beyond 2022-23 has not yet been confirmed by Government and therefore remains an area of risk. It also remains the case that Government’s approach to the funding of local authorities in recent years has been predicated on an assumption that councils will increase council tax by the referendum limit, and that average levels of tax base growth will be experienced. This expectation has effectively been reiterated in the *Plan for Health and Social Care*. A decision to increase council tax by less than the referendum threshold therefore results in the Council having lower levels of funding than Government would expect. Final decisions about the level of council tax increase remain a matter for Full Council based on the recommendation of Cabinet and to be agreed in each year.

Table 7: Council tax assumptions

	2023-24 £m	2024-25 £m	2025-26 £m	2026-27 £m
Council tax % increase	-9.290	-9.663	-10.052	-10.456
Council tax collection fund change ⁷	-0.080	2.000	0.000	0.000
Council tax base (assumes growth of 1.0% in all years)	-4.622	-4.808	-5.001	-5.202
Council tax ASC precept ⁸	-4.668	-4.856	-5.051	0.000
Total	-18.660	-17.327	-20.104	-15.658
Key assumptions				
General council tax % increase assumption	1.99%	1.99%	1.99%	1.99%
ASC precept % increase assumption	1.00%	1.00%	1.00%	0.00%

⁷ Assumes collection fund surplus in 2023-24.

⁸ Adult Social Care precept assumed to continue post 2022-23 but is subject to Government decision.

4.3. As set out at the time of 2022-23 budget setting, the pressures within the current budget planning position are such that the Executive Director of Finance and Commercial Services considers that the Council will have very limited opportunity to vary these assumptions, and **in the event that the Government offered the discretion for larger increases in council tax, or increases in the Adult Social Care precept for 2023-24, this would be the recommendation of the Section 151 Officer** in order to ensure that the Council's financial position remains robust and sustainable.

4.4. A number of significant uncertainties remain which could have an impact on the overall scale of the budget gap to be addressed in 2023-24, linked to ongoing uncertainty around local government (and wider public sector finances) including:

- Further "cost of living" pressures and the wider economic impacts, including the implications of the invasion of Ukraine;
- Further cost pressures emerging to support the achievement of carbon reduction targets, above the funding provided for in the 2022-23 Budget;
- the outcome of funding reforms (previously the Fair Funding Review) intended to be consulted on during 2022-23 and implemented for 2023-24. The short-term nature of the settlement announcement (for 2022-23 only, in spite of a multi-year Spending Review) means that risks remain around the provision of this funding in future years and therefore a material impact and potential cliff-edge may emerge in 2023-24 if these assumptions have to be subsequently reversed. The trajectory for local authority funding implied by both the Spending Review and 2022-23 settlement is for only very limited increases in core ongoing funding in 2023-24 and beyond;
- Government decisions about the council tax referendum limit or further ASC precept flexibilities in 2023-24. Government continues to make assumptions about council tax increases which effectively transfer the burden of funding services to Norfolk taxpayers;
- the need for a long term financial settlement for local government;
- delivery of other reforms to local government funding including the details of the approach to Adult Social Care reforms to implement the cap on care costs, and changes to other funding streams including the New Homes Bonus;
- The financial impact of anticipated social care and send national reviews which are assumed will not result in further unfunded burdens; and
- progress of various elements of Government policy including levelling up, County Deals, and the Shared Prosperity Fund.

4.5. While impact of many of these risks is difficult to quantify at this point, the sensitivity table below demonstrates some potential impacts on the scale of the Council's budget gap.

Table 8: Budget gap sensitivity analysis 2023-24

	Approximate impact on 2023-24 gap £m
Additional income from scope to raise Adult Social Care Precept by further 1%*	-4.700
Potential pressure from 2022-23 savings (assuming 20% non-delivery)	5.700
Potential pressure from 2023-24 planned savings feasibility review (assuming 20% unachievable)	1.800
Potential pressure from change in tax base growth +/-1%	+/-4.700
Approximate ASC pressure from every 1p increase in National Living Wage	+0.200
Impact of varying pay award assumptions +/- 1%	+/-2.600

*A 1% increase in ASC precept is already assumed but availability has not been confirmed by Government.

5. Proposals

5.1. The following principles for 2023-24 budget setting are proposed:

- Three rounds of Budget Challenge (initial proposals in May and June and a detailed session for each directorate in September).
- Allocate £60m target for 2023-24 based on a “controllable spend” approach consistent with previous years.
- Seek to identify proposals to address forecast future year budget gaps.
- Budget planning to cover the period 2023-24 to 2026-27 (extend current MTFS by one year).
- In order to inform any revision of 2023-24 MTFS and budget gap, Cabinet to continue to keep MTFS assumptions under review for remainder of budget setting, particularly relating to:
 - council tax and business rates planning assumptions (informed by latest District forecasts).
 - achievement of the 2021-22 outturn position.
 - forecast delivery of planned 2022-23 savings programmes and viability of previously planned 2023-24+ savings.
 - changes in cost and income pressures.
 - any further Government funding announcements for 2022-23 and future years.
- To closely scrutinise any requests for additions to the Capital Programme for 2023-24 requiring additional borrowing to consider the value for money of proposals and assess their impact on the affordability of the revenue budget and MTFS, ensuring that borrowing levels are maintained within appropriate prudent limits and the revenue budget remains robust.
- Select Committees to have a role as part of the budget-setting process, considering areas for savings in May 2022 and commenting on detailed proposals in November 2022.

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- Final decisions about the 2023-24 Budget to be taken in February 2023 in line with the budget setting timetable as set out below.

5.2. It is proposed that the broad approach to budget development should include:

- A review of all current pressures with a view to reducing the level required;
- A review of all earmarked revenue reserves with a view to releasing funding where possible (noting that this would provide a one-off gain which would impact on the future year gap);
- A review of the Council's commercial opportunities, including scope to achieve increased income;
- A review to consider the scope to extend existing saving proposals;
- Identification of new savings; and
- The organisational review approved by Cabinet.

5.3. It should be noted that the changes during the budget setting process may result in the saving targets currently allocated to Services being revised (and potentially materially increased) in the event that further pressures or income changes arise. Options to address any shortfall in savings to close the 2023-24 Budget gap will ultimately include:

- Government providing additional funding;
- Corporate / centrally identified savings opportunities;
- The removal or mitigation of currently identified budget pressures; and
- Service departments identifying further savings.

5.4. The Budget agreed in February 2022 included a high level timetable for the 2023-24 budget process. The detailed timescales for internal "budget challenge" activity and summer consultation will be confirmed following approval of the proposed approach by April Cabinet.

Table 9: Proposed Budget setting timetable 2023-24

2023-24 Proposed	Time frame
Cabinet review of the financial planning position for 2023-27 – including formal allocation of targets	4 April 2022
Scrutiny Committee	20 April 2022
Select Committee input to development of 2023-24 Budget – strategy	w/c 23 May 2022
Review of budget pressures and development of budget strategy and detailed savings proposals 2023-27 incorporating: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Budget Challenge 1 (early May) – context / strategy / approach / outline proposals including transformation • Budget Challenge 2 (early June) – detailed proposals • Budget Challenge 3 (early September) – final proposals 	April to December 2022

2023-24 Proposed	Time frame
<i>Fair Funding Review / DLUHC reform of Local Government funding</i>	<i>TBC early / mid 2022</i>
Cabinet agree strategic budget approach and any initial proposals for summer consultation	4 July 2022
Scrutiny Committee	20 July
Summer consultation activity – service priorities, transformation, approach and early saving proposals	Late July / August(?) 2022
Cabinet approve final proposals for public consultation	3 October 2022
Scrutiny Committee	19 October 2022
Public consultation on 2023-24 Budget proposals, council tax and adult social care precept	Late October to mid December?
Select Committee input to development of 2023-24 Budget – comments on specific proposals	w/c 14 November 2022
<i>Government Autumn Budget</i>	<i>TBC October 2022</i>
<i>Provisional Local Government Finance Settlement announced including provisional council tax and precept arrangements (outcomes of Fair Funding Review?)</i>	<i>TBC December 2022</i>
Cabinet considers outcomes of service and financial planning, EQIA and consultation feedback and agrees revenue budget and capital programme recommendations to County Council	30 January 2023
Confirmation of District Council tax base and Business Rate forecasts	31 January 2023
<i>Final Local Government Finance Settlement</i>	<i>TBC January / February 2023</i>
Scrutiny Committee 2023-24 Budget scrutiny	15 February 2023
County Council agrees Medium Term Financial Strategy 2023-24 to 2026-27, revenue budget, capital programme and level of council tax for 2023-24	21 February 2023

Assumed Government activity and timescales

5.5. The Budget process will be informed through the year by Government announcements around the Local Government Settlement, as well as any progress on reforms including the Funding Review. As set out elsewhere in the report, the timing for these is currently unknown.

5.6. In respect of the allocation of 2023-24 savings, it is recognised that Adult Social Services brought forward savings late in the 2022-23 budget process which would otherwise have provided a contribution to the department's 2023-24 target. The allocation of savings targets for 2023-24 therefore recognises this and adjusts the proposed targets⁹. Apart from this adjustment, it is proposed to

⁹ The adjustment for Adults front door saving ASS030 reflects adding the additional element of the saving to both the gap requirement and departmental budget, apportioning the revised gap based on \\norfolk.gov.uk\nccdfs1\Resources-TEAMS\Democratic Services\Committee Team\Committees\Cabinet\Agenda\2022\220404\15 Strategic and Financial Planning - Budget process 2023-24 v4 FINAL.docx

apply the approach adopted in previous years (i.e. allocation of savings targets to Departments in proportion to net budgets, adjusted for budgets which are not “controllable” (for example Public Health grant, Schools, capital charges)). The figures set out in Table 10 are the new savings to be found in addition to those currently planned for in Table 4. As described above, there is a risk that the targets set out in the table below may need to be revised later in the budget process. As set out in the proposed timetable, the below table reflects the proposal to divide the 2023-24 budget process into two phases, with initial proposals being consulted on during the summer.

Table 10: Saving targets by Department

<u>Savings Target</u>	2023-24 Phase 1	2023-24 Phase 2	2023-24 Total	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27	2023-27 Total	Share
	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m	%
Adult Social Services	6.700	18.400	25.100	9.700	5.600	8.500	48.900	42%
Children's Services	3.400	10.700	14.100	5.900	2.900	4.400	27.300	24%
Community and Environmental Services	3.500	11.200	14.700	6.100	3.000	4.400	28.200	24%
Finance and Commercial Services	0.700	2.200	2.900	1.200	0.600	0.900	5.600	5%
Finance General	0.400	1.400	1.800	0.700	0.300	0.500	3.300	3%
Governance	0.100	0.550	0.650	0.250	0.100	0.200	1.200	1%
Strategy and Transformation	0.200	0.550	0.750	0.350	0.100	0.200	1.400	1%
	15.000	45.000	60.000	24.200	12.600	19.100	115.900	100%

5.7. It should be noted that the Phase 1 total of £15m represents a minimum target of savings to be found for summer consultation. Any savings above this level would contribute towards departmental targets for Phase 2 and would help to reduce the overall level of risk for the 2023-24 budget setting process. The level of the Phase 1 target is not intended to prohibit departments from bringing forward material savings programmes or strategies if they are above the indicative Phase 1 amounts.

6. Impact of the Proposal

6.1. This paper sets out an outline timetable and approach to the Council’s budget planning process for 2023-24, while recognising that significant risks and uncertainties remain. The proposals in this report are intended to:

- set the context for service financial planning for the year to come;
- provide a robust approach to tackling the significant budget gap forecast for 2023-24;

the new notional budget prior to impact of the saving, then removing the additional ASS030 saving from the resulting Adults share of target.

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- assist the Council in managing the continuing significant uncertainty around local authority funding including funding reform while providing sufficient flexibility to respond to any changes required; and
- contribute to the Council setting a balanced budget for 2022-23.

7. Evidence and Reasons for Decision

7.1. After more than ten years of savings identification and delivery, and in the face of both continuing significant financial pressures and Government plans for funding reform, it is essential that the Council has a robust approach to budget setting and the identification of saving proposals. Simultaneously, it is critical to continue to engage with Government, MPs and other stakeholders to campaign for adequate and sustainable funding for Norfolk to enable the delivery of vital services to residents, businesses and visitors. In the context of funding reform, it will be even more imperative than it has been in previous years that Government issue guidance on the direction of travel for reform, financial planning assumptions, and indicative funding allocations for 2023-24, as soon as possible.

7.2. In view of the size of the gap forecast for 2023-24 there is a significant risk that the Council will be obliged to consider reductions in service levels. As such it is important that the process of identifying, and consulting on, savings proposals is undertaken as soon as possible. This will provide additional time for the preparation and consultation and engagement work around saving proposals, which should, in turn, support effective delivery and implementation of any proposals that are ultimately agreed to provide a full year saving for 2023-24.

7.3. The Council's planning within the MTFs forecast is based on the position agreed in February 2022 and it is important to note that this will be kept under review throughout the 2023-24 Budget setting process, particularly in the event that further information about funding becomes available. It remains prudent to establish a process to begin planning for savings at the level required to close the underlying gap identified in February 2022.

7.4. The proposals in the report are intended to reflect a proportionate response to the challenges and uncertainties present in the 2023-24 planning process and will ultimately support the Council to develop a robust budget for the year.

8. Alternative Options

8.1. This report sets out a framework for developing detailed saving proposals for 2023-24 and at this stage no proposals have been agreed, meaning that a range of alternative options remain open.

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

- Adopting an alternative allocation of targets between services, or retaining a target corporately.
- Considering an alternative timetable within the time constraints required to develop proposals, undertake public consultation, and meet statutory deadlines for the setting of council tax.
- Changing assumptions within the MTFS (including the level of council tax) and therefore varying the level of savings sought.

8.3. The planning context for the Council will be updated if further information becomes available. Final decisions about the overall shape of the 2023-24 Budget, savings, and council tax will not be made until February 2023.

9. Financial Implications

9.1. Financial implications are discussed in detail throughout this report, which sets out the proposed indicative savings targets which will need to be found by each department to contribute to closing the 2023-24 and future year budget gap, subject to formal approval by Full Council in February 2023. The proposals in the report will require services to identify further very significant savings to be delivered against current budget levels. The scope to achieve savings at the level required may be limited by the legacy impact of COVID-19 on cost pressures, service delivery expectations, and existing saving programmes.

9.2. The Council is legally required to set a balanced Budget annually and should plan to achieve this using a prudent set of assumptions. However, Cabinet could choose to vary the allocation of indicative targets between directorates, or to establish an alternative approach to identifying savings. The scale of the budget gap and savings required are such that if the Council is required to deliver savings at this level there is a risk that this could result in the Council failing to fulfil its statutory responsibilities. As such the Government's response and decisions about Council funding in 2023-24 will be hugely significant. Any changes in Government funding could have a material impact on both the level of savings to be identified, and the Council's wider budget process. Government has hitherto failed to deliver the paradigm shift needed in the recognition of the importance and costs of providing social care, and to adequately fund local authorities to provide these and other vital services. Fundamentally there is a need for a larger quantum of funding to be provided to local government to deliver a sustainable level of funding for future years.

9.3. Work to deliver additional Government funding could therefore have an impact on the overall budget gap to be addressed. Equally, in the event that funding reform sees resources shifted away from shire counties, the Council's forecast 2023-24 gap could increase. At this point, Government has not confirmed details of the proposed approach or timescales for consultation on funding reform. The 2023-24 MTFS position also assumes that approximately £12m of funding will be rolled forward from the one-off 2022-23 Services Grant and New Homes Bonus. These assumptions remain to be confirmed and should be considered a key area of risk.

- 9.4. As a result of the above, the budget setting process and savings targets will be kept under review as budget planning progresses. In the event that additional budget pressures for 2023-24 emerge through budget planning, there may be a requirement to revisit the indicative saving targets.

10. Resource Implications

- 10.1. **Staff:** There are no direct implications arising from this report although there is a potential that staffing implications may be linked to specific saving proposals developed. These will be identified as they arise later in the budget planning process.
- 10.2. **Property:** There are no direct property implications arising from this report although existing saving plans include activities linked to property budgets and assumptions around capital receipts to be achieved.
- 10.3. **IT:** There are no direct IT implications arising from this report although existing saving plans include activities linked to IMT budgets. In addition, activities planned within Business Transformation will include further work to deliver savings through activity related to digital and IT initiatives.

11. Other Implications

- 11.1. **Legal Implications:** This report sets out a process that will enable the Council to set a balanced budget for 2023-24 in line with statutory requirements, including those relating to setting council tax, and undertaking public consultation.
- 11.2. **Human Rights implications:** No specific human rights implications have been identified.
- 11.3. **Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) (this must be included):** Any saving proposals with an impact on service delivery will require public consultation, and an Equality Impact Assessment of all proposals will need to be completed as part of budget-setting in due course. The results of public consultation and the findings of all EqIAs will be presented to Cabinet in January 2023 in order to inform budget recommendations to County Council.
- 11.4. No specific EqIA has been undertaken in respect of this report, although the equality impact assessment of the Council's resilience and recovery planning for COVID-19 can be found [here](#). The EqIA in relation to the 2022-23 Budget can be found as part of the [budget papers considered in February 2022](#).
- 11.5. **Data Protection Impact Assessments (DPIA):** N/a
- 11.6. **Health and Safety implications (where appropriate):** N/a

11.7. **Sustainability implications (where appropriate):** There are no direct sustainability implications arising from this report although existing 2022-23 budget plans include funding for activities which may have an impact on the environmental sustainability of the County Council through the delivery of the Environmental Policy. These issues were considered in more detail within the February budget report to Full Council. Further details are set out in the *Net Zero and Natural Norfolk Progress Update* elsewhere on the agenda. Ultimately sustainability issues and any associated financial implications in relation to either new 2023-24 proposals, or activities developed during 2022-23, will need to be fully considered once such initiatives are finalised, and ultimately as part of budget setting in February 2023.

11.8. **Any other implications:** Significant issues, risks, assumptions and implications have been set out throughout the report.

12. Risk Implications/Assessment

12.1. A number of significant risks have been identified throughout this report. Risks in respect of the MTFs were also set out within the February 2022 report to Full Council. Uncertainties remain which could have an impact on the overall scale of the budget gap to be addressed in 2023-24. These include:

- Any further impact of COVID-19 on the budget in 2022-23, including in particular:
 - any ongoing cost pressures within service delivery and contracted services which have not currently been provided for
 - future pressures on income particularly in relation to business rates and council tax
 - the implications of any measures implemented by Government to restore the national finances in the medium to longer term
- Ongoing uncertainty around local government (and wider public sector finances) including:
 - the impact of “cost of living pressures” and the wider impact of the invasion of Ukraine on the economy
 - the need for a long term financial settlement for local government. Spending Review announcements in 2021 covered one year only, and as a result there remains high uncertainty about the levels of funding for 2023-24 and beyond. In particular, it is of major concern that Government continues to place significant reliance and expectations on locally raised income. If this trend persists, the financial pressures for 2023-24 and beyond may become unsustainable. There remains a specific risk in relation to longer term reform of local government funding and the planned funding review, which is now expected to impact on 2023-24 budget setting, in that a failure by the Government to provide adequate resources to fund local authorities could lead to a requirement for further service reductions, particularly where these result in a redistribution between authority types or geographical areas. Changing Government

policies around the nature, role, responsibilities and requirements of Local Government may also represent an area of risk, as will changing expectations of the public, taxpayers and service users.

- linked to this are risks around delivery of reforms to local government funding including actions to deliver “Levelling Up”, the funding review, the detailed implications of Adult Social Care reform, reforms to the Business Rates system, and changes to other funding streams including the New Homes Bonus
- Further decisions about Local Government reorganisation and the progress of negotiations related to a County Deal.

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

- RM002 – The potential risk of failure to manage significant reductions in local and national income streams.
- RM006 – The potential risk of failure to deliver our services within the resources available for the period 2021-22 to the end of 2023-24.
- RM022b – Implications of Brexit for a) external funding and b) Norfolk businesses
- RM023 - Lack of clarity on sustainable long-term funding approach for adult social services at a time of increasing demographic pressures and growing complexity of need.
- RM031 – NCC Funded Children's Services Overspend

Further details of all corporate risks, including those outlined above, can be found in Appendix C of the March 2022 Risk Management report to Cabinet. There is close oversight of the Council's expenditure with monthly financial reports to Cabinet. Any emerging risks arising will continue to be identified and treated as necessary.

The Council is in the process of implementing a new HR and Finance System, following approval of the business case presented in May 2019, with the new system due to go live in April 2022. The successful implementation of this system is a key prerequisite for the 2023-24 Budget in terms of the system supporting delivery of both the budget process itself, and providing a mechanism through which savings and efficiencies are intended to be achieved.

13. Select Committee comments

13.1. Select Committees provided commentary and input to the 2022-23 Budget process during budget development. Where relevant these have been set out within the budget setting approach proposed in this report. No specific input was sought in respect of the report itself, however Select Committees will

again have the opportunity to comment when they consider the implications of 2023-24 budget setting for the service areas within their remit when they meet during the year as set out in the proposed timetable.

14. Recommendations

14.1. Cabinet is recommended:

- 1. To consider the overall budget gap of £96.676m included in the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) set by Full Council in February 2022, and agree:**
 - c) the gap of £59.927m to be closed for 2023-24; and**
 - d) the extension of the MTFS by a further year (to 2026-27) and the resulting overall gap for planning purposes of £115.814m. (Section 4).**
- 2. To review the key budget risks and uncertainties as set out in this report. (Section 4).**
- 3. To consider the principles of the proposed approach to budget setting for 2023-24, noting that there may be a need for flexibility within both the process itself and the assumptions applied, and agree:**
 - c) the process and indicative timetable set out in Section 5, including the proposed two stage consultation process for 2023-24 to support in the early securing of deliverable saving proposals.**
 - d) the savings targets allocated to each Department to be found (Table 10), and that these will be kept under review through the budget process.**

15. Background Papers

15.1. Background papers relevant to this report include:

[Norfolk County Council Revenue and Capital Budget 2022-23 to 2025-26, County Council 21/02/2022, agenda item 5](#)

Finance Monitoring Report 2021-22 P11, Cabinet, 04/05/2022 (on this agenda)

Better Together, for Norfolk – delivering our strategy, Cabinet, 04/05/2022 (on this agenda)

Norfolk County Council – Strategic Review, Cabinet, 04/05/2022 (on this agenda)

[Risk Management, Cabinet 07/03/2022, agenda item 17](#)

Officer Contact

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Report to Cabinet

Item No.16

Report Title: Finance Monitoring Report 2021-22 P11: February 2022

Date of Meeting: 4 April 2022

Responsible Cabinet Member: Cllr Andrew Jamieson (Cabinet Member for Finance)

Responsible Director: Simon George (Executive Director of Finance and Commercial Services)

Is this a Key Decision? No

If this is a Key Decision, date added to the Forward Plan of Key Decisions: N/A

Introduction from Cabinet Member

This report gives 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.

Executive Summary

Subject to mitigating actions, on a net budget of £439.094m, the forecast revenue outturn for 2021-22 at the end of period 11 (January) is **a balanced budget** after taking into account use of £28.353m Covid reserves brought forward from 2020-21 to meet Covid pressures in 2021-22.

General Balances are forecast to be **£23.763m** at 31 March 2022 following transfers of £4.056m from non-Covid related savings and Finance General underspends at the end of 2020-21 and taking into account the current year forecast overspend. Service reserves and provisions are forecast to total **£160.809m**.

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

Recommendations:

1. To recommend to County Council the addition of **£0.337m** 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:
 - £0.237m schools revenue contributions to the Schools Capital programmes partially offset by adjustments from DfE
 - £0.100 SiF Internal funding revenue contributions received for the Technology Improvement project
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 11 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 **£100.452m**, including £28.353m brought forward from 2020-21;
 5. To recognise the period 11 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.

1. Background and Purpose

- 1.1. This report and associated annexes summarise the forecast financial outturn position for 2021-22, to assist members to maintain an overview of the overall financial position of the Council.

2. Proposals

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

3. Impact of the Proposal

- 3.1. The impact of this report is primarily to demonstrate where the Council is anticipating financial pressures not forecast at the time of budget setting, including the implications of the Covid-19 pandemic, together with a number of other key financial measures.

4. Evidence and Reasons for Decision

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

Appendix 1 summarises the revenue outturn position, including:

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

Appendix 2 summarises the key working capital position, including:

- Treasury management
- Payment performance and debt recovery.

Appendix 3 summarises the capital outturn position, and includes:

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

- 4.2. Additional capital funds will enable services to invest in assets and infrastructure as described in Appendix 3 section 4.

5. Alternative Options

- 5.1. 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.

6. Financial Implications

- 6.1. As stated above, the forecast revenue outturn for 2021-22 at the end of P11 is a **balanced budget** linked to a forecast 90% savings delivery. Forecast outturn for service reserves and provisions is **£160.809m**, and the general balances forecast is **£23.763m**. Funding of **£72.099m** is forecast to be received in the year to off-set additional expenditure occurred as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic in 2021-22. When added to £28.353m Covid reserves brought forward the total Covid funding available is **£100.452m**.
- 6.2. Where possible service pressures have been offset by underspends or the use of reserves. A narrative by service is given in Appendix 1.
- 6.3. The Council's capital programme is based on schemes approved by County Council in February 2021, including previously approved schemes brought forward and new schemes subsequently approved.

7. Resource Implications

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

8. Other Implications

8.1. Legal Implications

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

8.2. Human Rights implications

None identified.

8.3. Equality Impact Assessment

In setting the 2021-22 budget, the council has undertaken public consultation and produced equality and rural impact assessments in relation to the 2021-22 Budget. An overall summary Equality and rural impact assessment report is included on page 284 of the Monday 22 February 2021 Norfolk County Council agenda. [CMIS > Meetings](#)

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

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

8.4 Data Protection Impact Assessments (DPIA)

DPIA is not required as the data reported in this paper does not drill down to the personal data level.

9. Risk Implications/Assessment

- 9.1. Corporate risks continue to be assessed and reported on a quarterly basis to both Cabinet and the Audit Committee. The Council's key financial based corporate risk (RM002 - The potential risk of failure to manage significant reductions in local and national income streams) has been reviewed and refreshed in February 2021 to incorporate the 2021/22 budget and Medium-Term financial strategy 2021/22 - 2024/25 being set. Key risk mitigations include amongst others regular (monthly) financial reporting to Cabinet, working to the Medium-Term Financial Strategy and setting robust budgets within available resources.
- 9.2. Unlike many other parts of the public sector such as the NHS, local authorities are required by law to set a balanced budget. As part of their duties, the Executive Director of Finance and Commercial Services has a responsibility to report to members if it appears to him that the authority will not have sufficient resources to finance its expenditure for the financial year. While not underestimating the continued severity of the current crisis on Council's finances, the Executive Director of Finance and Commercial Services believes a balanced budget will be achieved in 2021-22.

10. Select Committee comments

- 10.1. None

11. Recommendation

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

12. Background Papers

- 12.1. Summary Equality and rural impact assessment [CMIS > Meetings](#) page 284

Officer Contact

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Appendix 1: 2021-22 Revenue Finance Monitoring Report Month 11

Report by the Executive Director of Finance and Commercial Services

1 Introduction

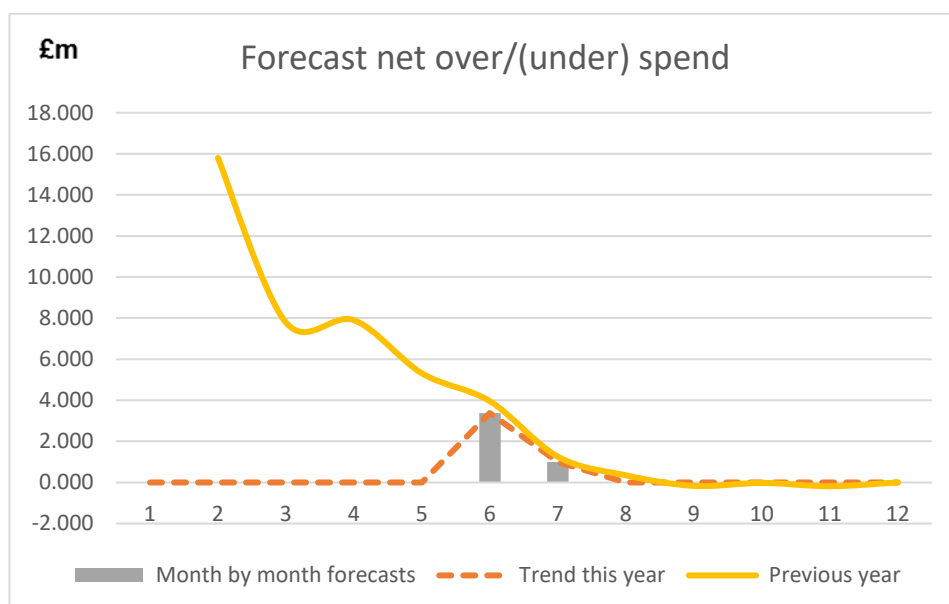
1.1 This report gives details of:

- the P11 monitoring position for the 2021-22 Revenue Budget
- additional financial information relating to the Covid-19 pandemic
- forecast General Balances and Reserves as at 31 March 2022 and
- other key information relating to the overall financial position of the Council.

2 Revenue outturn – over/(under)spends

2.1 **At the end of February 2022**, a balanced budget is forecast on a net budget of £439.094m.

Chart 1: forecast /actual revenue outturn 2021-22, month by month trend:



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

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

Table 1: 2021-22 forecast (under)/overspends by service

Service	Revised Budget	Cost Pressures	(Under spends/ Savings)	Earmarked Reserves & Provisions Utilised	Net (under)/ overspend	%	R A G
	£m		£m		£m		
Adult Social Care	252.290	11.270	-2.370	-8.900	0	0%	G
Children's Services	178.636	14.200	-1.940	-5.285	6.975	3.9%	R
Community and Environmental Services	158.484	1.307	0	-1.307	0	0%	G
Strategy and Transformation	8.601	0.087	-0.932	.0.845	0	0%	G
Governance Department	1.865	0.547	-0.060	-0.487	0	0%	G
Finance and Commercial Services	32.388	2.982	-0.129	-2.853	0	0%	G
Finance General	-193.17	1.799	-8.774		-6.975	3.6%	G
Total	439.094	32.192	-14.205	-17.987	0	0%	G

Notes:

- 1) the RAG ratings are subjective and account for the risk and both the relative (%) and absolute (£m) impact of overspends.
- 2) Earmarked reserves and provisions were set aside in 2020-21 in order to meet and fund additional pressures in 2021-22.

- 2.4 **Children's Services:** The forecast outturn as at Period 11 (end of February 2022) is an overspend of £12.260m partially offset by use of reserves, resulting in an overall overspend position of £6.975m.

- 2.5 This position reflects that Children's Services budgets continue to be under significant pressure, reflecting the operational pressures and challenging market forces that are outside of NCC's control and being seen nationally, with key financial drivers experienced being:
- Market forces, beyond the Council's control, are significantly impacting our ability to purchase the right placements at the right cost;
 - An unhelpfully rigid approach from the regulator (Ofsted) - challenging care settings in a way which makes them unwilling to work with young people with complex needs or drives a demand for very large packages of additional support;
 - An unprecedented worsening of emotional wellbeing and mental health amongst children, young people and parents;
 - A significant rise in 'extra familial harm', including county lines and exploitation of young people;
 - An underlying trend of increasing special educational needs and disabilities, including some children with complex disabilities surviving into later childhood as a result of medical advances;
 - An additional strain on families as a result of the pandemic and hidden harm with families locked down together.

Factors causing pressures previously identified have not eased off and, in many cases, have continued to increase, with many elements being unpredictable in

nature. The service now has better information due to be able to anticipate the year end position.

- 2.6 Much of the pressures are due to the uncertainties and on-going impact of the pandemic. Patterns and trends have changed from those seen pre-pandemic as a result of our transformation programme, and the medium-to-longer-term impact of the pandemic continues to develop. Whilst management action has been, and continues to be, taken to mitigate the budget risks, the pressures have continued to increase.
- 2.7 The budgets that continue to cause the greatest concern are demand-led; specifically, external social care residential placements and home to school transport for those with special educational needs. Education Trading budgets are also under pressure this year, but this is expected to be a short-term position for this academic year as an impact of the pandemic upon trading activities.
- 2.8 As previously reported, the former is under pressure due to rising demand for places, the rising complexity of need for vulnerable adolescents, and market forces significantly favouring suppliers of provision. The pressure on the number of residential placements required is due to the level of need and the availability of foster carers, both have been adversely impacted by the pandemic. Additionally, there has been increasing pressure on the leaving care budget, including where post-18s continue to support particularly with the challenge of securing suitable housing exacerbated by the pandemic. At this stage, £4.0m of the forecast overspend within social care is expected to be met through a corresponding contribution from Children's Services Business Risk Reserve.
- 2.9 The evidence from the tracking and delivery of the department's transformation programme is that pressure on placement supply and, therefore, budgets would have been far greater if transformation activity had not taken place and savings committed to as part of the budget planning process were not being delivered.
- 2.10 The home to school transport budget pressure of c. £3.6m is particularly due to the number of children and young people with high special educational needs and disabilities that need individual and/or high-cost assistance to travel to and from school or alternative provision. Since schools returned in April 2021, similar to the national picture, NCC has seen a significant increase in demand for Education, Health and Care Plans and for specialist school provision, prompting increasing demand for transport. The current forecast includes the additional arrangements made throughout the Autumn term to meet needs and new requests, thus increasing the pressure on this budget (primarily for pupils for SEND). The forecast is higher than the pressure anticipated for this year when contributions were made to the Transport Equalisation Reserves at the end of the 2020-21 financial year; the use of these reserves, (£1.285m), had been forecast to mitigate the majority of this overspend. The cost pressure is a combination of higher costs from a less competitive market (a shortage of drivers following covid) and additional places in high SEND specialist provision seen within the Dedicated Schools Grant High Needs Block spend.
- 2.11 The pandemic has had a disruptive impact upon education trading for the past 18 months, with some services unable to operate due to restrictions in place, others trading at reduced levels or staff being reassigned to undertake pandemic-related work to support the schools' sector. During 2020-21 there was significant additional government funding which mitigated the losses incurred during that period. Whilst we are seeing the market begin to rectify itself, this is delayed by rising COVID

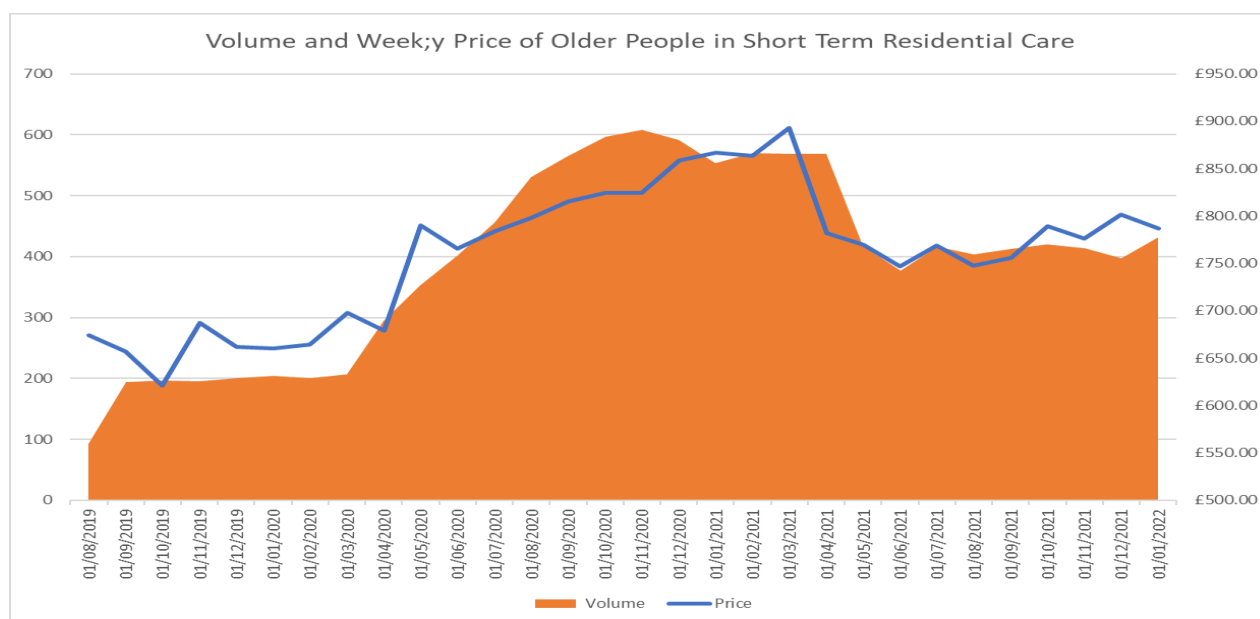
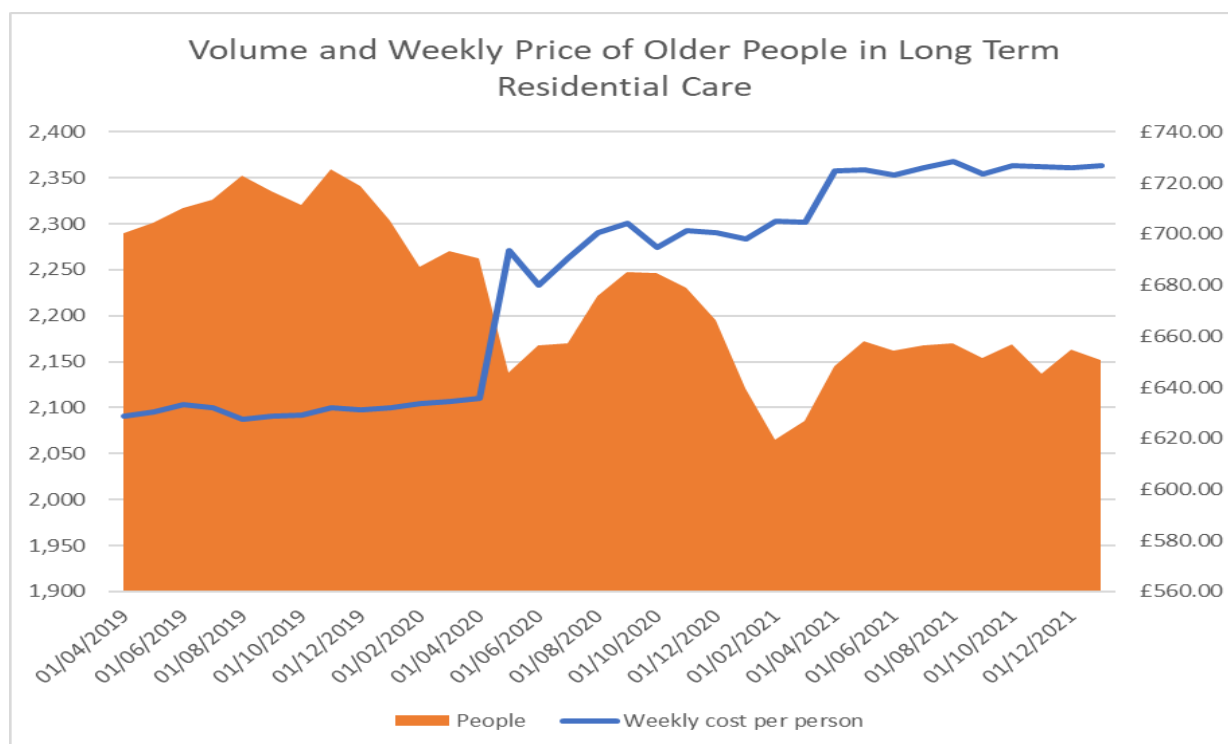
cases as schools remain understandably cautious about visitors. Management action is being taken to reduce the financial pressures caused through reviewing services to ensure that they will meet the new, anticipated demand as well as looking for alternative funding sources in the meantime.

- 2.12 Management action continues to be taken within the department, wherever possible to reduce the financial risks faced, both in this financial year and within future financial years. Any impact upon future years' budgets has been kept under close review as the 2022-23 Budget process was undertaken. The service also continues to presume the use of reserves to cover committed expenditure that slipped from 2020-21 due to the pandemic.
- 2.13 Given the current national context, there continues to be significant influences beyond the Council's control that make delivery of the transformation programme (and, therefore, savings) difficult. The ongoing recovery work is impacted by ongoing Covid-related staff shortages, surges in demands and any further Covid waves that may bring further restrictions and/or new scenarios to manage. These risks continue to be kept under close review.
- 2.14 **Adult Social Services:** The forecast outturn as at Period 11 (end of February 2022) is a balanced position after one-off reserve utilisation. With Adult Social Care (ASC) being a demand led service, the budget to provide it always operates under a degree of uncertainty, especially in the last 12 months. Covid-19 continues to have a detrimental effect on the pace and scale of the ASC transformation programme resulting in a shortfall in savings delivery which is still creating a legacy cost pressure against the department budget. ASC will not be able to catch-up on the 2020/21 savings whilst also delivering against the new 2021/22 savings. In 2020/21 the department recognised the risk to 2021/22 budgets and built up a level of reserves to mitigate this risk.
- 2.15 The ASC service both in Norfolk and nationally, continues to be under immense pressure, with demands for services creating unique system and capacity constraints. Whilst not the direct remit of this report, understanding the wider departmental performance is crucial to understanding its financial performance.
- 2.16 As part of our regular reporting there are several key performance indicators that provide a sense of the challenge the department faces at present:
- Our holding lists are now at a high of 2900 people, which continues to represent a significant increase over the last 12 months. These lists are constantly monitored and prioritised to enable risk to be managed, which clearly is a significant resource pressure.
 - Our Interim Care list is above 800 people, which indicates that our Care Market currently cannot provide all the services that are demanded upon it. This is further indicated by the significant level of Reablement capacity that is being absorbed to provide traditional home support whereby this is not available from the independent market.
 - Since November 2020 we have seen a significant rise in the level of completed S42 (Care Act 2014) safeguarding enquiries. In Mental Health alone our service has completed 85% more S42 enquiries in 2021 than they did in the whole of 2020. The trend in Safeguarding referrals continues to be upwards with the Council receiving 152, 201 and 225 new referrals in the months November, December and January.

- The pressure facing our partners in the health system has meant discharge referrals from hospital into the Home First Hubs have increased by over 100% more than the staffing and commissioning capacity. We continue to work with members of Norfolk's Health and Care system to manage this demand.
- Our care providers ability to recruit and retain staff, especially in services such as home support, is under strain at this time and will clearly limit capacity. For Home Support, since July 2020, we have seen a 35% increase in care vacancies, and in our care homes, a 14% increase in the last 3 months alone. Within this past month we are seeing a rise in the number of contracts that are either being handed back or having to be managed for interim periods due to temporary inability to staff.
- As well as external care staff vacancies, our own teams continue to struggle to maintain capacity despite a concerted effort to recruit and retain qualified Social Workers.
- As a result of the continued pressures, the service department has reintroduced its SCOPEL (Social Care Operational Escalation Level) measure, alongside the NHS OPEL equivalent. This provides a daily measure of the pressure on the systems in Norfolk. For much of December both SCOPEL and OPEL have operated at the highest level of pressure (Level 4) which has meant an urgent reprioritisation of resource towards managing this risk.

2.17 What the preceding paragraph means is our ASC budget, in particular the Older People Purchase of Care budget, continues to be under pressure. For our care purchasing budgets, whilst the pandemic has, in the short term, resulted in some reduced demand for services such as long-term residential care (see Graph 1), overall, we have still seen a 3% rise in demand for long term care, within which is a 13% rise in older people needing to access these services. We continue to give focus to our utilisation of short-term residential care beds and are seeing some positive results in reducing our dependence upon them. However, a high proportion of those previously in receipt of short term bedded care have converted into long term need. Of course, for the Health and Care system, as described by the SCOPEL paragraph above, the winter seasonal peak in pressure is now upon us, and capacity planning within our Winter Plan has kicked in and we make all attempts to manage this in the most cost-effective way possible.

Graph 1 & 2: Example of Older People care volume and price spikes over last 18 months.



- 2.18 During the last few periods the continued impact of the pandemic, and its effects on care capacity, has meant that we will see some short-term reductions in the volume, and therefore expenditure, of services such as home support and transport. These align to our rising interim care and holding lists. Whilst this could be perceived as positive movements financially, a continued pattern of movement from these drivers will likely be disadvantageous for both the outcomes of the people but also the longer term trend of cost.

- 2.19 We were pleased that new monies for Social Care relating to the six months to March 2022 were announced recently. These will provide a continued level of resource for care providers around infection control but also funding towards Hospital Discharge arrangements. Both funds were only confirmed for the next 6 months and continue to present a longer term financial risk to the Council.
- 2.20 In order to meet current demand levels and balance both Covid recovery and service transformation, the department has needed to continue with both its recruitment drive and focus on staff retention. This meant we believed that some of our staff budgets that have historically underspent (due to vacancies) may well themselves have been under pressure. Our continued challenges in recruitment and retention, as articulated at a recent People and Communities Select Committee, has meant that these staff budgets continue to be underspent.
- 2.21 We recognised that 2021/22 has been a difficult financial year and built an adequate reserve balance to manage any presenting risk. At period 11, the ASC department is still forecasting an underlying overspend of £11.3m, mitigated by one-off utilisation of Business Risk reserves or one-off underspends. The ASC reserve forecast (Table 3, section 4.3) therefore reflects this planned reserve utilisation. As noted elsewhere in this paper, the recent announcements of additional funding relating to ASC, namely for the Care Market and Hospital Discharge, has meant the funding set aside for the latter half of the year towards these pressures will likely not be needed during 2021/22. The Period 11 reserve forecast therefore reflects the reduced usage towards these needs in the next few months. It does however recognise that the service is likely to require these funds to manage both these pressures, and the wider transformation requirements of the department, in 2022/23 and beyond.
- 2.22 **CES:** we are currently forecasting a balanced outturn position after the use of the business risk reserve, historically CES budgets have been fairly stable throughout the year, however the impact of the pandemic has added a degree of uncertainty to the budgets, specifically around income generation.
- 2.23 We are currently forecasting pressures around income within Museums, Libraries and On-street parking. Overall, the position will be mitigated through the local government income compensation scheme for lost sales, fees and charges and the use of the business risk reserve.
- 2.24 The department is also reviewing the additional costs of reopening services to ensure that they are available to the public and operating within the government guidelines.
- 2.25 Waste volumes at Recycling Centres and kerbside collections remain volatile following an exceptional year in 2020/21. The 2021/22 budget allowed for an increase in waste volumes, we continue to monitor this closely and the long term impacts on the budget.
- 2.26 **Corporate services:** The Strategy and Transformation and Governance directorates are forecasting a balanced position, making use of current underspends, Covid and reserves brought forward from 2021-22 where appropriate.
- 2.27 Finance and Commercial Services is forecasting a balanced budget as pressures due to the impact of COVID on loss of income and increasing overhead costs on Property services are offset using the corporate and business risk reserve.

- 2.28 **Finance General:** Finance General forecast for P11 includes the one-off reduction in Minimum Revenue Provision of £4.405m resulting from slippage in the 2020-21 Capital Programme. In addition, there are lower than anticipated redundancy and organisation change costs of £1.045m, interest savings of £0.785m due to borrowings secured at lower interest rates than budget, £0.652m additional interest receivable and £1.083m in Travel Rights Grants. This is offset by a £1.799m overspend in Covid related PPE, staff and premises costs. Other forecast underspends include £0.07m reduction in member travel and allowances, and the £0.1m Council's pension AVC salary sacrifice scheme. The net result is an overall underspend of £6.975m.
- 2.29 The forecast assumes use of £28.353m Covid reserves brought forward from 2020-21 to mitigate Covid related expenditure where appropriate and necessary to maintain a balanced budget. We are assuming that the combination of Covid grants and reserves will be sufficient to cover additional cost pressures, but at this stage of the year the extent of cost pressures may still change.
- 2.30 Further details are given in Appendix 1: Revenue Annex 1.

3 Approved budget, changes and variations

- 3.1 The 2021-22 budget was agreed by Council on 22 February 2021 and is summarised by service in the Council's Budget Book 2021-22 (page 17) as follows:

Table 2: 2021-22 original and revised net budget by service

Service	Approved net base budget	Revised budget P11
	£m	£m
Adult Social Care	252.550	252.290
Children's Services	178.886	178.636
Community and Environmental Services	158.307	158.484
Strategy and Transformation	8.422	8.601
Governance Department	1.904	1.865
Finance and Commercial Services	32.235	32.388
Finance General	-193.210	-193.17
Total	439.094	439.094

Note: this table may contain rounding differences.

- 3.2 There were some minor budget transfers between services in December 21 and January 22, however the Council's net budget for 2021-22 remains unchanged.

4 General balances and reserves

General balances

- 4.1 At its meeting on 22 February 2021, the County Council agreed a minimum level of general balances of £19.706m in 2021-22. The balance at 1 April 2021 was **£23.763m** following transfers of £4.056m from non-Covid related savings and Finance General underspends at the end of 2020-21. The forecast for 31 March 2022 is £23.763m, taking into account the forecast balanced budget.

Reserves and provisions 2021-22

- 4.2 The use of reserves anticipated at the time of budget setting was based on reserves balances anticipated in January 2021. Actual balances at the end of March 2021 were higher than planned, mainly as a result of grants being carried forward, including Covid-19 support grants, and reserves use being deferred.
- 4.3 The 2021-22 budget was approved based on a closing reserves and provisions (excluding DSG reserves) of £111.8m as at 31 March 2022. This, and the latest forecasts are as follows.

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

Reserves and provisions by service	Actual balances 1 April 2021(1)	Increase in March 2021 balances after budget setting	2021-22 Budget book forecast March 2022	Latest forecast balances 31 March 2022
	£m	£m	£m	£m
Adult Social Services	38.611	16.836	14.102	32.876
Children's Services (inc schools, excl LMS/DSG)	17.412	8.953	5.832	7.153
Community and Environmental Services	54.223	12.274	49.780	58.563
Strategy and Transformation	1.892	0.529	1.265	2.737
Governance	2.119	0.236	0.908	1.631
Finance & Commercial Services	4.628	1.340	1.872	3.044
Finance General	39.255	6.172	30.739	40.212
Schools LMS balances	17.018	4.204	7.308	14.593
Reserves and Provisions including LMS	175.158	50.544	111.806	160.809
DSG Reserve (negative)	-31.797	-0.834	-34.355	-55.057

- 4.4 Covid grants and other grants and contributions brought forward as at 31 March 2021 resulted in reserves and provisions being £50.5m higher than had been assumed at the time of budget setting. The majority of these reserves have been used for service provision during 2021-22. However, the decision was taken in P11 to roll forward £18.0m of the COVID-19 MHCLG Grant Tranche 5 to support the 22-23 budget. As a result, the latest forecast net total for reserves and provisions at 31 March 2022 has increased by £17.268 when compared with P10 and is approximately £49.288m higher than was assumed at the time of budget setting.
- 4.5 **Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG):** The latest forecast DSG Reserve is based on the latest modelling of the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) Recovery Plan after the 2020-21 outturn, updated for the actual rise in placements and support seen during the financial year to date that have exceeded the growth estimates built into the budget. The forecast is for an in-year deficit of c. £23.3m overspend as at the end of March 2022, which will increase the DSG Reserve to £55.1m by 31 March 2022. This compares to a budgeted deficit of £8.635m. There has been minimal movement to the forecast position as at Period 11 (end of February) and so the outturn forecast for 2021-22 remains the same as the prior period forecast. This compares to a budgeted deficit of £8.635m.

- 4.6 The areas of most significant cost pressure continue to be independent school placements along with post-16 provision and maintained special school placements. After the third national lock-down, there was a significant increase in demand for independent special school provision placements which significantly exceeds the growth estimated in the budget and is the key driver behind the increased overspend forecast for the 2021-22 financial year.
- 4.7 In addition, the average cost of these places has risen by c. 15% since the budget was set. This price increase is replicated regionally and nationally and is due to the market conditions where demand is significantly exceeding supply. The charges of this sector are not regulated nationally, and local authorities are not in a position to properly negotiate upon price when it is required that a child is placed in the provision in line with statutory duties. Even prior to this increase in average costs, analysis shows that, Norfolk spends twice as much on independent special school places as it does upon state-funded (i.e. maintained, academy or free) school places, and the educational outcomes for children and young people are consistently higher within the state-funded sector.
- 4.8 These budgets will continue to be kept under close review. Officers have also raised concerns about the imbalance in the market with representatives of the DfE and requested support regarding regulation, to better support the control of costs and improving the outcomes for children and young people within these placements.
- 4.9 Another area of additional spend in 2021-22 relates to support in mainstream schools for children with high special educational needs to enable the child to remain within the mainstream sector either on a long-term basis, to prevent escalation of needs or on a short-term basis whilst specialist provision is awaited. As the pandemic restrictions have eased, there has been a significant demand from schools. This area of spend is being kept under close review, but it should be noted that additional spend on these budgets should mitigate pressures on maintained special school and independent school placements, particularly in the medium-to-longer-term.
- 4.10 Despite the pandemic, significant work by the NCC, Norfolk Schools Forum and the wider system continues to take place as part of the Children's Services Transformation Programme both to ensure that the right specialist provision is in the right place to meet needs (i.e. the capital investment), whilst also progressing work to transform how the whole system supports additional needs within mainstream provision.
- 4.11 NCC reports the forecast position each term to the Norfolk Schools Forum, in line with DfE expectations and feedback from the Forum continues to be sought. The latest report was to the November Schools Forum meeting (in line with the Period 6 forecast) and this position has been shared with the DfE in line with their requests for periodic update. As part of the DfE's ongoing monitoring where a local authority is carrying a cumulative deficit, a follow up meeting with representatives from the DfE has been held this term with no significant suggestions from the DfE as to alternative ways that Norfolk could be managing the DSG cost pressures.
- 4.12 Sustainable funding for the HNB continues to be pursued and NCC recently responded to a DfE consultation regarding revising the historical basis for the national funding formula for HNB; this consultation suggested that Norfolk has been under-funded for a number of years and, even if the proposals are implemented, will continue to be under funded due to a capping system. We have now received the provisional DSG allocations for 2022-23 that includes the outcome of this consultation; unfortunately, for Norfolk the final historical adjustment has been

capped at a lower level than the consultation, meaning that level of under-funding for Norfolk continues and is exacerbated.

- 4.13 Norfolk has been investing significant capital monies in the creation of additional specialist places in existing state-funded schools alongside the building of new special schools and specialist resource base provision. Without this investment, the deficit position would have been significantly higher on the basis that the independent sector continues to expand to as demand continues. Officers have also fed back to the DfE regarding the vital role that capital investment could play in supporting the recovery of the High Needs Block, to enable placements to move from expensive independent provision into maintained / academy / free special schools. Sufficient capital investment has not been forthcoming from central government for many years and whilst there have been recent announcements, these need to be just the starting point if there is to be sufficient supply of state-funded specialist provision to fully meet the place needs of children with high SEND. Additionally, Officers have fed back that it is key that the funding announced is directed to those authorities where it would deliver the biggest benefit.
- 4.14 The outcome of the national major review into support for children with special educational needs following the implementation of the SEND Reform Act 2014 is currently expected this Autumn, having been previously delayed three times. It is anticipated that this review will deliver significant findings and that these will have financial implications.
- 4.15 In addition to the pressures seen within the High Needs Block, there is also a forecast overspend in relation to the Early Years Block. When the hourly rate was set for 2021-22, various options were considered following a comprehensive consultation with the sector to refresh the formula for Norfolk. Detailed modelling of this block is challenging in 'normal' years due to the difficulties in estimating take up and the impact of supplements. 2020-21 was particularly unusual due to the pandemic, including in relation to future patterns of demand, with the modelling leaning towards maximising the rate to be disturbed and minimising the contingency available following underspends in previous years. Now that we have the majority of the 20-2122 data, it can be seen that the revised funding modelling overallocated and that, post clawback from the DfE, there will be an overspend. This is expected to be an in-year only pressure due to the modelling for 2022-23's hourly rate rectifying the situation to ensure affordability.
- 4.16 **Provisions included in the table above**

The table above includes forecast provisions of £28.393m comprising:

- £10.0m insurance provision,
- £12.6m landfill provision (this provision is not cash backed),
- £2.791m provisions for bad debts,
- £2.996m business rates appeals provision, and
- a small number of payroll related provisions.

5 Covid-19 financial implications

- 5.1 Details of central government funding announcements and forecast Covid-19 pressures are set out below.

5.2 Covid-19 funding forecasted to date is as follows:

Table 4a: Covid-19 funding

Funding	Actual/forecast 2021-22 £m
Covid reserves brought forward	
Home to School and College Transport Funding carried forward	0.598
Local Outbreak Control: test and trace service support grant carried forward	1.306
Contain Outbreak Management Fund carried forward	14.389
Community Testing Funding carried forward	0.049
Clinically Extremely Vulnerable Funding carried forward	2.420
Wellbeing for Education Recovery Grant carried forward	0.037
Holiday Activity Fund Grant carried forward	0.018
Norfolk Assistance Scheme Reserve	0.491
Covid-19 Grant (Adults) carried forward	3.437
COVID-19 MHCLG Grant Tranche 4 carried forward	5.608
Use of funding brought forward from 2020-21	28.353
COVID-19 MHCLG Grant Tranche 5	18.829
Infection Control Fund	3.860
Infection Control and Testing Fund	4.755
Infection Control, Testing and Vaccination Fund	7.344
Home to School and College Transport Funding	0.245
Contain Outbreak Management Fund	4.859
Wellbeing for Education Recovery Grant	0.125
Covid Winter Grant Scheme	0.645
COVID Local Support Grant	4.217
Adult Social Care Rapid Testing Fund	2.535
Holiday Activity Fund Grant	2.389
Covid-19 Bus Services Support Grant	4.884
Fire Home Office Grant	0.192
Hospital Discharge funding	12.706
Sales, fees and charges compensation	1.668
Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme	0.206
Practical Support for Self-Isolation Grant	1.739
Community Testing Funding	2.234
Workforce Recruitment & Retention Fund	2.829
Workforce Recruitment & Retention Fund – Round 2	5.222
Omicron Support Fund (OSF)	1.045
Funding forecast in 2021-22	82.528
	110.881
Contain Outbreak Management Fund	-10.429
Funding to be carried forward into 2022-23	-10.429
	100.452

New / confirmed funding

- 5.3 The majority of funding above is a continuation of funding streams first received in 2020-21. New funding sources include:
- 5.4 **Workforce Recruitment and Retention Fund – Round 2:** On 10 December the government set out its Adult Social Care Winter Plan which included a commitment to providing a second round of funding for workforce recruitment and retention to support local authorities recruit and retain sufficient staff over winter, support growth and sustain the existing workforce capacity. Norfolk's share of this funding is £5.222m.
- 5.5 **Hospital Discharge Funding:** £6.210m agreed funding from Norfolk & Waveney CCG to cover the hospital discharge costs incurred by NCC for Adult Social Care up until 30 September 2021. £478m nationally has been announced by the Government for the second half of the financial year in relation to the Hospital Discharge Programme. For Norfolk and Waveney, we have been allocated £11.169m of funding, with c£6.496m currently aligned to expenditure associated with NCC expenditure. We have very strong indications that this will be the last funding for this national policy. We are therefore working closely with our Health partners to ensure we have a sustainable and effective Hospital Discharge Programme within the reduced resources for 2022/23 onwards.
- 5.6 **COVID Local Support Grant:** an additional £1.638m was received for the Household Support Grant bringing the total COVID Local Support Grant forecast up to £4.217m for 2021-22.
- 5.7 An additional element of cost mitigation included in forecast over and underspends is the Government's **Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme**. While the scheme has not been used to duplicate other sources of public funding, such as the Covid-19 support grants, the government has recognised that there are exceptional cases where, for example, Local Authorities have needed to close venues such as museums and registry offices. Total furlough income scheme received in the year was £0.206m.
- 5.8 **Practical Support for Self-Isolation Grant:** The Council is expecting funding from the DHSC to provide practical support for those self-isolating.

Other funding

- 5.9 **Local government income compensation scheme for lost sales, fees and charges:** MHCLG have confirmed the extension to the Sales, Fees and Charges Scheme, into the first three months of 2021/22. The compensation subject to the same deductions as 2020-21 based on a 5% budget absorption and the 75 pence in every pound of loss thereafter). The Council submitted a claim on 20 October, Government have now paid £1.668m to compensate for lost income.
- 5.10 **Contain Outbreak Management Fund (COMF):** On 24th December the Council received confirmation that any unspent monies from COMF can be carried forward into the 2022-23 financial year. There is £14.389m carried forward from 2020-21 and an additional £4.859m received in 2021-22. £10.429m of this grant is now being

forecast to be carried forward to offset the costs associated with containing the pandemic, vaccination roll-out and enhanced testing facilities across the county in 2022-23.

- 5.10 **Adult Social Care – Omicron Support Fund (OSF):** On 29th December the government announced a further £60m top-up to local authorities to support adult social care sector and protect those who receive care and their carers from COVID-19 infection. Norfolk's share of this funding is £1.045m.

Covid-19 related cost pressures

- 5.11 A summary of the forecast Covid-19 related cost pressures are as follows:

Table 4b: Covid-19 cost pressures

Table 4b: Covid-19 cost pressures	Adult Social Services	Children's Services	Community and Environmental Services	Strategy and Transformation	Governance	Finance and Commercial Services	Finance General	Total
	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m
2021-22 Covid-19 cost pressures	49.043	16.744	26.027	0.000	0.000	0.935	7.538	100.287
Use of funding brought forward from 2020-21	-3.437	-0.653	-18.164	0.000	0.000	0.000	-6.099	-28.353
2021-22 Grants and funding	-40.940	-3.020	-14.629	0.000	-0.025	-0.219	-23.695	-82.528
2021-22 Covid-19 Funding	-44.377	-3.673	-32.793	0.000	-0.025	-0.219	-29.794	-110.881
Funding to be carried forward into 2022-23	0.000	0.000	10.429	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	10.429
Net pressure	4.666	13.071	3.663	0.000	-0.025	0.715	-22.256	-0.165

The forecast net Covid cost pressure is fully mitigated following the release of reserves carried forward including the Covid-19 Tranche 4 grant.

Other pressures

- 5.12 A particular risk relates to Business Rates and Council Tax income. This has been taken into account during 2021-22 budget setting. To assist future budgeting, the government has allowed Council's to spread their tax deficits over 3 years rather than the usual one year
- 5.13 The costs and income pressure relating to Covid-19 vary from the overall Council forecast balanced budget position shown in this report. This is due to non-Covid-19 related actions put in place by Chief Officers to mitigate the financial impacts of the pandemic.

6 Budget savings 2021-22 summary

- 6.1 In setting its 2021-22 Budget, the County Council agreed net savings of £41.179m. Details of all budgeted savings can be found in the 2021-22 Budget Book. A summary of the total savings forecast to be delivered is provided in this section.
- 6.2 The latest monitoring reflects total forecast savings delivery of £37.019m and a total shortfall of £4.160m (10%) at year end.
- 6.3 The forecast savings delivery is anticipated as shown in the table below:

Table 5: Analysis of 2021-22 savings forecast

	Adult Social Services	Children's Services	Community and Environmental Services	Strategy and Transformation	Governance	Finance and Commercial Services	Finance General	Total
	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m
Budget savings	17.858	11.300	8.288	0.553	0.353	1.927	0.900	41.179
Period 11 forecast savings	14.588	11.300	8.288	0.553	0.353	1.367	0.900	37.349
Savings shortfall (net)	3.270	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.560	0.000	3.830

Commentary on savings risk areas

- 6.4 Some saving programmes have highlighted risk areas which will need to be kept under review. Any updates to the forecast delivery of savings will be included in future monitoring to Cabinet.

Adult Social Services

- 6.5 Adult Social Services are presently forecasting to deliver £14.588m of their £17.858m 2021/22 savings target, but further significant risks exist. The £3.270m non-delivery relates to three savings.
- 6.6 £2.000m non delivery relates to the Short Term Out of Hospital Offer saving (ASS015) due to the high demand experienced for short term residential care following hospital discharge. The saving was predicated on the reduction of the use of short-term beds and the ability to reduce the length of stay, however due to Covid this has not been possible. Therefore, at Period 11 we continue to declare £2.000m non delivery against this £3.670m savings target.
- 6.7 At Period 11 we are also declaring a shortfall in the Homebased Reablement Saving (ASS001) of £0.870m against a £1.250m target. The Reablement service is currently experiencing considerable capacity issues due to having to 'hold' home care packages due to the significant pressures in the market. They also have a number of staff vacancies. Both these factors have meant that the services capacity to accept reablement referrals has substantially reduced. This has resulted in a reduction in the savings that are forecast to be delivered this year.

- 6.8 The other area at period 11 that we are now declaring a savings shortfall is the Digital Sourcing saving (an element of ASC036), £0.400m. Due to the considerable resourcing and Covid pressures on the market, at the moment we are still seeing upward pressures on the price levels the Council is having to pay for care. This is exacerbated by not currently being able to use a Sourcing Tool to support discussions.
- 6.9 There are other risks to the delivery of savings which may mean in future periods some of the other savings will have adverse forecasts applied to them. As conveyed in the revenue section of this report, Adult Social Services will likely struggle to deliver the previous year's (2020/21) savings shortfall whilst also delivering the present year savings.

Children's Services

- 6.10 Despite the ongoing pressures being seen by the department, it is anticipated that the Children's Services budgeted savings, which lie primarily within the transformation programme, will be delivered in 2021-22 based upon the latest analysis available. The profile of delivery of savings across the whole programme varies from the original budgeted expectation; some projects are under-delivering due to the impact of the pandemic (e.g. upon foster carer recruitment) but other projects, such as New Roads, are delivering savings ahead of schedule.
- 6.11 The forecast continues to assume that savings will be delivered during the remainder of the financial year; significant deviation from these plans could result in an increase to the forecast. Therefore, expected delivery of savings will continue to be kept under close review.
- 6.12 As advised elsewhere in this report, there are significant stresses within the system due to the ongoing impact of the pandemic that are diverting resources away from the transformation programme, as well as pressures within the market that means it is more challenging to secure the right provision, in the right place, at the right time and at the right cost; all of which are essential to deliver many elements of the transformation programme.
- 6.13 Other significant influences that are beyond the Council's control continue to make delivery of the transformation programme (and, therefore, savings) difficult considering the ongoing recovery work, ongoing direct Covid-related impacts including self-isolation of staff, increases in demand seen and further waves. Therefore, expected delivery of savings will continue to be kept under close review.

Finance and Commercial Services

- 6.14 £0.560m non delivery relates to Corporate Property Team savings (P&R027/P&R058/P&R060). Savings have to date been absorbed / delivered through one-off measures but following a detailed review of previously identified savings from 2016, particularly around commercialisation of elements, these are no longer felt to be achievable. A number of the initiatives have been market tested and evaluated and do not produce a significant return or pose a financial / reputational risk to NCC. The non-delivery of savings in 2021-22 has been reflected in the monitoring position and has been addressed as part of the 2022-23 Budget.

2022-23 to 2024-25 savings

- 6.15 Budget setting in 2021-22 saw the approval of £2.245m savings for 2022-23, £1.600m for 2023-24 and £2.500m savings for 2024-25. The deliverability of these savings, including any 2021-22 savings that are permanently undeliverable, has been considered as part of the budget setting process for 2022-26 and the saving position in the Revenue Budget report to January Cabinet reflected the removal or delay of £1.596m of saving proposals brought forward from previous budget rounds.

Revenue Annex 1

Forecast revenue outturn

Revenue outturn by service

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

Revenue budget outturn by service – detail

Adult Social Services	Revised Budget	Overspend	Under spend	Forecast net spend
		£m	£m	
Purchase of Care		1.767		
Commissioned Services			-0.440	
Community Social Work			-0.328	
Business Development			-0.166	
Early Help & Prevention			-0.944	
Community Health & Social Care			-0.492	
Management, Finance & HR		9.503		
Use of Business Risk Reserve			-8.900	
Forecast over / (under) spends		11.270	-11.270	
Net total	252.290		0	252.290
<i>The underlying over and underspends above excludes the planned use of ASC reserves built into the 2021-22 budget</i>				
Children's Services				
Social Care		9.800		
Learning and Inclusion		4.400		
Commissioning, Partnerships and Resources			-1.760	
Use of Children's Services Business Risk Reserves			-4.000	
Use of Transport Equalisation Risk Reserves			-1.285	
Use of anticipated MHCLG Loss of Fees and Charges Income			-0.180	
Forecast over / (under) spends		14.200	-7.225	
Net total	178.636		6.975	185.611
Community and Environmental Services				
Museums – Forecast Loss of income		0.699		
Libraries Loss of income		0.208		
On-street Parking income		0.400		
Use of Business risk reserve			-1.307	
Forecast over / (Under) spend		1.307	-1.307	
Net total	158.484		0	158.484

	Revised Budget	Overspend	Under spend	Forecast net spend
Strategy and Transformation				
Net underspends			-0.087	
Cost pressures		0.087		
Forecast over / (under) spend		0.087	-0.087	
Net Total	8.601		0	8.601
Governance				
Election and coroners costs		0.547		
Net underspends			-0.060	
Use of Business Risk Reserve			-0.049	
Use of Election Costs reserves			-0.438	
Forecast over / (under) spend		0.547	-0.547	
Net Total	1.865		0	1.865
Finance and Commercial Services				
COVID 19 – Loss of income, extra expenditure		0.345		
Cost pressures in Property and Finance		2.637		
Net underspends			-0.129	
Use of Reserves			-1.584	
Use of Corporate Reserves			-1.269	
Forecast over / (under) spend		2.982	-2.982	
Net Total	32.388		0	32.388
Finance General				
Covid-19 additional costs		1.799		
Travel Rights Grant income received			-1.083	
Members travel and allowances			-0.068	
Pension AVC Salary Sacrifice scheme			-0.112	
Interest on balances – updated interest payable forecasts for external borrowing taken earlier in the year to secure lower fixed interest rates			-0.785	
Interest receivable			-0.652	
Minimum Revenue Provision			-4.405	
Lower than anticipated costs of redundancy/organisational change			-1.045	

Other cost pressures and underspends			-0.624	
Forecast over / (under) spend		1.799	-8.774	
Net total	-193.170		-6.975	-202.603
TOTAL	439.094			439.094

Revenue Annex 2 – Dedicated Schools Grant Reserve

	Reserve as at 31 Mar 21	Revised Budget (A)	Budgeted Reserve as at 31 Mar 22	Forecast Spend (B)	(Over) / under spend A-B	Forecast Reserve as at 31 Mar 22
<i>Dedicated schools grant</i>						
High Needs Block		8.635		-23.260	-14.625	
Increase in net deficit to be carried forward		-8.635				
Forecast (over) / under spend				-23.260	-14.625	
Net deficit (DSG Reserve)	-31.797		-40.432			-55.057

Revenue Annex 3

Impact of Covid-19 – forecast cost pressures

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

**2021-22
Forecast
£m**

Identified / forecast costs

Adult Social Care

Support for people experiencing domestic abuse	0.050
Provider support payments to cover liquidity/sustainability issues and any additional costs where not specifically related to a person's changing care needs	1.100
Savings Risk Mitigation and Covid Recovery	3.868
Weekend or Overtime staff costs	0.180
Additional Capacity	1.145
Adult Social Care remote working costs	0.057
Adult Social Care Voluntary Sector	0.016
Loss of income - Day Care and Residential contributions	1.639
Hospital Discharge Programme	13.415
Full use of Infection Control funding	11.527
Full use of Adult Social Care Rapid Testing Fund	6.950
Full use of Workforce Recruitment and Retention Fund	8.052
Full use of Omicron Support Fund	1.045
Adult Social Care Total	49.044

Children's Services

Loss of income - Children's Services	1.094
Maintaining Early Year's Provision	0.139
Safeguarding campaign	0.030
Additional social care placement costs, including impact of market supply pressures as well as additional numbers of placements	11.662
Additional frontline agency costs	0.163
Children's Services remote working costs	0.023
Children's Services staff costs	0.033
Additional social worker training	0.075
School Sickness Insurance Scheme	0.099
Holiday Activity Fund	2.421
Full use of Home to School and College Transport Funding	0.843
Full use of Wellbeing for Education Return Grant	0.162
Children's Services Total	16.744

Community and Environmental Services

Customer Services additional Covid expenditure	0.006
Additional Resilience costs	0.243
Highways additional COVID costs from 3rd party contractor work	0.077
Public Transport - Covid Bus Services Support Grant	4.884
Loss of income: Libraries	0.488
Loss of income: Museums	1.194
Loss of income: Recreation and Sport	0.005
Loss of income: Adult Education	0.322

**2021-22
Forecast
£m**

Loss of income: Customer Service Centre	0.017
Loss of income: Planning Services	0.056
Loss of income: Public Transport	0.187
Loss of income: Records Office	0.005
Loss of income: CES including On-street Parking	0.500
Additional / redeployed Libraries staff	0.022
Additional / redeployed Museums staff	0.128
Additional / redeployed Records Office staff	0.005
Additional COVID expenditure within Growth & Infrastructure	0.002
Additional COVID expenditure within Waste	0.974
CES remote working costs	0.023
CES property costs	0.072
Full use of Fire Home Office Grant	0.192
Public Health expenditure	0.058
Full use of Local Outbreak Control: Test and Trace service support grant	1.306
Use of Contain Outbreak Management Fund grant	8.819
Full use of Community Testing funding	2.284
Full use of Clinically Extremely Vulnerable funding	4.159
Community and Environmental Services Total	26.028

Strategy and Transformation

Strategy and Transformation Total	0.000
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Governance

Governance Total	0.000
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Finance and Commercial Services

Covid response costs - redeployed staff, property costs (FCS)	0.423
Loss of income across Finance and Commercial Services including IMT	0.512
Services to Schools, Property and Car Park income	
Finance and Commercial Services Total	0.935

Finance General

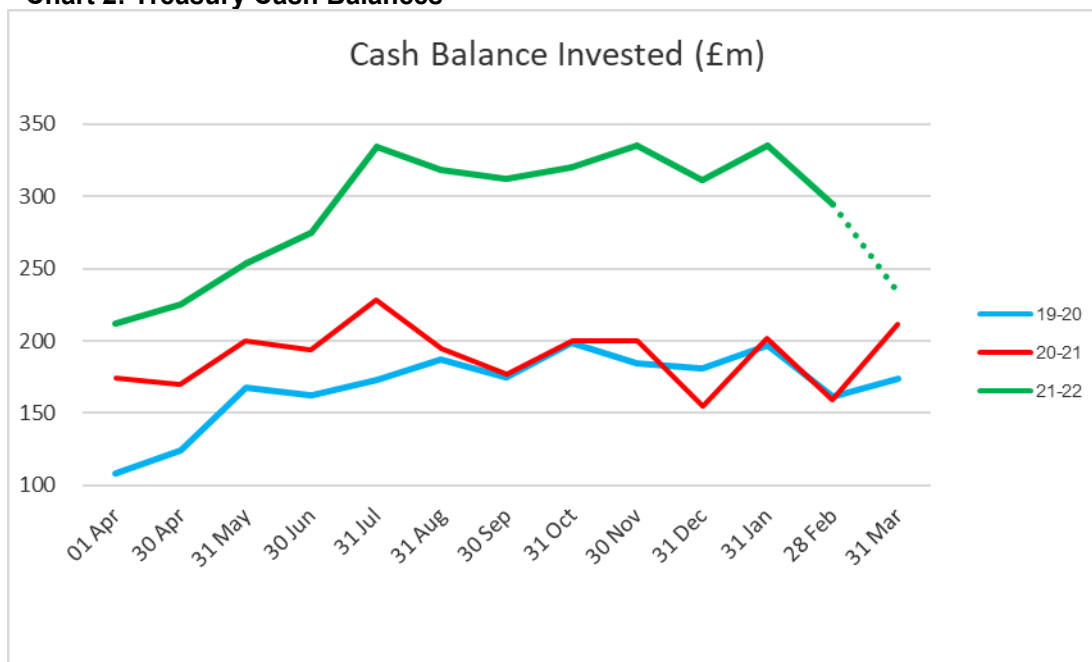
Covid response costs - redeployed staff, property costs	1.235
Additional / redeployed IMT staff	0.025
IMT - Infrastructure - Extra Data Bundled on mobile phone contract	0.089
Temporary mortuary costs	0.176
Corporate procurement of PPE	0.049
Distribution hub - Site costs	0.373
Extension of Norfolk Assistance Scheme (NAS)	0.491
Kit for digitally disadvantaged children	0.061
IMT Guided Learning	0.176
Use of COVID Local Support Grant	4.217
Use of COVID Winter Grant Scheme funding	0.645
Finance General Total	7.537
Covid-19 financial pressures Norfolk County Council total	100.288

Appendix 2: 2021-22 Balance Sheet Finance Monitoring Report Month 11

1 Treasury management summary

- 1.1 The corporate treasury management function ensures the efficient management of all the authority's cash balances. The graph below shows the level of cash balances over the last two financial years to March 2021, and projections to March 2022.

Chart 2: Treasury Cash Balances

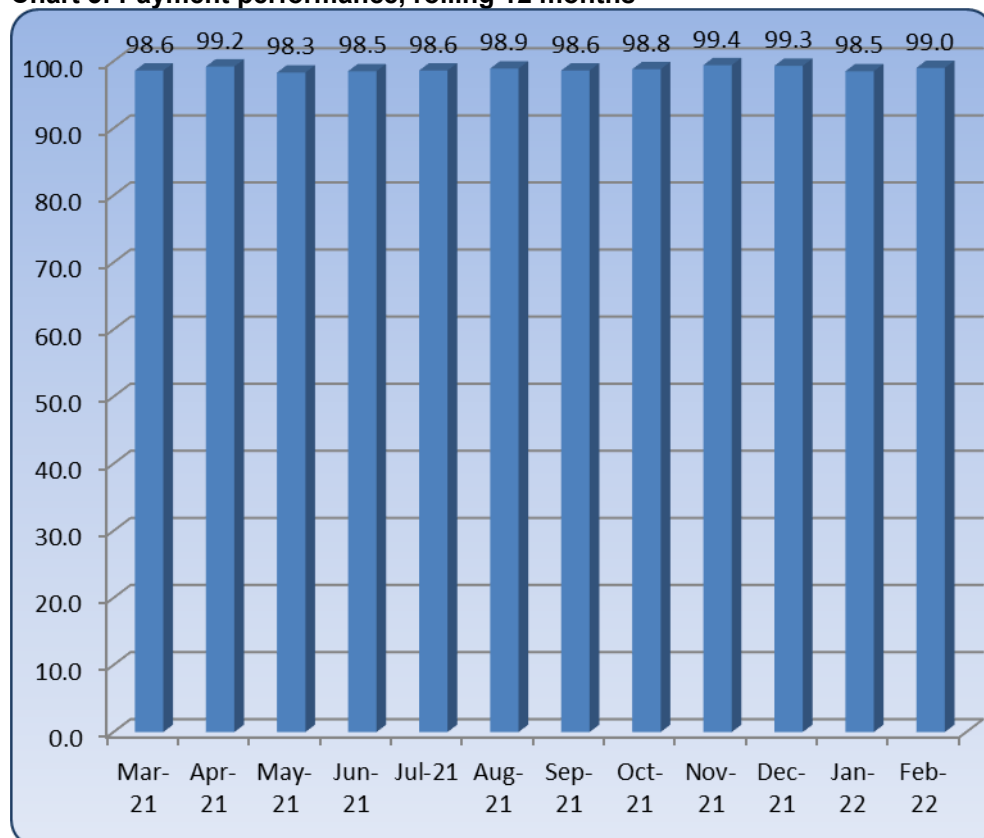


- 1.2 The Council has completed its planned borrowing for 2021-22 and will now hold off from further borrowing in the current financial year.
- 1.3 The Council has healthy cash balances for the immediate future and the year to date borrowing of £110m has reduced the Council's exposure to potential future interest rate rises and secured a £0.718m saving on interest payable this year. The Council's Treasury Strategy assumes as much as £80m may be borrowed in 2021-22, plus £30m deferred from 2020-21. The forecast cash flows takes into account the full £110m borrowed to date, £20m advance payments for April 2022 resulting from the Oracle implementation and current capital programme forecast resulting in a closing cash balance of approximately £233.156m
- 1.4 PWLB and commercial borrowing for capital purposes was £855.324m at the end of January 2022. The associated annual interest payable on existing borrowing is £30.905m.

2 Payment performance

- 2.1 This chart shows the percentage of invoices that were paid by the authority within 30 days of such invoices being received. Some 470,000 invoices are paid annually. 99.0% were paid on time in February 22 against a target of 98%. The percentage has remained above the target of 98% in the last 12 months.

Chart 3: Payment performance, rolling 12 months



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

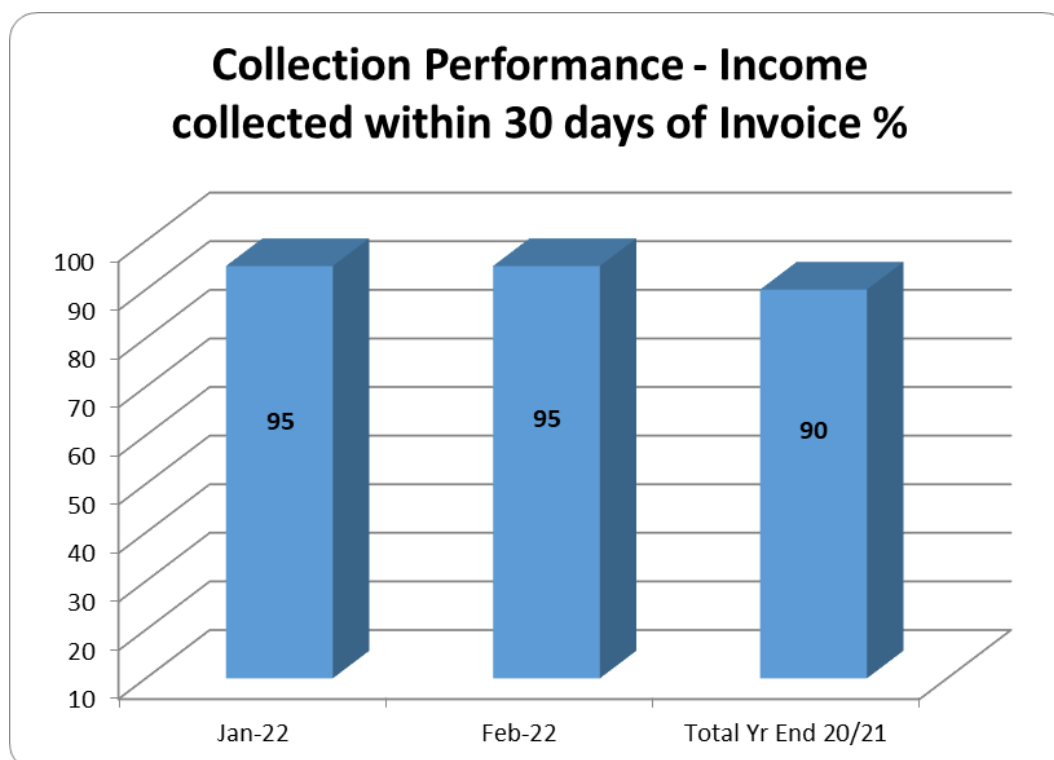
3 Debt recovery

- 3.1 **Introduction:** In 2020-21 the County Council raised over 135,100 invoices for statutory and non-statutory services. These invoices totalled in excess of £1.7bn. Through 2020-21 90.1% of all invoiced income was collected within 30 days of issuing an invoice, with 97.5% collected within 180 days.

Debt collection performance measures – latest available data

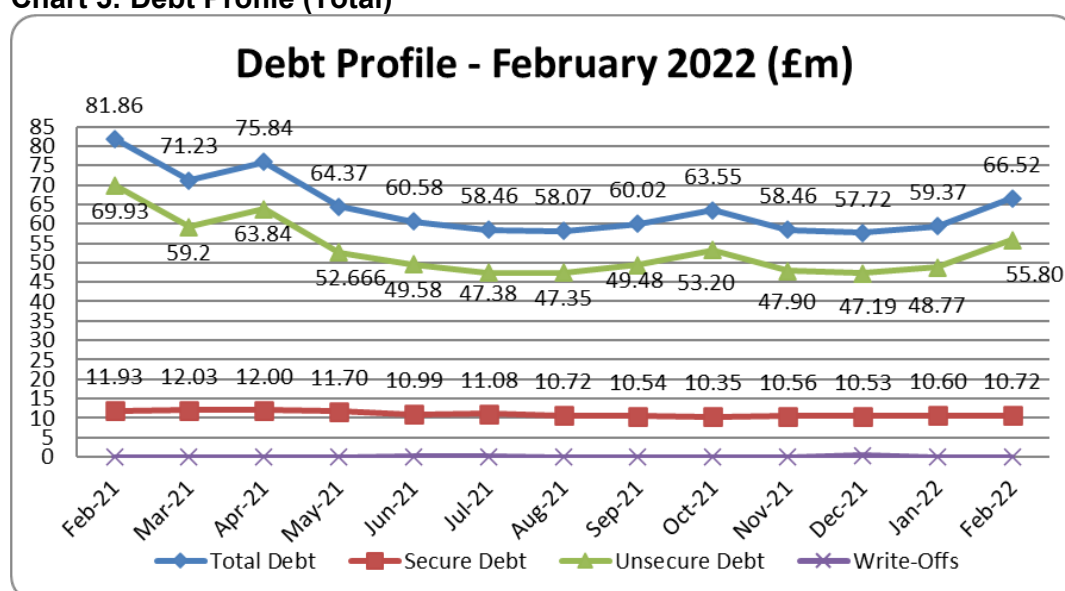
- 3.2 The proportion of invoiced income collected within 30 days for invoices raised in the previous month – measured by value – was 95% in February 22.

Chart 4 :Latest Collection Performance



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

Chart 5: Debt Profile (Total)



- 3.4 The overall level of unsecure debt increased by £6.71m in February 22. Of the £55.80m unsecure debt at the end of February 22; £14.35m is under 30 days, £1.58m has been referred to NPLaw, £1.26m is being paid off by regular instalments and £7.91m is awaiting estate finalisation. The largest area of unsecure debt relates to charges for social care, £44.51m, of which £9.91m is under 30 days and £19.54m

is debt with the CCG's for shared care, Better Care Pooled Fund, continuing care and free nursing care. The overall debt with the CCGs has decreased by £4.33m in February 22.

- 3.5 Secured debts amount to £10.72m at 28 February 22. Within this total £3.898m relates to estate finalisation where the client has died, and the estate is in the hands of the executors.
- 3.6 **Debt write-offs:** In accordance with Financial Regulations and Financial Procedures, Cabinet is required to approve the write-off of debts over £10,000. The Executive Director of Finance and Commercial Services approves the write-off of all debts up to £10,000.
- 3.7 Service departments are responsible for funding their debt write-offs. Before writing off any debt all appropriate credit control procedures are followed.
- 3.8 For the period 1 April 2021 to 28 February 22, 1637 debts less than £10,000 were approved to be written off following approval from the Executive Director of Finance and Commercial Services. These debts totalled £595,081.63, the majority of which are individual debts below £500 for which no further recourse for debt recovery is available .
- 3.9 Of the £595k debts written off 26 debts were over £500, totalling £53,373.24. No debts over £10,000 have been approved for write-off since 1 April 2021.

Appendix 3: 2021-22 Capital Finance Monitoring Report

Report by the Executive Director of Finance and Commercial Services

1 Capital Programme 2021-25

- 1.1 On 22 February 2021, the County Council agreed a 2021-22 capital programme of £281.594m with a further £256.066m allocated to future years', giving a total of £537.660m.
- 1.2 Additional re-profiling from 2020-21 resulted in an overall capital programme at 1 April 2021 of £661m. Further in-year adjustments have resulted in the capital programme shown below:

Table 1: Capital Programme budget

	2021-22 budget	Future years
	£m	£m
New schemes approved February 2021	33.687	68.781
Previously approved schemes brought forward	247.907	187.285
Totals in 2021-25+ Budget Book (total £537.660m)	281.594	256.066
Schemes re-profiled after budget setting	95.379	
New schemes approved after budget setting	1.249	
Other adjustments after budget setting including new grants	20.489	6.363
Revised opening capital programme (total £661.140m)	398.711	262.429
Re-profiling since start of year	-191.635	191.635
Norwich Western Link (approved 7 th June 21)	12.296	174.544
Other movements including new grants and approved schemes	76.266	118.591
Total capital programme budgets (total £1,042.836)	295.637	747.198

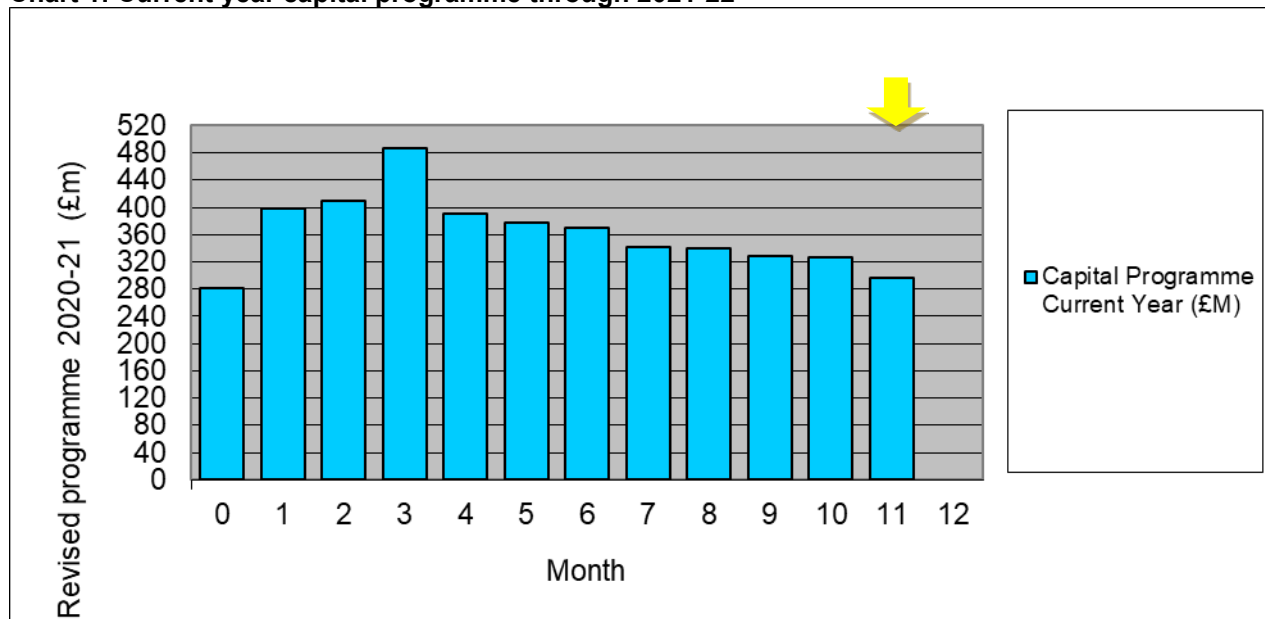
Note: this table and the tables below contain rounding differences

- 1.3 The total capital programme budget has increased by £91.051m compared to P10 (£951.785) due to:
- £90.735m uplift in future years Capital Programme following the approval of the 2022-23 Capital Strategy Paper at full Council on 21 February 2022
 - £0.237m revenue contributions from schools and Department of Education grants to school-based capital projects
 - £0.1m uplift in SiF contribution to Technology Improvements
 - Other minor adjustments to various project budgets totalling a £0.022m reduction in budget to reflect year to date spend and external contributions
- 1.4 The on-going review of forecasts has resulted in further slippage of £31.344m in budgets to future years from 2021-22 budget bringing the total budget reprofiled this year to £191.635m. The full breakdown of these movements in capital budget are available in Capital Annex 1 below.

Changes to the Capital Programme

- 1.5 The following chart shows changes to the 2021-22 capital programme through the year.

Chart 1: Current year capital programme through 2021-22



- 1.6 Month "0" shows the 2021-22 capital programme at the time of budget approval, with schemes reprofiled after budget setting shown in month 1, followed by the most up to date programme. The current year programme will change as additional funding is secured, and when schemes are re-profiled to future years as timing becomes more certain.

- 1.7 The current year's capital budget is as follows:

Table 2: Service capital budgets and movements 2021-22

Service	Opening program me	Previous report	Reprofiling since previous report	Other Changes since previous report	2021-22 latest Capital Budget
	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m
Children's Services	133.879	-67.782	-3.209	0.237	63.126
Adult Social Care	14.888	0.918	-0.120	0.000	15.022
Community & Environmental Services	162.948	-0.480	-24.469	-0.022	147.977
Finance & Commercial Services	86.914	-4.769	-2.883	0.100	79.363
Strategy & Governance	0.082	0.068	0.000	0.000	0.150
Total	398.711	-72.045	-31.344	0.315	295.637
		326.666		-27.864	

Note: this table may contain rounding differences.

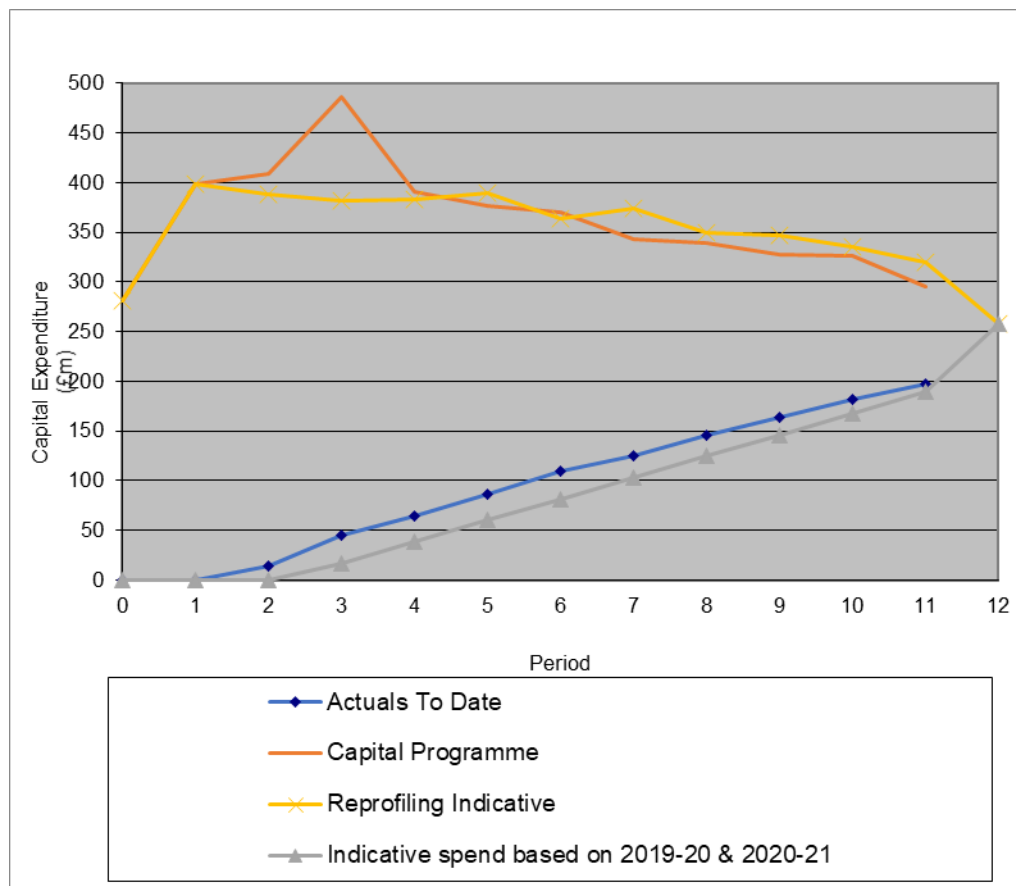
- 1.8 The revised programme for future years (2022-23 to 2024-25 and beyond) is as follows:

Table 3: Capital programme future years 2022+

Service	Previously reported future programme	Reprofil ng since previous report	Other Changes since previous report	2022+ Future Capital Budget
	£m	£m	£m	£m
Children's Services	199.946	3.209	0.008	203.163
Adult Social Care	56.963	0.784	10.600	68.346
Community & Environmental Services	323.407	24.469	37.374	385.250
Finance & Commercial Services	44.521	2.883	42.753	90.157
Strategy & Governance	0.282	0.000	0.000	0.282
Total	625.120	31.344	90.735	747.198

Note: this table contains rounding differences

- 1.9 The graph below shows the movement on the current year capital budget and year to date capital expenditure:



The graph shows that actual year to date capital spend is ahead of the opening forecast, which was based on the opening capital programme and an indicative calculation based on previous years' expenditure. It also shows that budgets are being re-profiled to future years as the progress on projects becomes clearer. As a

result, capital expenditure of approximately £257.838m is expected to take place in 2021-22.

2 Financing the capital programme

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

Table 4: Financing of the capital programme

Funding stream	2021-22 Programme	Future Years Forecast
	£m	£m
Prudential Borrowing	140.333	483.328
Use of Capital Receipts	1.000	
Revenue & Reserves	0.673	-
<i>Grants and Contributions:</i>		
DfE	27.446	48.736
DfT	88.965	181.668
DoH	9.216	0.309
MHCLG	0.139	-
DCMS	5.175	-
DEFRA	2.000	-
Developer Contributions	8.882	24.022
Other Local Authorities	0.670	0.036
Local Enterprise Partnership	0.804	
Community Infrastructure Levy	2.972	2.968
National Lottery	4.638	3.182
Commercial Contributions	1.990	2.500
Business rates pool fund		
Other	0.734	0.452
Total capital programme	295.637	747.198

Note: this table may contain rounding differences

- 2.2 For the purposes of the table above, it is assumed that all capital receipts will be applied directly to the re-payment of debt and transformation projects, rather than being applied to fund capital expenditure. Any proposals to utilise capital receipts to fund in-year capital expenditure are recommended to Cabinet for approval (see section 3 below)
- 2.3 Developer contributions are funding held in relation to planning applications. Section 106 (Town and Country Planning Act 1990) contributions are held in relation to specific projects: primarily schools, with smaller amounts for libraries and highways. The majority of highways developer contributions are a result of section 278 agreements (Highways Act 1980).

3 Capital Receipts

- 3.1 The Council's property portfolio is constantly reviewed to ensure assets are only held where necessary so that capital receipts or rental income can be generated. This in turn reduces revenue costs of the operational property portfolio.
- 3.2 The capital programme, approved in February 2021, gave the best estimate at that time of the value of properties available for disposal in the four years to 2024-25, totalling £20.4m.

Table 5a: Disposals capital programme forecast

Financial Year	Property sales forecast £m
2021-22	10.6
2022-23	5.7
2023-24	3.9
2024-25	0.2
	20.4

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

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

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

Capital receipts 2021-22	£m
Capital receipts reserve brought forward	6.449
Loan repayments – subsidiaries forecast for year	0.787
Loan repayments – LIF loan repayments to date	0.358
Capital receipts to date	
Sale of Hopton Land to Repton	2.862
Other Capital receipts in year	2.932
Capital Receipts forecasted for asset disposals subject to contract	1.792
Secured capital receipts to date	15.180
Potential current year farms sales	-
Potential current year non-farms sales	-
Potential development property sales	-
Potential capital receipts	-
Forecast available capital receipts	15.180
Forecast use of capital receipts	
Budget 2021-22 to repay debt	2.000
Maximum flexible use of capital receipts to support transformation costs	3.000
To fund short-life assets – IT and VPE	5.000
Norwich Western Link Reserve	5.061
Total forecast use of capital receipts	15.061

- 3.4 As can be seen from this table, enough capital receipts have been secured to support the approved 2021-22 revenue budget.

- 3.5 Further sales will contribute to the capital receipts reserve which can be used to reduce the external borrowing requirement, fund debt repayments, flexible use of capital receipts or to directly fund capital expenditure, thereby reducing the Capital Funding Requirement (CFR).
- 3.6 On 10 February 2021, the DLUHC announced that the flexibility granted to local authorities to utilise capital receipts to support transformation costs has been extended for a further 3 years. Table 5b includes £3m earmarked for this in 2021-22- £1m to ASC and £2m to Children's Services. The £1m ASC Transformation has been drawn down and added to the capital programme in P10.

4 New capital budget proposals

- 4.1 The additions to the capital budget for February 2022 include the following:
- £0.237m schools revenue contributions to the Schools Capital programmes partially offset by adjustments from DfE
 - £0.100 SiF Internal funding revenue contributions received for the Technology Improvement project
- 4.2 The breakdown of the sources of funding is set out below in Capital Annex 1.

Capital Annex 1 - changes to capital programme since last Cabinet

Service	Project	Funding Type	2021-22 Change (£m)	2021-22 REPROFILE	22-23+ Change (£m)	22-23+ REPROFILE	Reason
Adult Social Care							
SC8154	Oak Lodge, Attleborough	NCC Borrowing		-0.120		0.120	Reprofiled to cover in year expenditure
SC8153	ICES equipment	NCC Borrowing			8.100		New Approval 22-23+
SC8169	Assitive Equipment	NCC Borrowing			2.500		New Approval 22-23+
SC8173	NCC.NCTB Project A	Borrowing and Capital Receipts		-0.090		0.090	Reprofiled to 22-23
SC8172	OP Estate Transformation (Norse Care)	Borrowing and Capital Receipts		-0.343		0.343	Reprofiled to 22-23
SC8139	Winterbourne Project	DoH		-0.136		0.136	Reprofiled to 22-23
SC8174	NCC.NCTB Project B	Borrowing and Capital Receipts		-0.033		0.033	Reprofiled to 22-23
SC8171	NFS Laptops	Borrowing and Capital Receipts		-0.061		0.061	Reprofiled to 22-23
Total Adult Care			0.000	-0.784	10.600	0.784	
Children's Services							
ECAPAA	School based projects	Internal	0.358				Schools revenue contributions to capital
ECAPFM	DFC	DfC - grant	-0.124		0.008		Schools contribution to refresh + contributions to ECAPFM from VA schools
			0.003				
EC4344	Fen Rivers Ph2, former St Edmunds	NCC Borrowing		0.090		-0.090	Funding moved back to cover in year exp
EC4348	Fakenham New SEN	NCC Borrowing		-3.611		3.611	Reprofile as per cost report
		Basic need Grant		-0.467		0.467	Reprofile as per cost report
EC4596	AC - Gayton Primary	Basic need Grant		-0.495		0.495	Reprofiled as per latest cost report
EC4822	Condition Funding	Capital Maintenance Grant		0.729		-0.729	Reprofile to cover CPG allocations
EC4806	FN-St Michaels, Aylsham - Additional classrooms	S106 - Dev contributions		0.436		-0.436	Reprofile to cover in year expenditure
EC4882	CM - Silfield New Primary	S106 - Dev contributions		0.110		-0.110	Reprofile to cover in year expenditure
Total Children's Services			0.237	-3.209	0.008	3.209	

Service	Project	Funding Type	2021-22 Change (£m)	2021-22 REPROFILE	22-23+ Change (£m)	22-23+ REPROFILE	Reason
Adult Education							
LA9007	Wensum Lodge Development	NCC Borrowing			4.500		New Approval 22-23+
Better Broadband							
	Better Broadband for Norfolk	External Grant		-2.500		2.500	Reprofile to 22-23
Economic Development							
PU2918	GY O&M Campus	NCC Borrowing		1.212		-1.212	Move back to cover in year costs
PU2916	Gt Yarmouth Energy Park	NCC Borrowing		-0.917		0.917	Reprofile to 22/23+
ETD GRT							
PQ2014	Capital Site Improvements	NCC Borrowing			2.500		New Approval 22-23+
ETD - Other							
PQ7020	Planning Service Advice	NCC Borrowing		-0.213		0.213	Reprofile to 22/23+
CTS002	Trading Standards	NCC Borrowing		-0.025		0.025	Reprofile to 22/23+
CTS003	T Stds Robotic Mass Comparator	NCC Borrowing			0.135	0.000	New Approval 22-23+
RO1030	NRO 2050 Vision	NCC Borrowing		-0.080		0.080	Reprofile to 22/23+
RO1020	Capital Costs: Collection Management	NCC Borrowing		-0.088		0.088	Reprofile to 22/23+
RO1010	Accommodation Longevity	NCC Borrowing		-0.161		0.161	Reprofile to 22/23+
RO2000	NRO Metadata Migration Project	NCC Borrowing		-0.012		0.012	Reprofile to 22/23+
ETD Waste							
PQ3043	North Walsham Recycling Centre	NCC Borrowing			2.910		New Approval 22-23+
PQ3002	KINGS LYNN HWRC IMPROVE	NCC Borrowing		-0.085		0.085	Reprofile to 22/23+
Fire							
CF0208	Real Fire Traing Unit	NCC Borrowing			0.036		New Approval 22-23+
CF0397	Fire Leased Vehicles	NCC Borrowing			0.523		New Approval 22-23+
CF0463	Fire One Store	NCC Borrowing			0.871		New Approval 22-23+
CF0506	Fire vehicle replacement program.	NCC Borrowing			19.960		New Approval 22-23+
CF0507	Critical equipt replacement program.	NCC Borrowing			0.140		New Approval 22-23+
CF0399	Dereham Fs Phase 2 improvements	NCC Borrowing		-0.009		0.009	Reprofile to 22/23+
CF0392	Swaffham FS Area Office Accommodation	NCC Borrowing		-0.001		0.001	Reprofile to 22/23+
CF0390	Fire Portable cabin/office	NCC Borrowing		-0.017		0.017	Reprofile to 22/23+
CF0221	Equalities Improvements to on call fire stations	NCC Borrowing		-0.031		0.031	Reprofile to 22/23+
CF0208	Real Fire Traing Unit	NCC Borrowing		-0.001		0.001	Reprofile to 22/23+
CF0507	Critical equipt replacement program.	NCC Borrowing		-0.098		0.098	Reprofile to 22/23+
Highways							
	Drainage Improvement schemes	NCC Borrowing			1.500		New Approval 22-23+
	Highways Depot improvements	NCC Borrowing			0.150		New Approval 22-23+
PAA003	Norwich Transforming cities	NCC Borrowing		-0.440		0.440	Reprofile to 22-23+
PN9999	Capital pot	NCC Borrowing		-0.293		0.293	Reprofile to 22-23+
PK1002	Norwich Western Link	DfT Block		2.272		-2.272	Move funds back to cover in year expected spend
PKA018	Gt Yarm 3rd River Xing	DfT Block		-17.142		17.142	Reprofile into 22/23
PFA052	Nch City Centre E-bound through-traffic reduction	DfT Other		-2.667		2.667	Reprofile into 22/23
	Various	DfT		-1.995		1.995	Adj for various projects that are now projecting a lower spend in year
PFA042	Recycling the Railways	Developer cont		-0.380		0.380	Budget Adjustment
	Various	External		-0.250		0.250	Budget Adjustment
Environment							
PQ7015	Jubilee Trails	NCC Borrowing			0.900		New Approval 22-23+
Libraries							
LL1037	Library Book Stock	S106 Developer contributions		-0.350		0.350	Reprofile to 22/23+
	Various	S106 Developer contributions	-0.006	-0.097		0.097	Reprofiling across a number of Library projects
	Various	S106 Developer contributions	-0.016				Small reduction in budget across several projects
LL1059	Libraries - Community Hub Programme	NCC Borrowing			3.000		New Approval 22-23+
Museums							
MM0559	GFW Environmental Landscape Mgmt project	NCC Borrowing			0.249		New Approval 22-23+
MM0552	Gressenhall Playground	NCC Borrowing		-0.020		0.020	Reprofile to 22/23+
MM0546	Norwich Castle Critical M&E Services	NCC Borrowing		-0.060		0.060	Reprofile to 22/23+
MM0553	Gateway to Medieval England Project Management	NCC Borrowing		-0.020		0.020	Reprofile to 22/23+
Total CES			-0.022	-24.469	37.374	24.469	

Service	Project	Funding Type	2021-22 Change (£m)	2021-22 REPROFILE	22-23+ Change (£m)	22-23+ REPROFILE	Reason
Adult Education							
LA9007	Wensum Lodge Development	NCC Borrowing			4.500		New Approval 22-23+
Better Broadband							
	Better Broadband for Norfolk	External Grant		-2.500		2.500	Reprofile to 22-23
Economic Development							
PU2918	GY O&M Campus	NCC Borrowing		1.212		-1.212	Move back to cover in year costs
PU2916	Gt Yarmouth Energy Park	NCC Borrowing		-0.917		0.917	Reprofile to 22/23+
ETD GRT							
PQ2014	Capital Site Improvements	NCC Borrowing			2.500		New Approval 22-23+
ETD - Other							
PQ7020	Planning Service Advice	NCC Borrowing		-0.213		0.213	Reprofile to 22/23+
CTS002	Trading Standards	NCC Borrowing		-0.025		0.025	Reprofile to 22/23+
CTS003	T Stds Robotic Mass Comparator	NCC Borrowing			0.135	0.000	New Approval 22-23+
RO1030	NRO 2050 Vision	NCC Borrowing		-0.080		0.080	Reprofile to 22/23+
RO1020	Capital Costs: Collection Management	NCC Borrowing		-0.088		0.088	Reprofile to 22/23+
RO1010	Accommodation Longevity	NCC Borrowing		-0.161		0.161	Reprofile to 22/23+
RO2000	NRO Metadata Migration Project	NCC Borrowing		-0.012		0.012	Reprofile to 22/23+
ETD Waste							
PQ3043	North Walsham Recycling Centre	NCC Borrowing			2.910		New Approval 22-23+
PQ3002	KINGS LYNN HWRC IMPROVE	NCC Borrowing		-0.085		0.085	Reprofile to 22/23+
Fire							
CF0208	Real Fire Traing Unit	NCC Borrowing			0.036		New Approval 22-23+
CF0397	Fire Leased Vehicles	NCC Borrowing			0.523		New Approval 22-23+
CF0463	Fire One Store	NCC Borrowing			0.871		New Approval 22-23+
County Farms							
CB0120	County Farms Statutory Compliance	NCC Borrowing			0.477		New Approval 22-23+
CB0115	Asbestos Removal	NCC Borrowing		-0.051		0.051	Reprofile to 22/23+
CB0104	Septic Tank Replacement Schemes	NCC Borrowing		-0.227		0.227	Reprofile to 22/23+
CB0051	Land Drainage Schemes	NCC Borrowing		-0.157		0.157	Reprofile to 22/23+
CB0117	Burlingham - Harefen Farm - Extension to House	NCC Borrowing		-0.175		0.175	Reprofile to 22/23+
CB0112	Haddiscoe - Clinks Care Farm - Cattle Barn	NCC Borrowing		-0.059		0.059	Reprofile to 22/23+
CB0099	Mautby - Paston Fram - Concreting	NCC Borrowing		-0.141		0.141	Reprofile to 22/23+
CB0116	Mautby - Upper Wood Farm - Concreting	NCC Borrowing		-0.018		0.018	Reprofile to 22/23+
CB0107	Hilgay Fen & Ten Mile Bank - New Access Tank	NCC Borrowing		-0.035		0.035	Reprofile to 22/23+
CB0113	Nordelph - Neatmoor Hall - Fendale Fm - Concreting	NCC Borrowing		-0.035		0.035	Reprofile to 22/23+
CB0118	Outwell - Menham Farm - House Refurb & Extn	NCC Borrowing		-0.159		0.159	Reprofile to 22/23+
CB0110	Southery Brandon Creek - Farthing Fm - Concreting	NCC Borrowing		-0.071		0.071	Reprofile to 22/23+
CB0109	Stow & Marshland - White City Road - Roadway Impr	NCC Borrowing		-0.058		0.058	Reprofile to 22/23+
CB0106	Stow & Marshland - Newlings Farm - Repl Modular Hs	NCC Borrowing		-0.353		0.353	Reprofile to 22/23+
CB0102	Stow & Marshland - New Road Farm - House Refurb	NCC Borrowing		-0.159		0.159	Reprofile to 22/23+
CB0101	Stow & Marshland - Poplar Farm - House Refurb	NCC Borrowing		-0.059		0.059	Reprofile to 22/23+
CB0088	Stow - Newlings Farm - New GP Building	NCC Borrowing		-0.275		0.275	Reprofile to 22/23+
CB0089	Terrington - FH Fern Farm - New GP Building	NCC Borrowing		-0.385		0.385	Reprofile to 22/23+
CB0090	Terrington - GM Greenmarsh - New GP Building	NCC Borrowing		-0.407		0.407	Reprofile to 22/23+
CB0105	Welney - NCC Farm - Bungalow Refurbishment	NCC Borrowing		-0.059		0.059	Reprofile to 22/23+

			2021-22	2021-22	22-23+	22-23+	
Service	Project	Funding Type	Change (£m)	REPROFILE	Change (£m)	REPROFILE	Reason
Finance - ICT							
KT0120	ICT Transformation Project	NCC Borrowing			3.401		New Approval 22-23+
KT2613	Future Network Project	NCC Borrowing			2.098		New Approval 22-23+
KT2610	Technology Improvement	NCC Borrowing			8.471		New Approval 22-23+
KT2610	Technology Improvement	Sif Internal	0.100				Revenue contributions received
Capital Loans Facility							
CPM008	Repton Loan	NCC Borrowing			10.000		New Approval 22-23+
Finance							
KF0088	NCC - HR & Finance Systems Replacement	NCC Borrowing			5.840		New Approval 22-23+
Minor Works							
CA2202	DSBLD DISCRM ACT 00	NCC Borrowing			1.500		New Approval 22-23+
CA2270	Corporate Minor Works - Other (20/21)	NCC Borrowing			2.200		New Approval 22-23+
Property - Other							
CA2307	Shrublands Gorleston - Feasibility Study 2022-23	NCC Borrowing			0.611		New Approval 22-23+
CA2306	Elizabeth House Dereham - Office Alterations 22-23	NCC Borrowing			0.450		New Approval 22-23+
Property - Fire							
CA2305	Hethersett Fire Station improvements 2022-2023	NCC Borrowing			0.275		New Approval 22-23+
CA2294	Drill yard remedial works	NCC Borrowing			0.750		New Approval 22-23+
CA2259	Cap main fire estate	NCC Borrowing			1.550		New Approval 22-23+
Offices							
CA2266	Smarter working post COVID	NCC Borrowing			3.500		New Approval 22-23+
CA2304	Decarbonisation				1.300		
Offices - County Hall							
CA2255	CH refurb remedial works	NCC Borrowing			0.150		New Approval 22-23+
CA2268	Carparks resurfacing programme	NCC Borrowing			0.180		New Approval 22-23+
Total Finance			0.100	-2.883	42.753	2.883	
Total			0.315	-31.344	90.735	31.344	

Cabinet

Item No: 17

Report Title: Disposal, acquisition and exploitation of property

Date of Meeting: 4 April 2022

Responsible Cabinet Member: Councillor Greg Peck, Cabinet Member for Commercial Services & Asset Management

**Responsible Director: Simon George
Executive Director for Finance and Commercial Services**

Is this a Key Decision? No

If this is a Key Decision, date added to the Forward Plan of Key Decisions: n/a

Executive Summary/Introduction from Cabinet Member

Proposals in this report are aimed at supporting Norfolk County Council (NCC) 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.

One of the key actions within the Strategic Property Asset Management Framework is a sharp focus on maximising income through adoption of a more commercial approach to property.

As part of corporate management of property and a systematic approach to reviewing the use and future needs of property assets for service delivery there is a continued emphasis on minimising the extent of the property estate retained for operational purpose. However, on occasion there will be the requirement to acquire or reuse an individual property to support a service to delivers its aims.

By adopting a “single estate” approach within the County Council and sharing property assets with public sector partners through the One Public Estate programme, the Council is aiming to reduce net annual property expenditure.

Consideration is also given to the suitability of surplus property assets for reuse or redevelopment to meet specific service needs that could improve the quality of services for users, address other policy areas and/or improve financial efficiency for the County Council, for example, facilitating the supply of assisted living accommodation and other housing solutions for people requiring care, or undertaking re-development to support jobs and growth.

This means that as well as continuing with the rationalisation of the operational property estate to reduce the number of buildings used by the County Council, a more commercial approach is being adopted over the sale or redeployment of surplus property assets.

Recommendations:

Cabinet is asked:

- 1. To agree to the letting of the house at Council Farm, Church Road, Carleton Rode NR16 1RP (7023/100) to Tenant UJ on the terms agreed as detailed in Appendix A.**
- 2. To formally declare the land at Priory Nursery Yard (Part), Great Yarmouth (6009/194) surplus to County Council requirements and instruct the Director of Property to dispose of the property to the adjoining owner.**
- 3. To formally declare the land at Old Sunway, King's Lynn surplus to County Council requirements and instruct the Director of Property to dispose of the property to the adjoining owner. In the event of no agreement then the Director of Property is authorised to sell by auction or tender.**
- 4. To agree to the letting of the bungalow and field at Nelson Place, South Walsham Road. North Burlingham Lingwood and Burlingham NR13 4EH (5014/100) to Tenant AI on the terms agreed as detailed in Appendix A.**
- 5. To formally declare the Land at Wood Lane, Mautby (6013/104) surplus to County Council requirements and instruct the Director of Property to agree terms and dispose of the land to the adjoining owner. In the event of no agreement then the Director of Property is authorised to sell by auction or tender.**
- 6. To agree to the letting of the house at Rodwell Farm, Mill Lane Whissonsett NR20 5SR (3111/100) to Tenant ID and Partner JD on the terms agreed as detailed in Appendix A.**

1. Background and Purpose

- 1.1 The County Council actively manages its property portfolio in accordance with the Strategic Property Asset Management Framework 2021/22 - 2026/27. Property is held principally to support direct service delivery, support policy objectives, held for administrative purposes or to generate income. Property is acquired or disposed of as a reaction to changing service requirements, changing council policies or to improve the efficiency of the overall portfolio.
- 1.2 The County Council challenges the use of its property on an ongoing basis. In the event of a property asset becoming surplus to an individual service need there are internal officer led processes to ascertain whether other service areas have an unmet need that could be addressed by re-using the property asset for that service. This may lead to a change of use of individual properties, for example,

an office building may be adapted and reused for operational service delivery. Any proposals for retention are only agreed if supported by a robust business case showing the benefits to the County Council and are funded from approved budgets. This assessment will also consider whether a property could be offered at best consideration to public sector or third sector partners.

- 1.3 The above assessments are carried out by the Corporate Property Officer (the Director of Property) in consultation with the Corporate Property Strategy Group (CPSG). Once it is confirmed there is no further County Council requirement, Cabinet is asked to formally declare property assets surplus or re-designate for alternative purposes.
- 1.4 The Corporate Property Officer reviews options for maximising income from surplus properties usually by open market sale to obtain the best consideration possible. These will range from selling immediately on the open market (to the bidder making the best offer overall), enhancing the value prior to sale, strategic retention for a longer-term benefit through to direct development of the land and buildings and selling/letting the completed assets, in the expectation of enhanced income for the Council. Most disposals will be by way of tender or auction. In respect of auctions the contract of sale will be formed at the fall of the hammer and where this approach is selected the Corporate Property Officer will determine a reserve below which the property will not be sold. Most disposals will include overage/clawback provisions to enable the council to collect future uplifts in value created by alternative uses.
- 1.5 For properties to be sold immediately there is sometimes a need to consider selling directly to a specific purchaser instead of going to the open market. This may be justified where the third party is in a special purchaser situation and is willing to offer more than the assessed market value. Conversely this might be to a purchaser who is in a unique position of control for the unlocking of the full latent value of the County Council owned site (ransom situation). A direct sale without going to market can also be justified if there are specific service benefits or a special partnership relationship which is of strategic value with service/community benefits.
- 1.6 In making recommendations for direct sale without going to market, or direct property development, the Corporate Property Officer will consider risks, opportunities, service objectives, financial requirements and community benefits.
- 1.7 The recommendations for all disposals, acquisitions and exploitation of NCC property in this report follow detailed assessment by officers of the range of options available. The recommendation for each property is based on existing policies and strategies and judged to provide the best return to the County Council in financial terms and, where appropriate, taking account of community and economic benefits.

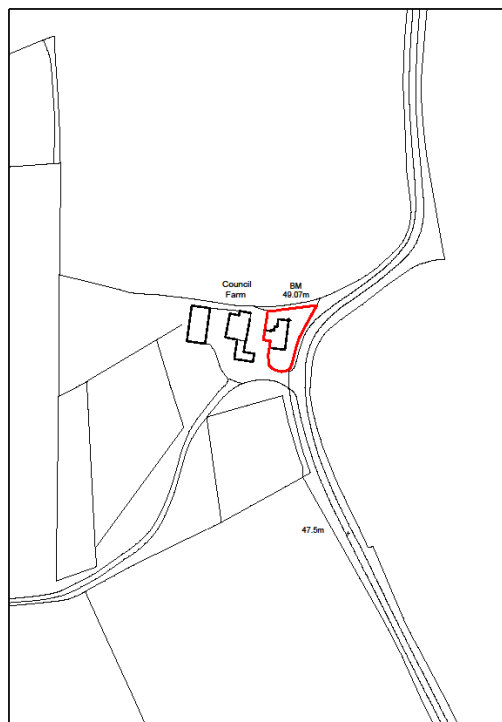
2. Proposal

Carleton Rode – House at Council Farm, Church Road NR16 1RP (7023/100)

2.1 The House at Council Farm, Church Road, Carleton Rode NR16 1RP (7023/100), shown edged red on the plan, is owned by NCC and is part of the County Farms estate. The site area is 0.14 acres (0.057 hectares).

2.2 The property was previously let with the adjoining farmland and buildings to Tenant AJ on a tenancy in accordance with the Agricultural Holdings Act 1986 until his death ended the tenancy. Tenancies under this act confer lifetime rights

2.3 Following discussions with the family of the former tenant it is proposed to let to the widow (Tenant UJ) the House at Council Farm on a 21 year and 1 day lease on terms as detailed in **Appendix A**. Tenant UJ is over the statutory pension age and with her husband had been on the County Farms Estate for over 50 years.



2.4 The Division Member has been informed of this proposal.

Great Yarmouth – Priory Nursery Yard (Part) (6009/194)

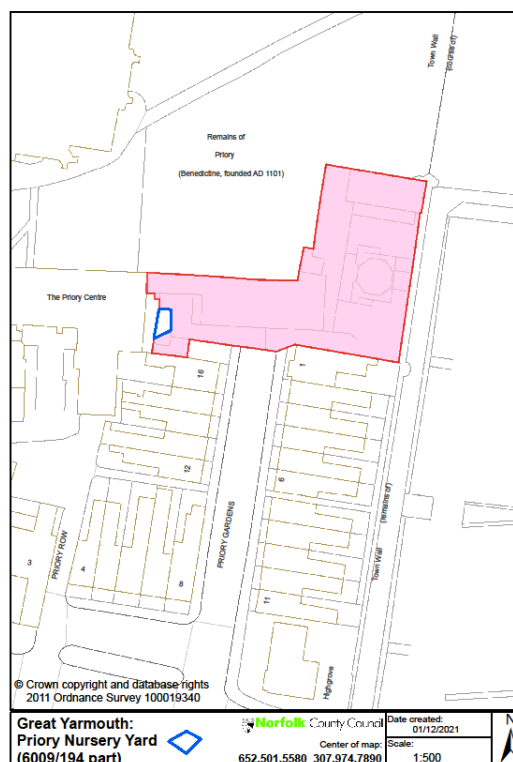
2.5 The land, edged blue on plan, is in the freehold ownership of NCC and amounts to 12m² in area.

2.6 The land was acquired as part of the adjacent site (shaded pink). The adjacent site was subsequently let to a nursery services provider; however, the land edged blue was excluded from the lease.

2.7 The adjoining property owner has expressed an interest in purchasing this small area of land.

2.8 Following a review by the Director of Property in consultation with CPSG it has been confirmed that the site is not required for NCC service use.

2.9 It is proposed to dispose of this land to the adjoining owner as it has been determined by the Director of Property that there is no viable market for this



disposal being effectively landlocked. The capital receipt will not be significant but the main advantage for the County Council is that it removes it from the portfolio.

2.10 The Division Member has been informed of this proposal.

King's Lynn – Land at Old Sunway

2.11 The land, edged red on plan, is in the freehold ownership of NCC. The land was acquired and utilised as part of a public highway improvement scheme in the early 1970's and is approximately 39m² in area.

2.12 This land has been identified as being surplus to highway use. A review has confirmed that the Crichel Down rules whereby the land is offered back to the previous owner do not apply in this case.

2.13 Following a review by the Director of Property in consultation with CPSG it has been confirmed that the site is not required for NCC service use.

2.14 The adjoining property owner is in the process of submitting a Stopping Up application to Highways (at the applicant's expense) and has expressed an interest in purchasing the land.

2.15 The Stopping Up, if made, will result in the Highway Rights being removed and enabling the adjoining owner to control parking on the land which is causing a hindrance to the access/egress to their property. It is proposed to dispose of this land to the adjoining owner as it has been determined by the Director of Property that there is no viable market for this disposal. The capital receipt will not be significant but the main advantage for the County Council is that it removes it from the portfolio and there will be no further liability for unforeseen costs.



2.16 The Division Member have been informed of this proposal.

Lingwood and Burlingham – Bungalow and field at Nelson Place, South Walsham Road. North Burlingham NR13 4EH (5014/100)

2.17 The Bungalow, yard and field (nr 266) at Nelson Place, South Walsham Road. North Burlingham NR13 4EH (5014/100), shown edged red on plan, is owned by NCC and is part of the County Farms estate and has an area of 4.95 hectares (12.23 acres).

2.18 The property is part of a wider holding of a total of 52.36 hectares (129.37 acres) currently let to Tenant AI on a tenancy in accordance with the Agricultural Holdings Act 1986. Tenancies under this act confer lifetime rights.

2.19 The original tenancy is due to expire this year on Tenant AI's 65th birth year. Following negotiation, the County Council has agreed with tenant AI to separately lease the bungalow, yard and field on a 21 year and 1 day lease on terms as detailed in **Appendix A**. It is noted that the size of field nr 266 may reduce due to possible land take for the A47 road improvements.

2.20 The farmland, 47.41 hectares (117.14 acres) will be relet to Tenant AI for a further two years to meet his pensionable age (67) on a farm business tenancy (FBT).



2.21 The Division Member have been informed of this proposal.

Mautby - Land at Wood Lane (6013/104)

2.22 The land, edged red on plan, is owned freehold by NCC and is part of the County Farms estate and has an area of and is approximately 256 m² in area.

2.23 The adjacent land to the south and west was previously sold but this residual part remained in County Council ownership. The track and the land to the east and north remain part of the County Farms estate.

2.24 The County Farms Team have reviewed this site and determined it is not required for operational use. Following a review by the Director of Property in consultation with CPSG it has been confirmed that the land is not required for NCC service use.

2.25 It is proposed to offer the freehold (at best consideration) to the adjoining owners. In the event this does not proceed it is intended to dispose of this property by open market sale through auction or by tender.



2.26 The Division Member have been informed of this proposal.

Whissonsett – House at Rodwell Farm, Mill Lane NR20 5SR (3111/100)

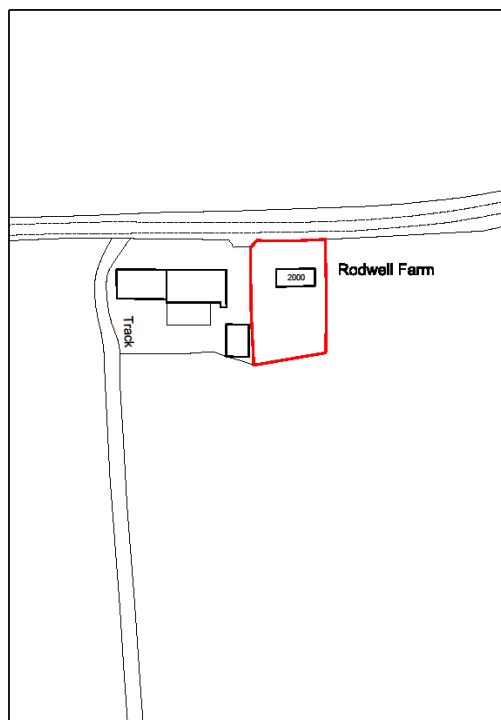
2.27 House at Rodwell Farm, Mill Lane NR20 5SR (3111/100), edged red on the plan, is owned by NCC and is part of the County Farms estate. The site area is 0.08 hectares (0.2 acres).

2.28 The property is currently let with the adjoining farmland and buildings to Tenant ID on a tenancy in accordance with the Agricultural Holdings Act 1986. Tenancies under this act confer lifetime rights.

2.29 The tenant has been unable to farm the land in his own right and has subsequently considered his options in respect of retirement. Following negotiation, the County Council has agreed in principle to the surrender of the whole holding from 10 October 2022 and the waiving of any notice periods. In return the Council will let to Tenant ID and partner JD the house and garden on a 21 year and 1 day lease on terms as detailed in **Appendix A**.

2.30 The adjacent land amounting to approximately 29.14 hectares (72 acres) will be advertised and let on a FBT in accordance with Agricultural Tenancies Act 1995.

2.31 The Division Member have been informed of this proposal.



2.32 **Appendix A** is exempt from publication as it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 1 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972. The public interest test has been applied and it is considered that the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information at this stage. The information is exempt from the Cabinet Report for the leases to Tenant UJ; Tenant ID and Partner JD; and Tenant ID as it relates to information referring to an individual.

3. Impact of the Proposal

3.1 Property disposals will provide capital receipts for the council to support the capital programme and hence service delivery. The County Council will apply the capital receipts to meet its priorities.

3.2 Lifetime rights under the Agricultural Holdings Act 1986 will be removed from retained land which will then be relet on Farm Business Tenancies under the Agricultural Tenancies Act 1995.

4. Evidence and Reasons for Decision

- 4.1 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.
- 4.2 In respect of the County Farms Estate lettings the existing tenants can retire with dignity.

5. Alternative Options

- 5.1 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.

6. Financial Implications

- 6.1 Disposals outlined in this report will provide the opportunity for capital receipts and savings in holding costs.

7. Resource Implications

- 7.1 **Staff:** Nil
- 7.2 **Property:** As described in the earlier parts of this report.
- 7.3 **IT:** Nil.

8. Other Implications

- 8.1 **Legal Implications:** For disposals and leases in the usual way the legal implications are around the parties agreeing to the terms of the agreement for each disposal and lease and entering a contract.
- 8.2 **Human Rights Implications:** No implications.
- 8.3 **Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA):** - No specific EqIA has been undertaken in respect of the disposal/leasing out of sites.
- 8.4 **Data Protection Impact Assessments (DPIA):** No data protection impact implications in respect of the disposal/leasing out of sites.
- 8.5 **Health and Safety implications (where appropriate):** No implications for the disposal/leasing out of sites.
- 8.6 **Sustainability implications (where appropriate):** Future possible redevelopment of disposed sites will require planning permission and therefore would be mindful of sustainability measures.

9. Risk Implications / Assessment

- 9.1 The risks around disposals/leases are around the non-agreement of terms. This risk is mitigated using experienced expert consultants.

10. Recommendations

- 10.1 Cabinet is asked to agree to the letting of the house at Council Farm, Church Road, Carleton Rode NR16 1RP (7023/100) to Tenant UJ on the terms agreed as detailed in **Appendix A**.
- 10.2 Cabinet is asked to formally declare the land at Priory Nursery Yard (Part), Great Yarmouth (6009/194) surplus to County Council requirements and instruct the Director of Property to dispose of the property to the adjoining owner.
- 10.3 Cabinet is asked to formally declare the land at Old Sunway, King's Lynn surplus to County Council requirements and instruct the Director of Property to dispose of the property to the adjoining owner. In the event of no agreement then the Director of Property is authorised to sell by auction or tender.
- 10.4 Cabinet is asked to agree to the letting of the bungalow and field at Nelson Place, South Walsham Road. North Burlingham Lingwood and Burlingham NR13 4EH (5014/100) to Tenant AI on the terms agreed as detailed in **Appendix A**.
- 10.5 Cabinet is asked to formally declare the Land at Wood Lane, Mautby (6013/104) surplus to County Council requirements and instruct the Director of Property to agree terms and dispose of the land to the adjoining owner. In the event of no agreement then the Director of Property is authorised to sell by auction or tender.
- 10.6 Cabinet is asked to agree to the letting of the house at Rodwell Farm, Mill Lane Whissonsett NR20 5SR (3111/100) to Tenant ID and Partner JD on the terms agreed as detailed in **Appendix A**.

Officer Contact

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