

Council



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31 January 2022

A meeting of the **Council** of North Norfolk District Council will be held in the Council Chamber - Council Offices on **Wednesday, 9 February 2022 at 6.00 pm.**

At the discretion of the Chairman, a short break will be taken after the meeting has been running for approximately one and a half hours

Members of the public who wish to ask a question or speak on an agenda item must notify Democratic Services 24 hours in advance of the meeting. Further information on the procedure for public speaking can be obtained from Democratic Services, Tel: 01263 516010, Email: emma.denny@north-norfolk.gov.uk. Please note that this meeting will be live-streamed: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCsShJeAVZMS0kSWcz-yEzq>

Anyone attending this meeting may take photographs, film or audio-record the proceedings and report on the meeting. Anyone wishing to do so should inform the Chairman. If you are a member of the public and you wish to speak on an item on the agenda, please be aware that you may be filmed or photographed.

Emma Denny
Democratic Services Manager

To: Mr T Adams, Ms P Bevan Jones, Mr D Birch, Mr H Blathwayt, Mr A Brown, Dr P Bütikofer, Mrs S Bütikofer, Mr C Cushing, Mr N Dixon, Mr P Fisher, Mrs A Fitch-Tillett, Mr T FitzPatrick, Mr V FitzPatrick, Mrs W Fredericks, Ms V Gay, Mrs P Grove-Jones, Mr G Hayman, Mr C Heinink, Mr P Heinrich, Dr V Holliday, Mr N Housden, Mr R Kershaw, Mr N Lloyd, Mr G Mancini-Boyle, Mr N Pearce, Mr S Penfold, Mrs G Perry-Warnes, Mr J Punchard, Mr J Rest, Mr E Seward, Miss L Shires, Mrs E Spagnola, Mrs J Stenton, Dr C Stockton, Mr M Taylor, Mr J Toye, Mr E Vardy, Mr A Varley, Ms L Withington and Mr A Yiasimi

All other Members of the Council for information.

Members of the Management Team, appropriate Officers, Press and Public



If you have any special requirements in order to attend this meeting, please let us know in advance

If you would like any document in large print, audio, Braille, alternative format or in a different language please contact us

A G E N D A

1. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

To receive apologies for absence, if any.

2. **MINUTES**

1 - 18

To confirm the minutes of the meeting of the Council held on 17 November 2021.

3. **ITEMS OF URGENT BUSINESS**

To determine any other items of business which the Chairman decides should be considered as a matter of urgency pursuant to Section 100B (4)(b) of the Local Government Act 1972.

4. **TO RECEIVE DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS FROM MEMBERS**

19 - 20

Members are asked at this stage to declare any interests that they may have in any of the following items on the agenda. The Code of Conduct for Members requires that declarations include the nature of the interest and whether it is a disclosable pecuniary interest (see attached guidance and flowchart)

5. **PUBLIC QUESTIONS AND STATEMENTS**

To consider any questions or statements received from members of the public.

6. **SIGNING OF THE ARMED FORCES COVENANT**

The Leader, Cllr S Butikofer, will sign the pledge on behalf of the Council to honour the Armed Forces Covenant and support the Armed Forces Community.

7. **CHAIRMAN'S COMMUNICATIONS**

To receive the Chairman's communications, if any.

8. **LEADER'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

To receive announcements from Cllr S Butikofer, Leader of the Council.

9. **RESIGNATION OF THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL AND ELECTION OF A NEW LEADER**

21 - 22

Summary: The Leader of the Council indicated her intention to step down from the office of Leader on 5 January 2022. This report is to note the resignation of the Leader and to consider the election of a new Leader of the Council.

Options considered: Councils in England may have one of three

executive models. North Norfolk District Council has a Strong Leader and Executive model. On the resignation of the Leader, a new Leader will need to be elected for the remainder of the term.

Conclusions: Following the resignation of the Leader, a new Leader of the Council will need to be elected.

Recommendations: **(i) That the Council notes and accepts the resignation of the Leader.**
(ii) That the Council then proceeds to elect a new Leader
(iii) That the Council notes any appointment by the new Leader of their Deputy and Cabinet, at the meeting, or to be received at such future time when those appointments are made.

Reasons for Recommendations: To enable a new Leader to be elected upon the resignation of the current Leader.

Cabinet Member(s)	Ward(s) affected - All
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Contact Officer, telephone number and email: Cara Jordan, Monitoring Officer & Assistant Director Finance, Assets, Legal Tel - 01263 516373; email - cara.jordan@north-norfolk.gov.uk

10. REVIEW OF POLITICAL BALANCE AND ALLOCATION OF SEATS TO COMMITTEES, SUB-COMMITTEES, WORKING PARTIES AND PANELS

23 - 28

Summary: Following a change to the membership of the political groups at North Norfolk District Council, the Council is required to review the allocation of seats on committees, sub committees and working parties to reflect the political balance of the Council, in accordance with Section 15 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 and regulations made thereunder.

Conclusions: Following a change in the political balance it is necessary to review the allocation of seats on committees, sub-committees, working parties and panels.

Recommendations: **1. That Council approves the revised political balance calculation as per**

section 2.6 of this report

2. That Council approves the allocation of seats to political groups as shown at Appendix A (to follow), taking into consideration any arrangements agreed by the Group Leaders
3. That delegation is given to the Group Leaders to make any appointments to committees, sub-committees, working parties & panels.

Contact Officer(s), telephone number and email:
Emma Denny, Democratic Services Manager, 01263 516010,
emma.denny@north-norfolk.gov.uk;

11. APPOINTMENTS TO COMMITTEES, SUB-COMMITTEES, WORKING PARTIES & PANELS

To approve any changes to appointments to committees, sub-committees, working parties and outside bodies as advised by the Group Leaders.

12. CREATION OF TWO SEPARATE LICENSING COMMITTEES

29 - 32

Summary: The Council presently has one licensing committee which deals with Licensing Act 2003 matters and non-Licensing Act matters. It is proposed that this Council creates two separate committees to ensure the lawfulness

Options considered: of decisions made

- (1) The creation of two committees
- (2) Retain the status quo

Conclusions: That two separate committees :
- A Licensing Committee (Premises and Gambling); and
- A Licensing Regulatory Committee (dealing with all other licensing matters)
be set up for the next municipal year, to deal with the Council's licensing functions. Further that both committees comprise the same membership.

Recommendations: **That there be two distinct committees relating to licensing matters: a statutory Licensing Committee ["The Licensing Committee (Premises and Gambling)"] and**

a regulatory licensing committee which deals with all other licensing functions [“The Licensing Regulatory Committee”]:

- (i) That the current single licensing committee ceases and that two licensing committees be formed for the next Annual Meeting of Council
- (ii) The first of these committees will deal with Licensing Act 2003 and Gambling Act 2005 matters and will be known as the Licensing Committee (Premises and Gambling).
- (iii) The second committee will deal with all the other licensing matters not detailed in (ii) above and will be known as the Licensing Regulatory Committee
- (iv) Both committees will contain the same members but will be distinct committees and may set up their own Sub-Committees
- (v) That the Monitoring Officer be authorised to update the Constitution to reflect this change.

Reasons for Recommendations: To protect the Council from risk of challenge of its decisions made by a licensing committee of this Council

Cabinet Member(s)	Ward(s) affected - All
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Contact Officer, telephone number and email: Cara Jordan, Assistant Director Finance, Assets, Legal Tel - 01263 516373; email - cara.jordan@north-norfolk.gov.uk

13. PORTFOLIO REPORTS

33 - 78

To receive reports from Cabinet Members on their portfolios.

Members are reminded that they may ask questions of the Cabinet Member on their reports and portfolio areas but should note that it is not a debate.

No member may ask more than one question plus a supplementary question, unless the time taken by members' questions does not exceed 30 minutes in total, in which case, second questions will be taken in the order that they are received (Constitution, Chapter 2, part 2, section 12.2)

Cabinet members (listed alphabetically)

Cllr A Fitch-Tillett – Coast
Cllr W Fredericks – Housing & Benefits
Cllr V Gay – Leisure, Culture & Wellbeing
Cllr R Kershaw – Sustainable Growth
Cllr N Lloyd – Environment
Cllr E Seward – Finance, Assets & Legal
Cllr L Shires – Organisational Resources
Cllr J Toye – Planning & Enforcement

14. RECOMMENDATIONS FROM CABINET 29 NOVEMBER 2021 79 - 116

The following recommendations to Council were agreed by Cabinet at the meeting held on 29th November 2021:

1. Public Convenience Investment Programme

Recommend to Full Council that further capital provision of £500,000 is allocated from capital receipts (to include any potential grant funding) to undertake improvements to facilities in Sheringham and North Walsham, to include provision of Changing Places facilities. These facilities will be delivered by the end of the 2022 calendar year

2. Treasury Management Half-Year Update 2021-2022

Recommends that Full Council approves the Treasury Management Half-Yearly Update 2021-2022

Overview & Scrutiny Committee supported the above recommendations at the meeting held on 8th December 2021.

15. RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 12 JANUARY 2022

To consider any recommendations from the Overview & Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 12th January.

Recommendations from the meeting held on 9th February will be considered by Full Council on 23rd February.

16. RECOMMENDATIONS FROM GOVERNANCE, RISK & AUDIT COMMITTEE 07 DECEMBER 2021 117 - 130

The following recommendation to Full Council was made at the meeting of the Governance, Risk & Audit Committee meeting held on 7th December 2021:

Agenda item 11: External Audit Procurement Exercise

RESOLVED to recommend to Council that NNDC opt-in to the PSAA joint procurement exercise, while also providing feedback to them on how the process could be improved.

17. DRAFT PROGRAMME OF MEETINGS 2022-2023

131 - 134

Summary: A draft Programme of Meetings for 2022-23 has been prepared and circulated for consultation and is attached at **Appendix A**.

Conclusions: Following review, the proposed draft Programme of Meetings 2022-23 follows the established cycle of meetings as closely as possible.

Recommendations: **That Members adopt the Programme of Meetings for 2022-23.**

Contact Officer, telephone number and email:

Alison Argent, Tel: 01263 516058, Email: alison.argent@north-norfolk.gov.uk

18. COMMUNITY GOVERNANCE REVIEWS

135 -
162

Summary: Following consultation with relevant stakeholders, final recommendations are now being made on the series of Community Governance Reviews to reflect changes to the boundaries of several parishes within the district; as well as the proposed grouping of the Hempton and Pudding Norton parishes which had previously been requested by the two Parish Councils. We have also run a recent consultation on whether or not a warding arrangement should be implemented within the parish of Raynham, should the boundary change with Helhoughton be implemented.

Conclusions: The report contained herewith details final recommendations relating to the series of Community Governance reviews to be considered by Full Council for implementation.

Recommendations: **That Full Council considers the community governance reviews and approves implementation.**

Reasons for Recommendations: These final recommendations are being made in order to address some historical administrative anomalies, reflect better, clearer boundaries which reflect the identities of those living within the areas concerned and establish sustainable community governance structures.

LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS AS REQUIRED BY LAW

(Papers relied on to write the report, which do not contain exempt information and which are not published elsewhere)

Appendix 1: Maps and summaries of proposals

Appendix 2: Sculthorpe/Fakenham proposals and implications

Appendix 3: Cromer/Roughton/Northrepps revised final recommendations and implications

Appendix 4: Raynham and Helhoughton proposed mapping and implications

Contact Officer, telephone number and email:

Rob Henry. X6327, robert.henry@north-norfolk.gov.uk

19. OPPOSITION BUSINESS

None Received.

20. QUESTIONS RECEIVED FROM MEMBERS

None Received.

21. NOTICE(S) OF MOTION

163 - 166

Please note that there is a **total time limit of 30 minutes** for this item – as set out in the Constitution, Chapter 2, paragraph 14.11

The following notices of motion have been received:

1. Health & Well-being of Coastal Communities

Proposed by Cllr V Gay, seconded by Cllr A Fitch-Tillett:

'In July 2021 the Chief Medical Officer for England published his Annual Report. It was entitled *Health in Coastal Communities*. In his report Professor Chris Whitty wrote that

Whilst the focus nationally over the summer may be directed towards visitors, with many opting to stay in one of the UK's many beautiful coastal towns, it is important to remember that the coast is also home to millions of people and that the health and wellbeing of these populations has been long neglected and overlooked.

The report draws attention to conditions which are familiar to us: an aging population; a difficulty in attracting health professionals; an infrequent and fragmented system of public transportation combined with a long journey to an acute hospital; an economy founded in low wages and seasonal work. The Chief Medical Officer's report encompasses all of these things and more.

The first recommendation of the report is for a cross-government national strategy to improve the health and well-being of coastal communities.

We propose therefore that North Norfolk District Council call upon the Rt Hon Sajid Javid MP as Secretary of State for Health and Social Care and the Rt Hon Michael Gove MP as Secretary of State for the

Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Community to work together to enact the recommendations arising from Professor Whitty's Annual Report.'

2. Motion for the Ocean

Proposed by Cllr A Fitch-Tillett, seconded by Cllr N Lloyd.

This Council declares an urgent need for Ocean Recovery.

We recognise that we need ocean recovery to meet our net zero carbon targets, and we need net zero carbon to recover our ocean.

This Council pledges to:

1. Report to Full Council within 12 months on the actions and projects that will begin an ocean recovery in North Norfolk
2. Consider ocean recovery in all strategic decisions, plans, budgets and approaches to decisions by the Council (particularly in planning, regeneration, skills and economic policy), aligning with climate change mitigation and adaptation requirements, and considering ocean-based solutions in our journey towards a carbon neutral and climate resilient future.
3. Promote closer working between North Norfolk District Council and the Marine Management Organisation and embed strong links between the Local Plan and the East Marine Plan to support ocean recovery.
4. Ensure that the Local Nature Recovery Strategy strives to support ocean recovery.
5. Work with partners locally and nationally to deliver increased sustainability in marine industries and develop a sustainable and equitable blue economy that delivers ocean recovery and local prosperity.
6. Grow ocean literacy and marine citizenship in North Norfolk including ensuring all pupils are given the opportunity to experience the ocean first-hand before leaving primary school - striving to include home-schooled children - and promote equitable access to the ocean through physical and digital experiences for all residents.
7. Create a link on the Council website to partners' updates on ocean recovery progress, signpost to ocean literacy development opportunities, and marine citizenship pledges.
8. Write to the Government asking them to put the ocean into net recovery by 2030

The full supporting document to this motion is attached separately.

22. EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

To pass the following resolution – if necessary:

“That under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following item(s) of business on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph(s) _ of Part 1 of Schedule 12A (as amended) to the Act.”

23. PRIVATE BUSINESS

COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of the Council held on Wednesday, 17 November 2021 in the Council Chamber - Council Offices at 6.00 pm

Members Present:

Ms P Bevan Jones	Mr D Birch
Mr H Blathwayt	Mr A Brown
Dr P Bütikofer	Mrs S Bütikofer
Mr C Cushing	Mr N Dixon
Mr P Fisher	Mrs A Fitch-Tillett
Mr T FitzPatrick	Mr V FitzPatrick
Ms V Gay	Mrs P Grove-Jones
Mr P Heinrich	Dr V Holliday
Mr R Kershaw	Mr N Lloyd
Mr G Mancini-Boyle	Mr N Pearce
Mr S Penfold	Mr J Rest
Mr E Seward	Miss L Shires
Mrs E Spagnola	Mrs J Stenton
Mr J Toyne	Mr E Vardy
Ms L Withington	

Also in attendance:

100 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies had been received from Cllrs T Adams, W Fredericks, G Hayman, C Heinink, N Housden, G Perry-Warnes, J Punchard, C Stockton, A Varley and A Yiasimi

101 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 22nd September were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

102 TO RECEIVE DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS FROM MEMBERS

None received.

103 ITEMS OF URGENT BUSINESS

None received.

104 CHAIRMAN'S COMMUNICATIONS

Cllr P Grove-Jones, the Vice-Chairman, was chairing the meeting in the absence of the Chairman, who was unwell. She provided a short update to Members on two civic events that she had recently attended. She said that she had been very proud to lead the ceremony for the laying of wreaths at the Council's poppy memorial and was pleased to see how many members of staff had attended. She said that the Chairman's civic reception at Fakenham racecourse in early October had been very enjoyable.

105 LEADER'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Leader said that as she had been absent following a family bereavement, she was going to hand over to the Deputy Leader, Cllr E Seward.

Cllr Seward began by updating Members on Greenbuild, which had been held remotely this year due to the pandemic. He said that a series of online talks and briefings on the theme of climate change had been run concurrently with COP 26. There had been many excellent speakers and over 600 participants. The sessions were still available to view online so this number would continue to increase. He thanked the Council's climate change team for being so innovative in their approach.

Cllr Seward then handed over the Cllr V Gay, Portfolio Holder for Leisure, to make an important announcement.

Cllr Gay said that she was delighted to announce that the Council's new leisure centre in Sheringham, the Reef would be opening on Tuesday 30th November. A short video of the new centre and its facilities was then played to members.

106 PUBLIC QUESTIONS AND STATEMENTS

The Chairman said that there were two statements from members of the public. She invited Mr D Russell to address members. Mr Russell said that he was a former elected member and former Chairman of the Council and he thanked members for allowing him to speak. He then spoke about two former councillors, Phillip Kemp and Des Hewitt, who had both recently passed away. He asked Members to join him in a minutes silence in their memory.

The Chairman thanked Mr Russell for attending the meeting. She then read out the following statement from Elaine Addison, which was in support of Agenda Item 16, Motion 2:

'I have been appalled by the reckless and near total disregard for water safety by the privatised water companies in England, and successive government failure to enforce investment in water infrastructure. Coupled with the disastrous cut to the funding of the Environment Agency by two-thirds since 2010, it seems the electorate are being taken for mugs, whilst water company shareholders are creaming off profits. To note that more than 70% of England's water industry is owned by foreign 'investors' Anglian Water is owned by a consortium of international investment funds. These include Colonial First State Global Asset Management (Australia) IFM Investors (Australia) and 3i (UK). Over 30% of the company is owned by the Canadian Pension Plan Investment Board, a pension fund owned by the Canadian state.

Of course, we need to protect rivers, the Norfolk Broads and coastal waters for recreational swimming, water sports and to protect the wildlife reliant on the clean environment. However, I was also interested to read a report in yesterday's Observer newspaper, and wondered how Anglian Water's approach is affecting our seafood industry in North Norfolk? It seems that e-coli in our drinking water has increased recently across the South East, which is suspected to be caused by a failure in the water cleaning process. This put simply is untreated sewage flowing into our rivers. We have also seen cases of norovirus increasing during the summer months, quite out of season. Whilst it is difficult to pinpoint the source of norovirus, it should be noted than norovirus can 'live' in water for months. This is an extremely unpleasant virus, but it could also be catastrophic for our seafood industry. The

Observer includes a report from an oyster company in the South East, stating that norovirus incidents had recently occurred after eating oysters. This resulted in Public Health England closing the company down, until they had put in place testing for norovirus and e-coli.

I certainly support NNDC's engagement with Anglian Water, but would also support NNDC in urging our government to tighten up restrictions and bring forward tougher legislation. I'm afraid the fines are cheaper than investment in infrastructure. Government agencies such as the EA, and DEFRA are no match for these companies in their present form, and privatised water companies have no incentive to go further than the absolute minimum required by law. Investment in infrastructure must be part of their service level agreement.

Having written to Duncan Baker MP several times on this matter, it seems that government are going to await water companies reports on future plans before they make any further decisions, kicking the can down the road, on such an important matter.

Thank you for your time and consideration.'

Cllr Seward thanked Ms Addison for her comments and said that he hoped that the issues she had raised would be addressed when the motion was debated later in the meeting.

107 APPOINTMENTS TO COMMITTEES, SUB-COMMITTEES, WORKING PARTIES AND OUTSIDE BODIES

The Group Leaders did not have any appointments to make at this time.

108 APPOINTMENT OF VICE-CHAIRMAN OF THE EMPLOYMENT & APPEALS COMMITTEE

The Chairman invited nomination for Vice-chairman of the Employment & Appeals Committee.

Cllr E Seward nominated Cllr A Fitch-Tillett. This was seconded by Cllr S Butikofer.

There being no other nominations, it was put to the vote and

RESOLVED that Cllr A Fitch-Tillett be elected as Vice-Chairman of the Employment & Appeals Committee.

Cllr Fitch-Tillett thanked members for their confidence in her.

109 PORTFOLIO REPORTS

The Chairman said that as full written reports were included in the agenda, Cabinet members were only expected to provide a short oral update on any matters that had occurred since the agenda was published. There being none, she invited members to ask questions.

1. Cllr C Cushing asked the Deputy Leader, Cllr Seward, for an update on the motion on social care which had been supported at the meeting of Full Council on 16th December 2020. He said that he had not heard about it since and wondered if any of the agreed actions had been implemented. Cllr Seward asked Cllr Gay, as Portfolio Holder for Wellbeing to respond. Cllr

Gay said that she had provided updates on this matter in previous portfolio holder reports. She had also provided a reply to Cllr Dixon on this. She said that it was a County Council led project and it was difficult for the District Council to make a contribution. That said, there had been some actions, including the introduction of the ' carers' employment scheme'. Regarding designated positions, she conformed that she was the lead member and that the Early Help & Prevention Manager was the lead officer. Cllr Cushing asked if a further update could be provided at the next meeting of Council. Cllr Gay agreed and said that she would also share the previous written updates with Cllr Cushing.

2. Cllr E Spagnola asked Cllr Fitch-Tillett, Portfolio Holder for Coast, if she could confirm when work would commence on the sea defences at Cromer. Cllr Fitch-Tillett replied that the Coastal team had been out to local liaison groups and the contract was now being finalised ahead of going out to tender in the new year. She said the intention was to start the work after the summer holiday season in 2022. She concluded by saying that as the materials were being brought in by barge, it was hoped that it would be a tourist attraction.
3. Cllr J Rest said he wished to put a question to Cllr Fredericks, Portfolio Holder for Housing. As she was not in attendance, he said that he would accept a written response. He referred to page 19 of the agenda and the section on affordable homes, commenting that the first two figures (71 and 92) and the second two (73 and 91) added up to 164. He asked for clarification on where the additional number came from as it was not clear.
4. Cllr S Penfold asked Cllr Seward (in the Portfolio Holder's absence) for clarification on the Council's position regarding shared ownership schemes. Cllr Seward replied that the Council welcomed and encouraged such schemes as a source of affordable housing and which was an effective means of enabling lower income households to purchase a home. He went onto say that the housing market was currently broken. Recently there had been a number of household situations where they had not been able to access affordable housing and they had not been eligible for a mortgage. Following discussions with the Council's housing officers, it became apparent that if a grant was provided to housing providers, then suitable homes could be provided in these particular cases. By converting some shared-ownership homes to affordable rental homes, some families which were facing homelessness were able to be accommodated. He concluded by saying that the Council remained supportive of shared ownership and it would continue to play a part in housing schemes that were coming forward for development in the next 12 months.
5. Cllr G Mancini-Boyle said he wished to ask Cllr N Lloyd, Portfolio Holder for Environment, a question. He referred to the recent COP26 summit and the decision to phase out fossil fuels and the Government grant scheme which the installation of alternative heating systems. He asked whether the Council would be actively encouraging developers to phase out the installation of gas boilers and would consideration also be given to using a green alternative for the running of the waste contract fleet of vehicles. Cllr Lloyd replied that the Council had been encouraging developers to switch to green heating systems for some time. He referenced the 350 houses being built by Hopkins Homes in North Walsham and said that they were all having ground source heat pumps installed. Regarding the waste collection fleet, Cllr Lloyd said that Serco had been trialling this and the outcome of this was awaited. He added that they were using electric vehicles now for grounds maintenance and the cleansing of public conveniences.
6. Cllr N Pearce asked Cllr R Kershaw for his views on a recent report in the

Eastern Daily Press, which stated that the naturalist Chris Packham had said that in order to help save the environment, NNDC should close its car parks to restrict vehicle movements. He said that not only would this impact heavily on the Council's income it would also deter visitors to the District. Cllr Kershaw replied that he did not believe this was what Chris Packham had said. He said that it was not an approach that the Council would be adopting.

7. Cllr Dr V Holliday asked Cllr Lloyd for an update on the installation of electric vehicle charging points (EVCP) at parish level. Cllr Lloyd replied that the Council had just completed installation of the final EVCP in North Walsham. He said that there was an action in the Corporate Plan to review car park EVCP provision in the wider areas of the District. He said that the Government had not been very forthcoming about providing support for this. The Council had been successful in obtaining an OLEV grant for the initial rollout but this was limited to populated areas. He added that there was the additional problem of the electricity supply not being able to support EVCPs in some areas. He concluded by saying that the Council was one of the first to instal EVCPs in its car parks. Cllr Dr Holliday thanked him for his comments and said that the Borough Council of Kings Lynn and West Norfolk were rolling out a scheme to some parishes where the cost was borne by other parties and perhaps consideration could be given to such an approach. Cllr Penfold informed Members that the North Norfolk Sustainable Communities Fund had received some applications for funding for EVCPs and consideration was still being given as to how to respond to these as it was anticipated that more would be coming forward.
8. Cllr A Brown asked Cllr Lloyd about the Council's Tree Planting Strategy and whether he welcomed its adoption. Cllr Lloyd replied that he was very pleased with the progress being made by the tree planting programme. It was hoped that 40,000 trees would be planted in the coming months – during the planting season. He thanked the officers for their hard work in supporting the project. The Chief Executive confirmed that the Tree Planting Strategy had been to Overview & Scrutiny Committee for pre-scrutiny and would be coming to Cabinet soon for formal adoption.

110 RECOMMENDATIONS FROM CABINET 04 OCTOBER 2021

1. Determination of Council Tax Discounts 2022/23

It was proposed by Cllr E Seward, seconded by Cllr R Kershaw and

RESOLVED

That under section 11A of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, and in accordance with the provisions of the Local Government Finance Act 2012 and other enabling powers one of the following applies:

Recommendation 1

- (a) The discounts for the year 2022/23 and beyond are set at the levels indicated in the table at paragraph 2.1.
- (b) The premium for long term empty

- properties (those that have been empty for a consecutive period longer than 24 months) is set at 100% of the Council Tax charge for that dwelling
- (c) The premium for long term empty properties (those that have been empty for a consecutive period longer than 60 months) is set at 200% of the Council Tax charge for that dwelling
 - (d) The premium for long term empty properties (those that have been empty for a consecutive period longer than 120 months) is set at 300% of the Council Tax charge for that dwelling
 - (e) To award a Council Tax Hardship Discount of 100% as per the policy attached at Appendix B, under the provisions section 13A of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 (as amended)
 - (f) To continue to award a local discount of 100% for eligible cases of care leavers under section 13A of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 (as amended).
 - (g) That an exception to the levy charges may be made by the Section 151 Officer in conjunction with the Portfolio holder for Finance, on advice of the Revenues Manager in the circumstances laid out in section 3.6 of this report.

Recommendation 2

- (a) those dwellings that are specifically identified under regulation 6 of the Council Tax (Prescribed Classes of Dwellings)(England) Regulations 2003 will retain the 50% discount and;
- (b) those dwellings described or geographically defined at Appendix A which in the reasonable opinion

of the Head of Finance and Asset Management are judged not to be structurally capable of occupation all year round and were built before the restrictions of seasonal usage were introduced by the Town and Country Planning Act 1947, will be entitled to a 35% discount.

In accordance with the relevant legislation these determinations shall be published in at least one newspaper circulating in North Norfolk before the end of the period of 21 days beginning with the date of the determinations.

111 RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 13TH OCTOBER AND 10TH NOVEMBER

Cllr N Dixon, Chairman of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee confirmed that there were no recommendations from the committee to Full Council.

112 APPROVAL OF THE STATEMENT OF LICENSING POLICY 2021-2026 AND THE STATEMENT OF PRINCIPLES UNDER THE GAMBLING ACT POLICY 2022-2025

Cllr N Lloyd, Portfolio Holder for Environmental Services, introduced this item. He explained that both policies were due for review in order to comply with statutory requirements. The revised documents took into account any recent legislative changes and case law. A six week period of consultation had been undertaken with statutory consultees, with only one response being received. The revised policies had been considered by the Licensing & Appeals Committee in September and the committee recommended adoption to Full Council.

It was proposed by Cllr N Lloyd, seconded by Cllr P Butikofer and

RESOLVED

To approve the Statement of Licensing Policy 2021-2026 and the Statement of Principles under the Gambling Act Policy 2022-2025

113 QUESTIONS RECEIVED FROM MEMBERS

None received.

114 OPPOSITION BUSINESS

The following item of Opposition Business had been proposed by Cllr N Dixon and seconded by Cllr C Cushing:

'There's mounting concern that this Council isn't doing enough in terms of supporting the growth of sustainable economic development across the District to retain and grow jobs within existing businesses and to attract inward investment, either for infrastructure or from the arrival of new businesses to areas with the greatest socioeconomic deprivation. Although at least two strands of its Corporate Plan should be capable of delivering new better paid and higher skill career opportunities

at scale this Administration is failing to deliver.

In particular, the District, isn't achieving the creation of new sustainable, high skill career jobs within existing, or new businesses, in proportion with housing growth nor is it attracting infrastructure investment to help support internal growth or to attract new businesses. There's very little evidence of multi-agency work with adjoining Districts, the County Council, the New Anglia LEP or direct with central government; over the past two years there's nothing significant to show it has the determination to strive and drive to deliver on these commitments.

In fact, there are good reasons to suggest the socioeconomic deprivation gap across the District is widening mostly because those at the bottom end are becoming more deprived and disadvantaged. When is this Administration going to recognise that situation and what is it going to do, other than drawing up plans devoid of effective action and tangible outcomes, to actually deliver beneficial change to local economies, improve social mobility and community wellbeing?

This motion calls on this Administration to redouble current efforts to:

1. Speak up for North Norfolk to win inward investment and create high skill career jobs on a scale comparable with our neighbouring Districts.
2. Work with partners and others agencies creatively so that North Norfolk isn't left out of the funding support streams that our neighbouring Councils seem to tap into.
3. Get alongside local businesses keen to grow and expand and cultivate the tentative enquiries from businesses seeking to migrate into North Norfolk.'

Cllr Dixon began by setting out the context behind the motion. He said that local economies were the wealth and revenue creators essential to sustaining the people and fabric of the District. He said that his experience was based on the east of the District but that it was likely to be equally true in relation to the west of the District. He said that while agriculture, tourism and the care sector made up a large part of the district's economy, there was a reliance on specialist businesses to create well paid, highly skilled work with career opportunities. It was these jobs which raised socio-economic standards, reduced deprivation and improved quality of life. He said that much had been done recently to improve education in schools and raise ambitions amongst the district's young people. However, many left the District to find quality, well paid jobs once their education was completed. If the Council was to meet the aspirations of such young people, more had to be done to retain specialist businesses and to help them grow. Some needed infrastructure improvements and others needed pump-priming to help them turn ambitious plans into reality. It was also necessary to convert more of the tentative enquiries from businesses wishing to relocate to North Norfolk from outside the area. By doing more, businesses would want to come to North Norfolk and career-minded young people would want to stay. Cllr Dixon the said that boosting business growth was a key strand of the corporate plan which underpinned the success of several other strands. He concluded by saying that he was bringing this matter forward now as it was past the mid-point of the administration. He said that several major housing schemes had been delivered and now the priorities needed to be balanced with investment and support being provided to quality, sustainable businesses. Otherwise the district's towns would become dormitories with high commuter carbon footprints and low socio-economic performance.

Cllr Cushing reserved his right to speak.

The Chairman then invited Cllr R Kershaw, Portfolio Holder for Sustainable Growth, to respond. Cllr Kershaw began by asking whether Cllr Dixon had considered the

changing of two words in the motion which he had proposed prior to the meeting. Cllr Dixon replied that he had but he felt that he could not accept them as they negated the meaning of the motion.

Cllr Kershaw said that over the previous two years the Council had worked with the Norfolk and Suffolk economic plan and improved the relationship with the New Anglia Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) and secured funding for the North Walsham Heritage Action Zone (HAZ), Fakenham infrastructure projects, funding to help with withdrawal of water abstraction licences in the Bure Valley and funding to help relocate agro-tech businesses. However, it was evident with the recent draft of the Norfolk and Suffolk economic plan, that growth and investment was being focussed around the Norwich, Ipswich, Cambridge triangle, in line with the levelling up agenda. This was the competition faced by the Council. It had to be acknowledged that the District faced constraints regarding digital and physical infrastructure, transport and training. The growth in offshore electricity production highlighted the shortage of deep harbours needed to sustain such operations. He went on to say that take-up of land at the Broadland Business Park had been slow and that manufacturing had been undermined by retail and food outlets were yet to take up properties. Cllr Kershaw said that throughout the pandemic, the Council had been engaged with a wide range of businesses and had not yet seen the empty shops in the District's town centres that many other areas such as Norwich had seen. In the 2020/21 Business Rates outturn report, North Norfolk had the third highest levy which indicated business growth. Cllr Kershaw said that the contact that the Council had had with businesses had shown that the future lay with climate change and sustainability. He said that over 25% of jobs in North Norfolk were in the tourism and hospitality sector and there was a growing need in the care and agricultural sectors. There was growth in the digital sector but it was impacted by the slow rollout of broadband and poor mobile connectivity. He concluded by saying that the Council had engaged with the hospitality sector to improve the offering and he outlined recent successes in this sector. Options were also being explored with several partners to look at improving eco-tourism in the District.

Cllr J Rest said that he would have liked to have seen some suggested projects listed within the motion. He added that the reference in recommendation 2 'to work with partners', could include other members of the Council. He also asked that if the main opposition group was ever in a position to take any such projects forward that they assessed any long term risk and longevity.

Cllr E Seward said that he supported the aspirations of the motion regarding economic growth but that they must be grounded in evidence and fact. Businesses needed customers to survive.

He then countered the suggestion that there was no evidence of multi-agency work with adjoining districts, saying that he had attended a Norfolk Leader's meeting earlier that year when Great Yarmouth submitted a bid for the regeneration of the town centre and NNDC had readily supported that bid. The Council recognised that the district would see the benefits of growth in neighbouring areas as it would be bringing jobs and residents nearby towns and villages.

In response to the assertion that there was little evidence of work with the New Anglia LEP, Cllr Seward said this wasn't true. The LEP had contributed £1.3m to the North Walsham HAZ scheme. Regarding the County Council, he said that the Council was working closely with them to support the infrastructure around the large housing scheme in Fakenham. There was also ongoing work at county level on a new bus interchange in North Walsham.

Cllr Seward said that in terms of the 'growing gap' and 'tangible outcomes', the Council had had to step up during the pandemic and provide support to businesses. Over £126m was distributed businesses was distributed quickly to 5000 small businesses. It was so successful that the Council was congratulated by a Government minister and received a national award. It was in recognition of this achievement that the Government awarded a further £760k recovery and resilience grant to the Council to help support small businesses as they came out of the pandemic.

Cllr Seward said that earlier that day he had attended a briefing with the Norfolk & Suffolk LEP on their economic plan. He reiterated Cllr Kershaw's earlier comments that North Norfolk needed more help to resist the pull towards the Norwich/Thetford corridor.

In conclusion, Cllr Seward said that this was an ongoing challenge and effort that didn't begin and end with one administration. He said that when he was elected in 2007 there were three empty sites in North Walsham that were designated for employment land. They remained empty today. This showed the struggle that had gone on for many years and more help was needed from Government to stop the hoarding of land.

Cllr S Penfold said that he had attended several meetings in the past with the Leader of the Opposition, where policy documents and statements had been pulled apart for not being clear and concise. Referencing phrases such as 'mounting concern', 'reasons to suggest' and 'get alongside', Cllr Penfold said that these were vague and not supported with any data or evidence. He felt the motion was poorly worded.

Cllr H Blathwayt referred to Cllr Dixon's ward of Hoveton, where the boat building industry was thriving. All of them currently had full order books.

Cllr L Shires said that she wanted to talk about some of the data. She said that compared to the England and Norfolk averages, North Norfolk had a higher percentage of residents in employment and a higher percentage in self-employment. The percentage of maths and science apprenticeships was also higher as was the figure for residents working over 45 hours a week. Cllr Shires said that there was an issue regarding the distance of residents from accessing further higher education. The number of residents within 30 minutes travel time was the lowest in Norfolk and this was the same for residents within 60 minutes of education facilities. This was a problem that must be addressed if young people were to get the education they needed to achieve the careers that they deserved.

Cllr Cushing then spoke as seconder of the motion. He said that his view hadn't been changed by the comments that he had heard. He still believed that the Administration wasn't doing enough. It was the role of the opposition group to challenge those in control. The Corporate Plan set out clearly the ambitions of the Administration and it was interesting to look at the actions relating to 'Boosting Business Growth'. Actions such as 'Growth Sites Delivery Strategy', 'develop a mechanism for providing support for business start ups' 'Economic Growth Strategy' and 'work with partners to identify skills deficiencies and monitor apprenticeships' were all listed as being delayed due to Covid.

He then spoke about the success of neighbouring councils where investment was much larger and said it was clear that they worked closely together, whilst North

Norfolk seemed to remain isolated and disengaged. He acknowledged the investment that was going to North Walsham but questioned that this was evident in other parts of the District such as Fakenham.

Cllr Cushing said that this was the third anniversary of the Liberal Democrat administration taking control of the Council and their achievements were poor in relation to other Councils – he referenced the failure to benefit from the Community Renewal Fund, which was extremely disappointing. In conclusion, he said that Covid was mentioned a lot as a reason for not taking action, yet other local authorities had achieved a lot and they did not use it as an excuse.

The Chairman then invited Cllr Dixon, as proposer of the motion, to close the debate. He said that this was a strategic motion and he felt that it was not appropriate to be drawn into the detail on some of the matters raised. He said that he did not underestimate the enormity of the task, adding that he recognised the efforts and results that were being achieved. It was also not about the distribution of government grants to businesses. It was about quality job creation and business growth in order to address the pockets of deprivation and the socio-economic problems that accompanied them. He asked members to support the motion.

When put to the vote, the recommendations were not supported, with 9 voting in favour and 22 against.

115 NOTICE(S) OF MOTION

Two Notices of Motion had been received. The Chairman said that she would take them in order:

The following Notice of Motion was proposed by Cllr J Rest, seconded by Cllr A Fitch-Tillett:

1. Remote meetings

'We have long called for the ability to be able to attend and vote on line. Whilst we will always want councillors to be able to meet in person, there needs to be the provision for some to be online, for example if they are vulnerable, have caring responsibilities or difficulties with transport. It is also in line with reducing carbon emissions to zero by 2030. Northern Ireland recently agreed in its parliament to allow councils to meet and vote remotely, Wales and Scotland already allow this. England is being left behind.

This Council mandates the Leader to write to the new Secretary of State, to call for parity across the UK and enable councillors in England to meet and vote on line as they see fit.

This Council re-investigates the feasibility of hosting hybrid meetings in one room, such as the Council Chamber.'

Cllr Rest began by saying that during the last six months there had been several occasions when, if hybrid meetings could have been held, members who were unable to attend in person could have taken part in the debate and voted. He referred to the Chairman and at least one other member who were not in attendance at Full Council as they were isolating due to Covid. He went on to say that over the last 18 months, members had all mastered how to participate effectively in remote meetings and Democratic Services had records to show that attendance had

increased considerably at such meetings. He said that training courses had also been extremely well attended when held remotely. Cllr Rest said that with the future of local government services at a critical juncture, it was not the time to go back to old ways. Members needed to retain the ability to make quick decisions, which was the trademark of local authorities during the pandemic.

Cllr A Fitch-Tillett, seconded the motion. She said that allowing members to attend meetings remotely supported the Council's ambition of become carbon neutral by 2030. It also reduced claims for travel expenses. Some members had to travel long distances to get to the Council offices and this took time that could be better used by joining meetings remotely from home.

Cllr E Seward said that he supported the motion. More flexibility was needed around the holding of meetings. Hybrid meetings could take place in Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales but not in England. He referred to a Cabinet member who was able to participate fully in a pre-Cabinet meeting yesterday but who could not attend the Council meeting to answer question or take part in the debate because she was isolating due to Covid.

Cllr J Toye said he was supportive because it greatly increased the engagement of elected members and the public.

Cllr E Spagnola said that as a mother of two disabled children, being able to attend remotely had made a huge difference as she did not have to find childcare, which could be challenging.

Cllr N Dixon acknowledged that the motion had many merits but unless it was bounded by specific grounds on why people weren't attending, it could be the 'thin end of the wedge' which could undermine the value of face to face meetings. He suggested that the Constitution Working Party should develop the proposals further and then bring them back to Full Council at a later date.

Cllr V FitzPatrick said that there was a lot in favour of online meetings but hybrid were different. They didn't fall into the category of remote or face to face and he had found that during hybrid meetings, those attending remotely were often ignored during discussions and less engaged. He felt that hybrid meetings were worse than both face to face and online meetings.

Cllr R Kershaw said that he supported the motion. He didn't agree with Cllr FitzPatrick. There had been some very successful hybrid meetings held in the Council Chamber recently. If they hadn't been hybrid then some of the attendees would have had to travel a long way to attend in person.

Cllr S Penfold said that he supported the motion and wanted to reassure Cllr Dixon that the second recommendation proposed 'reinvestigating the feasibility' which implied further exploratory work would be undertaken.

The Monitoring Officer advised members that the proposal to refer the matter to the Constitution Working Party was not feasible at the current time as there needed to be a change in the law to allow remote and hybrid meetings.

The Chief Executive reminded members that the Council could not lawfully hold meetings in the Chamber but the technology was in place to facilitate hybrid meetings.

Cllr Rest said that it was the issue of members debating and voting in a hybrid meeting that was the issue – not the technical set up. In response to Cllr Dixon's concerns about non-attendance, he said that the onus was on the Group Leaders to address such matters.

It was proposed by Cllr J Rest, seconded by Cllr A Fitch-Tillett and

RESOLVED that

This Council mandates the Leader to write to the new Secretary of State, to call for parity across the UK and enable councillors in England to meet and vote on line as they see fit.

This Council re-investigates the feasibility of hosting hybrid meetings in one room, such as the Council Chamber

9 members abstained.

2. Reduction of Sewage Discharges

The following motion was proposed by Cllr N Lloyd, seconded by Cllr E Withington:

The Council resolves to:

1. Request the Leader of the Council write to the Chief Executive of Anglia Water and seek the following information:
 - a) Report to the year-round figures for sewage discharges (including Combined sewage outfall) across the North Norfolk District Council area
 - b) Explain how this information shared with the public to help them make informed decisions as to water safety for recreational use
 - c) Explain what percentage of reporting of CSOs is live or from modelling?
 - d) Complete the process of identifying and classifying the performance (from both daily events and through extreme weather conditions) of CSOs in order to focus remedial action and investment across the district
 - e) Confirm which assets have been prioritised for investment and what plans are in place to reduce and prevent CSO events
 - f) Report on Anglian Water targets for reducing CSO events in the short term and longer Term
 - g) Report much money is being invested in infrastructure improvements in the area covered by North Norfolk District Council and what measures are being taking to ensure this infrastructure is climate resilient?
 - h) Explain what additional measures are being taken to reduce sewage discharges or other pollution incidents in those parts of the North Norfolk river systems including its canal and the coastal waters that lie within the area covered by North Norfolk District Council?
2. Request the Leader of the Council write to the Chair, Phillip Dunne MP, of the

Parliamentary Environmental Audit Select Committee stating :

- a) This Council is in agreement with the Government U turn on supporting the amendment which will place a new legal duty directly on water companies to progressively reduce the adverse impacts of storm overflow discharges and provide enforcement of the duty by the secretary of state, or OFWAT (the Water Services Regulation Authority).
 - b) This Council considers it vital that in addition to setting targets for CSO prevention, the government places a legal obligation on the water companies to classify CSO discharge outlets according to their condition and subsequent performance and produce action plans for infrastructure improvement since there is currently no legal obligation to do so.
3. The Council Overview and Scrutiny committee consider including periodic review of sewage water discharge events in North Norfolk on their agenda's by engaging with Anglia Water and asking them to report to NNDC on the progress and investments being made.

Cllr Lloyd introduced the motion. He explained that national news reports had recently revealed the shocking levels of sewage pollution that plagued England's rivers and coastal areas. Public outrage was growing as they saw pollution events occurring in many ecologically important areas many of which sustained high levels of biodiversity whilst also being important in terms of recreation, well-being and tourism.

In September this year the Government told wastewater plants in England they may be able to discharge effluent that had not been fully treated because of disruption caused by "supply chain failure". When he had tried to find data regarding the amount of sewage discharge, there was none available on the Anglian Water website. The Rivers Trust, however, had collected information and published it. Cllr Lloyd said that all he was looking for was greater transparency from the water companies. The Government did not place enough emphasis on the water companies to take responsibility for reporting or for cleaning up such discharges. This was despite them making £500bn since privatisation was introduced. He said it was not about being political it was about cleaning up the local area and protecting the blue flag beaches and chalk streams.

Cllr E Withington reserved to her right to speak.

Cllr C Cushing said that he wished to propose an amendment. He said that his group wanted to support it. He asked that words 'U turn' were removed from recommendation 2a and that recommendation 3 was amended as follows:

'Request that the Environmental Health Department engages with Anglian Water to ensure that sewerage water discharge events, affecting North Norfolk, are reported to NNDC, as they occur, together with details of action being taken to reduce and ultimately stop such events. This information is to be reported to Members at least annually to Full Council or to another forum or at a different frequency as appropriate.'

Cllr Lloyd replied that he was willing to remove 'u turn' but that he felt that it was the responsibility of the whole Council to embrace the issue not just the Environmental Health team and the vehicle for doing this was via Overview & Scrutiny Committee. He felt the amendment watered down the original proposition.

Cllr N Dixon, Chairman of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee said that he did not agree with Cllr Lloyd's comments. This was an executive function not a scrutiny issue. This should happen by dint of relationships at officer level and that the amendment went much further than the one proposed in the substantive motion. He said that the Council should be informed when such events occurred as there may be actions, in terms of mitigation, that should be taken. It wasn't effective to simply ask for periodic reviews of discharge events, this seemed too weak an approach. It was the role of Overview & Scrutiny Committee to ensure that the relationship between officers and an external agency was working effectively. He said that in principle there was cross-party support for the motion, it was just a question of how the reporting and work relating to it was undertaken.

The Chief Executive read out the terms of reference of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee to members. He said that the amendment and Cllr Dixon's subsequent comments, raised a question regarding previous reports to Overview & Scrutiny Committee regarding reporting from external partners and agencies – such as the East of England Ambulance Service and their response times. He felt it was a similar situation.

Cllr H Blathwayt said that he believed that the Overview & Scrutiny Committee was the right vehicle for this. These were not one-off events but regular, sometimes continuous discharge. He referred to Hoveton Great Broad and Knacker's Wood in Horning which had both been subject to foul water discharge. It was such an important issue that it could only be dealt with by the Overview & Scrutiny Committee on a regular basis.

Cllr N Pearce said that he believed that the amendment strengthened the original proposition by strengthening the interplay between officers and external partners.

The Leader, Cllr S Butikofer, said that she prided herself on working cross-party. She said that she would like to propose the following alternative wording that might resolve the issue:

'This Council requests that all sewage water discharge events are immediately reported to the Council's Environmental Health department and then consolidated into periodic reviews to be undertaken by the Overview & Scrutiny Committee. These reports should include a full review of all sewage water discharge events in North Norfolk and should require the Council and the Overview & Scrutiny to engage with Anglian Water and for them to report on the progress and investments being made.'

Cllr Cushing agreed to withdraw his amendment and for it to be replaced by Cllr Butikofer's amendment.

The amendment was proposed by Cllr Butikofer, seconded by Cllr Cushing and when put to the vote was supported unanimously.

The Chairman informed members that debate of the substantive motion would now commence.

Cllr E Withington, seconder of the motion, then spoke in support of it. She referred to the Duke of Wellington's amendment to the Environment Bill, which was supported by the water companies as they wanted the duty to reduce sewage discharge into the blue environment and that they wanted the target levels to be achieved and specific timescales to be set. So, rather than direct responsibility being placed on the water companies there was an indirect duty to mitigate the adverse impact of discharges. There was an enforcement system that had lost a lot of its capacity to inspect yet alone enforce. So, to request that Anglian Water engages with the Council and reports regularly to it, was a key step forward. She said that data on combined sewage outflow (CSO) for all year round was not currently available from Anglian Water and working with them on sharing this was crucial. Transparent, real time, all year round data was needed. Anglian Water was working towards this but it was the Council's responsibility to hold them to account. She concluded by saying that Anglian Water welcomed the motion and the opportunity to engage with the Council and provide ongoing accountability. They accepted that the Council needed to be confident about sewage outflow data and this motion was a key step in achieving this.

Cllr Lloyd, as proposer of the motion, spoke last. He said he was pleased to see that members had found middle ground on the issue.

It was proposed by Cllr N Lloyd, seconded by Cllr E Withington and

RESOLVED unanimously

1. Request the Leader of the Council write to the Chief Executive of Anglia Water and seek the following information:
 - a) Report to the year-round figures for sewage discharges (including Combined sewage outfall) across the North Norfolk District Council area
 - b) Explain how this information shared with the public to help them make informed decisions as to water safety for recreational use
 - c) Explain what percentage of reporting of CSOs is live or from modelling?
 - d) Complete the process of identifying and classifying the performance (from both daily events and through extreme weather conditions) of CSOs in order to focus remedial action and investment across the district
 - e) Confirm which assets have been prioritised for investment and what plans are in place to reduce and prevent CSO events
 - f) Report on Anglian Water targets for reducing CSO events in the short term and longer Term
 - g) Report much money is being invested in infrastructure improvements in the area covered by North Norfolk District Council and what measures are being taking to ensure this infrastructure is climate resilient?
 - h) Explain what additional measures are being taken to reduce sewage discharges or other pollution incidents in those parts of the North Norfolk river systems including its canal and the coastal waters that lie within the

area covered by North Norfolk District Council?

2. Request the Leader of the Council write to the Chair, Phillip Dunne MP, of the Parliamentary Environmental Audit Select Committee stating :
 - a) This Council is in agreement with the Government on supporting the amendment which will place a new legal duty directly on water companies to progressively reduce the adverse impacts of storm overflow discharges and provide enforcement of the duty by the secretary of state, or OFWAT (the Water Services Regulation Authority).
 - b) This Council considers it vital that in addition to setting targets for CSO prevention, the government places a legal obligation on the water companies to classify CSO discharge outlets according to their condition and subsequent performance and produce action plans for infrastructure improvement since there is currently no legal obligation to do so.
3. This Council requests that all sewage water discharge events are immediately reported to the Council's Environmental Health department and then consolidated into periodic reviews to be undertaken by the Overview & Scrutiny Committee. These reports should include a full review of all sewage water discharge events in North Norfolk and should require the Council and the Overview & Scrutiny to engage with Anglian Water and for them to report on the progress and investments being made

116 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

117 PRIVATE BUSINESS

The meeting ended at Time Not Specified.

Chairman

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Declarations of Interest at Meetings

When declaring an interest at a meeting, Members are asked to indicate whether their interest in the matter is pecuniary, or if the matter relates to, or affects a pecuniary interest they have, or if it is another type of interest Members are required to identify the nature of the interest and the agenda item to which it relates. In the case of other interests, the member may speak and vote. If it is a pecuniary interest, the member must withdraw from the meeting when it is discussed. If it affects or relates to a pecuniary interest the member has, they have the right to make representations to the meeting as a member of the public but must then withdraw from the meeting.

Have you declared the interest in the register of interests as a pecuniary interest? If Yes, you will need to withdraw from the room when it is discussed.

Does the interest directly:

1. Affect yours, or your spouse / partner's financial position?
2. Relate to the determining of any approval, consent, licence, permission or registration in relation to you or your spouse / partner?
3. Relate to a contract you, or your spouse / partner have with the Council
4. Affect land you or your spouse / partner own
5. Affect a company that you or your partner own, or have a shareholding in

If the answer is "yes" to any of the above, it is likely to be pecuniary.

Please refer to the guidance given on declaring pecuniary interests in the register of interest forms. If you have a pecuniary interest, you will need to inform the meeting and then withdraw from the room when it is discussed. If it has not been previously declared, you will also need to notify the Monitoring Officer within 28 days.

Does the interest indirectly affect or relate to any pecuniary interest you have already declared, or an interest you have identified at 1-5 above?

If yes, you need to inform the meeting. When it is discussed, you will have the right to make representations to the meeting as a member of the public, but must then withdraw from the meeting.

Is the interest not related to any of the above? If so, it is likely to be another interest. You will need to declare the interest, but may participate in discussion and voting on the item.

Have you made any statements or undertaken any actions that would indicate that you have a closed mind on a matter under discussion? If so, you may be predetermined on the issue; you will need to inform the meeting and when it is discussed, you will have the right to make representations to the meeting as a member of the public, but must then withdraw from the meeting.

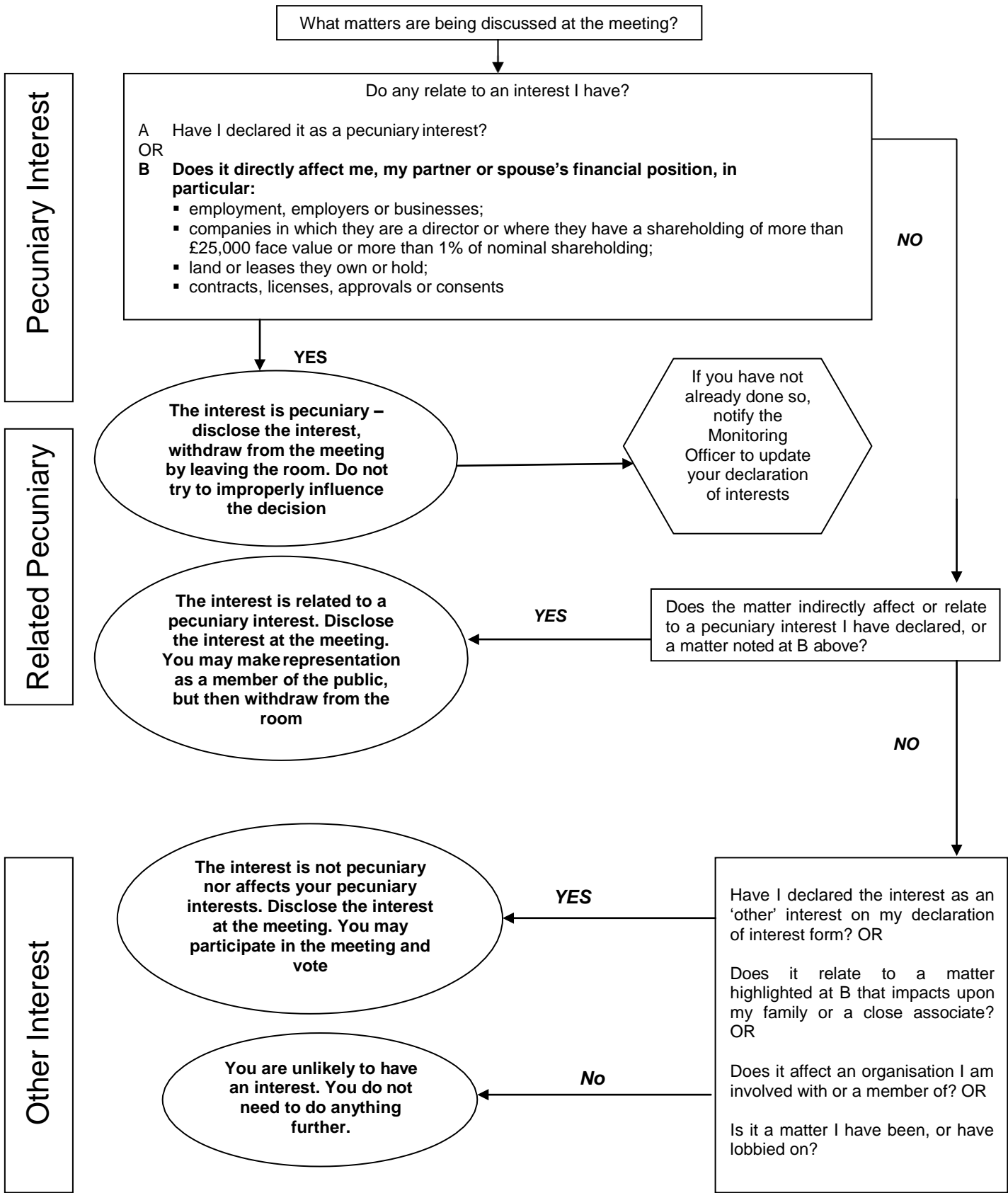
FOR GUIDANCE REFER TO THE FLOWCHART OVERLEAF

PLEASE REFER ANY QUERIES TO THE MONITORING OFFICER IN THE FIRST INSTANCE

DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MEMBERS SHOULD ALSO REFER TO THE PLANNING PROTOCOL

Declarations of Interest at Meetings

DECLARING INTERESTS FLOWCHART – QUESTIONS TO ASK YOURSELF



Resignation of the Leader of the Council and election of a new Leader

- Summary: The Leader of the Council indicated her intention to step down from the office of Leader on 5 January 2022. This report is to note the resignation of the Leader and to consider the election of a new Leader of the Council.
- Options considered: Councils in England may have one of three executive models. North Norfolk District Council has a Strong Leader and Executive model. On the resignation of the Leader, a new Leader will need to be elected for the remainder of the term.
- Conclusions: Following the resignation of the Leader, a new Leader of the Council will need to be elected.
- Recommendations: **(i) That the Council notes and accepts the resignation of the Leader.**
(ii) That the Council then proceeds to elect a new Leader
(iii) That the Council notes any appointment by the new Leader of their Deputy and Cabinet, at the meeting, or to be received at such future time when those appointments are made.
- Reasons for Recommendations: To enable a new Leader to be elected upon the resignation of the current Leader.

Cabinet Member(s)	Ward(s) affected - All
Contact Officer, telephone number and email: Cara Jordan, Monitoring Officer & Assistant Director Finance, Assets, Legal Tel - 01263 516373; email - cara.jordan@north-norfolk.gov.uk	

1. Introduction

1.1 Background

The Council's Leader made an announcement at the end of a meeting on 5 January 2022, that it was her intention to stand down from the office of Leader at North Norfolk District Council. Her resignation is expected to have been formally placed in writing to the Chief Executive prior to the meeting of Council. On noting her resignation, the Council will need to consider electing a new Leader, who in turn will need to make arrangements to appoint a deputy and Cabinet.

1.2 The Council's Constitution

The Council's Constitution sets out in Chapter 3, Part 1, Paragraph 3, that the Leader will be a Councillor elected to the position of Leader by the Council. This provision sets out that the Leader will hold office until, *inter alia*, he or she resigns from the office.

- 1.3 On the current Leader's resignation from office, she will need to cancel all her appointments from the executive, and a new Leader will need to be elected.
- 1.4 Under Chapter 3 Part 1 of the Constitution, the Cabinet is appointed by the Leader and will include the Deputy Leader. The Cabinet will comprise between two and ten members, including the Leader and Deputy Leader.

2. Corporate Plan Objectives

None specifically relevant

3. Financial and Resource Implications

There is no notable resource implication.

4. Legal Implications

The Council has a Leader and executive model. On the resignation of the current leader it will need to elect a new Leader in accordance with the requirements of 9C Local Government Act 2000.

5. Equality and Diversity

The considerations and recommendations have a remote or low relevance to the substance of the Equality Act.

6. Section 17 Crime and Disorder considerations

Not specifically relevant

7. Conclusion and Recommendations

- (i) That the Council notes and accepts the resignation of the Leader.**
- (ii) That the Council then proceeds to elect a new Leader**
- (iii) That the Council notes any appointment, by the new Leader, of their Deputy and Cabinet, at the meeting, or to be received at such future time when those appointments are made.**

REVIEW OF POLITICAL BALANCE AND ALLOCATION OF SEATS TO COMMITTEES, SUB-COMMITTEES, WORKING PARTIES AND PANELS

Summary: Following a change to the membership of the political groups at North Norfolk District Council, the Council is required to review the allocation of seats on committees, sub committees and working parties to reflect the political balance of the Council, in accordance with Section 15 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 and regulations made thereunder.

Conclusions: Following a change in the political balance it is necessary to review the allocation of seats on committees, sub-committees, working parties and panels.

- Recommendations:**
- 1. That Council approves the revised political balance calculation as per section 2.6 of this report**
 - 2. That Council approves the allocation of seats to political groups as shown at Appendix A (to follow), taking into consideration any arrangements agreed by the Group Leaders**
 - 3. That delegation is given to the Group Leaders to make any appointments to committees, sub-committees, working parties & panels.**

Contact Officer(s), telephone number and email: Emma Denny, Democratic Services Manager, 01263 516010, emma.denny@north-norfolk.gov.uk ;
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1. Introduction

1.1 Since the last review of the political balance of the Council in September 2021, there has been a change to the political make-up of the Council. As a result of this change, it is necessary to review the political balance again and determine the allocation of seats on committees to ensure that they reflect the revised balance.

1.2 Council's duty is to determine the allocation of seats to be filled by appointments by the authority, except the Cabinet. The purpose is to ensure that there is proportionality across all formal activities of the Council, reflecting the overall political composition. It affects all formally constituted committees, sub-committees, working parties and panels which discharge functions on behalf of the authority.

2. Background

2.1 In October 2021, a Liberal Democrat member resigned from the Council. On 2nd December 2021, a by-election was held and a Conservative member was

elected. This has resulted in the following change to the composition of the council: Liberal Democrats (25 members), Conservatives (10 members) Independent Group (4 members), Independent non-aligned (1)

2.2 The Local Government (Committees and Political Groups) Regulations 1990 (SI 1990/1553) state that ungrouped members are not entitled to committee seats and any seats given would have to be at the discretion of the majority group.

2.3 Therefore, for the purpose of the political balance calculations, the non-aligned member has been removed from the number of members entitled to committee seats, reducing the total to 39. The calculations are made on this basis and reflected in the accompanying table.

2.4 Section 15(1) of the Local Government & Housing Act 1989 requires the Council to review the representation of the different political groups on committees and sub-committees:

- at, or as soon as practicable after the Annual Meeting of the Council or,
- where notice is received of a change in the composition of political groups

2.5 The Head of Paid Service has a duty, whenever such a review takes place, to submit a report to the Council showing what the allocation of seats, in their opinion, best meet the requirements of the above Act.

2.6 Political Composition

The political composition of the Council is outlined below:
(As referenced at section 2.2, the non-aligned member is removed from the calculations)

Group	No. of members	% (of 39 seats)
Liberal Democrat	25	64.10
Conservative	10	25.64
Independent	4	10.25
Total	39	99.99%

2.5 The Council needs to approve the allocation of seats to the political groups on those committees which are required by law to be politically balanced.

2.6 The obligation to ensure that there is proportionality in the political composition of the Council's committees extends only to proportionate representation of members of political groups and does not require that a vacant seat is represented.

2.7 In carrying out any review, the Council is obliged to adopt the following principles and to give effect to them 'so far as is reasonably practicable':

- a) That not all seats on the Council are allocated to the same political group
- b) That the majority of the seats on the Council are allocated to a particular group if the number of persons belonging to that group is a majority of the authority's membership

- c) Subject to the above, that the number of seats on ordinary committees of the Council which are allocated to each political group, have the same proportion to the total of all the seats on the ordinary committees of that authority as is borne by the number of members of that group to the membership of the authority and
- d) Subject to a) and c) above, that the number of the seats on the Council which are allocated to each group have the same proportion to the number of all the seats on that Council as is borne by the number of members of that group to the membership of the Council.
- e) It was agreed at the Annual meeting of Full Council on 15th May 2019 that delegation should be given to the Group Leaders to make any changes required to appointments to committees, sub-committees, working parties and panels as long as they are in accordance with the political balance. Group Leaders will inform the Democratic Services Manager of any changes and Members will be informed via the Members' Bulletin. In addition, and to ensure they changes are recorded formally, an update will be provided to the next meeting of Full Council. It is proposed that this convention is continued to allow appointments to be filled without waiting for approval from Council.

2 Entitlement to Places

- 2.1 The table at Appendix A shows those Committees that are required to be politically balanced. Generally, the approach taken has been to round up percentages where they are above 0.5% or close to 0.5. However, if more than one group has a percentage above 0.5% then the highest will be allocated the seat.
- 2.2 According to NNDC's Constitution, Chapter 5 section 6.2 'Working Parties shall in law be Committees of the Council' and consequently the political balance rules will also apply to working parties – unless they are Cabinet sub-committees. Cabinet sub-committees are not required to be politically balanced but it is the practice at NNDC that they are and for this reason they are included in the table (marked with an asterisk)
- 2.3 At the meeting of Full Council on 22 September 2021, the Group Leaders agreed to allocate an additional seat to the Independent Group (taking their total to 11 committee seats) to allow them to have representation on the Employment & Appeals Committee.
- 2.4 The Group Leaders have agreed that due to a further change in the balance, it would be appropriate for the Conservative Group to take an additional seat on the Licensing Committee and the Independent Group will then revert to their overall allocation of 10 seats.
- 2.5 Overall the percentages have changed slightly as follows:

The Liberal Democrat Group now has 64.10% (previously 66.67%) of committee seats which equates to 64 in total.

The Conservative Group now has 25.64% (previously 23.07%) of committee seats which equates to 25 in total

The Independent Group remains unchanged at 10% - 9.9 (10) seats.

2.6 The Group Leaders have agreed to implement the proposed changes (highlighted in red on Appendix A) which will affect the allocation of seats on three committees; Licensing & Appeals Committee, Development Committee and North Norfolk Sustainable Communities Fund.

2.8 Full Council will need to approve any change to the calculation, as proposed by the Group Leaders.

3 Conclusion

Council is asked to allocate seats and substitutes to political groups in accordance with the political balance rules and approve any changes proposed by the Group Leaders.

4 Implications and Risks

In line with the relevant legislation, the Council must review the political balance and allocation of seats following the formation of a new political group. There is no alternative.

5 Financial Implications and Risks

There are no financial implications arising from this report.

6 Sustainability

There no sustainability issues arising from this report.

7 Equality and Diversity

An Equality Impact Assessment has not been completed because there are no service, policy or organisational changes being proposed.

8 Section 17 Crime and Disorder considerations

There are no Crime and Disorder implications arising from this report.

		Liberal Democrat		Conservative		Independent		TOTAL
Members		25		10		4		40 (39)
Expressed as %		64.10%		25.64%		10.25%		100%
Committee	No. of Seats	Entitled Places (exact)	Entitled Places (rounded)	Entitled Places (exact)	Entitled Places (rounded)	Entitled Places (exact)	Entitled Places (rounded)	
Licensing Committee	15	9.62	10	3.84	3 4	1.54	2 1	15
Development Committee	14	8.97	10 9	3.59	3 4	1.44	1	14
Overview & Scrutiny	12	7.69	8	3.07	3	1.23	1	12
Planning Policy & Built Heritage WP	12	7.69	8	3.07	3	1.23	1	12
Standards Committee	7	4.49	5	1.79	1	0.72	1	7
Governance, Risk & Audit Committee	6	3.85	4	1.54	1	0.62	1	6
EAC	5	3.2	3	1.15	1	0.51	1	5
*NN Sustainability Fund Grants Panel	7	4.49	5 4	1.79	4 2	0.72	1	7
*Member Development Group	6	3.85	4	1.38	1	0.62	1	6
Constitution Working Party	5	3.2	3	1.15	2	0.5	0	5
*Joint Staff Consultative Committee	5	3.2	3	1.15	2	0.5	0	5
* Council Tax Support Working Party	5	3.2	3	1.15	1	0.5	1	5
TOTAL	99	63.45	64	24.67	25	10.13	10	99

**Please note that all of the committees marked with an asterisk * are Cabinet sub-committees and therefore they are not required to be politically balanced – however, it is the practice at NNDC that they are politically balanced.*

Notes: At the May AGM, the Conservative Group agreed to allocate a seat on JSCC to the Independent Group, losing one of their seats and increasing the Independent Group allocation to 11 and reducing the Conservative allocation to 22. The Group Leaders have agreed to revert to the original allocation – with the Conservative Group having two seats on this committee.

At the AGM, the Independent Group indicated that they would not be taking up their seat on the EAC. If members are supportive of the change in the terms of reference of the EAC, then it will need to be politically balanced and a representative of the Independent Group will be required to sit on this Committee.

Creation of two separate licensing committees

Summary: The Council presently has one licensing committee which deals with Licensing Act 2003 matters and non-Licensing Act matters. It is proposed that this Council creates two separate committees to ensure the lawfulness of decisions made

Options considered: (1) The creation of two committees
(2) Retain the status quo

Conclusions: That two separate committees :
 - A Licensing Committee (Premises and Gambling); and
 - A Licensing Regulatory Committee (dealing with all other licensing matters)
 be set up for the next municipal year, to deal with the Council’s licensing functions. Further that both committees comprise the same membership.

Recommendations: **That there be two distinct committees relating to licensing matters: a statutory Licensing Committee [“The Licensing Committee (Premises and Gambling)”] and a regulatory licensing committee which deals with all other licensing functions [“The Licensing Regulatory Committee”]:**

- (i) That the current single licensing committee ceases and that two licensing committees be formed for the next Annual Meeting of Council
- (ii) The first of these committees will deal with Licensing Act 2003 and Gambling Act 2005 matters and will be known as the Licensing Committee (Premises and Gambling).
- (iii) The second committee will deal with all the other licensing matters not detailed in (ii) above and will be known as the Licensing Regulatory Committee
- (iv) Both committees will contain the same members but will be distinct committees and may set up their own Sub-Committees
- (v) That the Monitoring Officer be authorised to update the Constitution to reflect this change.

Reasons for Recommendations: To protect the Council from risk of challenge of its decisions made by a licensing committee of this Council

LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS AS REQUIRED BY LAW

(Papers relied on to write the report, which do not contain exempt information and which are not published elsewhere)

Cabinet Member(s)	Ward(s) affected - All

Contact Officer, telephone number and email: Cara Jordan, Assistant Director Finance, Assets, Legal Tel - 01263 516373; email - cara.jordan@north-norfolk.gov.uk

1. Introduction

1.1 **The Licensing Committee at North Norfolk District Council**

The Licensing Committee is responsible for discharging the Council's functions relating to all licensing and registration functions under the Licensing Act 2003, as well as other functions under the Gambling Act. The Council currently has one Licensing Committee to carry out its functions and which also deals with additional licensing functions, outside of the Licensing and Gambling Acts. It deals with matters relating to:

- a) **The Licensing Act 2003**
(This includes functions such as consideration of applications for premises licences to sell alcohol and carry out licensable activities); and
The Gambling Act 2005
(Considering matters relating to the regulation of gambling);
 - b) **Other licensing matters not under the above two Acts**
(This includes a wide range of regulatory licensing matters connected to public protection, such as considering applications by persons wishing to drive taxis; those involved in horse riding establishments; zoos; sex establishments and tattoo parlours etc.)
- 1.2 The Licensing Act 2003 and the Gambling Act 2005 (as detailed at 1.1(a) above) will be considered together in this report, as the latter details that the Licensing Act 2003 rules will apply.
- 1.3 Those non Licensing Act matters detailed at 1.1(b) above are subject to different legislation and are governed by rules and procedures detailed in the Local Government Act 1972.

2. **The licensing functions performed by the Committee**

- 2.1 Whilst the Licensing Committee currently considers all matters relating to the regulation of licensing, the legislation governing matters such as applications for a hackney carriage and private hire licences, zoo licences, sex establishments etc., is different.

The Licensing Act 2003

- 2.2 Section 7 Licensing Act 2003 provides that each licensing authority must establish a licensing committee consisting of at least ten, but no more than fifteen, members of the authority. The legislation is such that the committee is only able to deal with licensing and licensing related matters detailed in that Act (section 7(3) Licensing Act 2003). Its powers and functions are limited. Therefore a stand-alone statutory Licensing Committee (which can also deal with Gambling Act matters) is required to be established under the Licensing Act 2003. Such a committee can have sub-committees and need not be politically balanced (though can be).

Non-Licensing Act matters

- 2.3 A committee to consider other regulatory licensing matters relating to the public protection function of the Council (i.e. those matters which do not fall under the Licensing Act 2003 or the Gambling Act 2005) falls to be established under the Local Government Act 1972 (sections 101 and 102). Such a committee must be politically balanced.
- 2.4 There is a different legal basis covering the establishment and functions of the Licensing Committee (dealing with pubs and clubs etc). Its powers are limited. The other public protection licensing functions (dealing with taxi licences, sex establishments etc) do not fall within the functions detailed within the Licensing Act 2003. Accordingly, the council may be

placing itself at risk of challenge by retaining just one committee to deal with both aspects of the licensing regime.

3. Two separate committees

- 3.1 Currently members of the Licensing Committee receive training on both Licensing Act matters and other public protection licensing matters. An approach may be to create two separate committees, with the same membership. These committees must be separately constituted, though could comprise of the same individual members. Only one of the committees needs to be politically balanced, but by having the same members on both committees (and each having sub-committees), it would allow for both to be politically balanced. It would also allow for members to receive the same training, and to be able to sit on the same day, albeit it would need to be made clear, using separate agendas and minutes etc., that Members are sitting as “the Licensing Committee (Premises and Gambling)”, being subject to the rules of the Licensing Act 2003, and then sitting as “the Licensing Regulatory Committee”, the other regulatory committee, dealing with public protection licensing matters, following the rules and procedures of the Council’s Constitution.
- 3.2 Having two distinct committees is likely to reflect the requirements of the legislation, ensuring that our customers are dealt with fairly and transparently. Further, it would protect the Council from risk of challenge that it has acted *ultra vires*.
- 3.3 An alternative is that the Council could retain the status quo. There have been no challenges as to the constitution of the committees thus far, and so it may be viewed as low risk to date. However, should there be a contentious matter considered by the committee in the future, a party aggrieved by a decision may look to pursue the constitution of the committees.

4. Corporate Plan Objectives

4.1 Customer Focus & Financial Sustainability

Ensuring that the Council’s democratic process runs as transparently and as effectively as possible, building on the corporate plan objective of focussing on the customer and putting them at the heart of what we do. Further the setting up of two committees protects the Council from the risk of unnecessary spending from procedural challenge.

5. Financial and Resource Implications

There is no significant resource implication from setting up two separate committees. Creating two committees protects against risk of procedural challenge.

6. Legal Implications

The statutory Licensing Committee (Premises and Gambling) should be established pursuant to section 7 Licensing Act 2003 and the Licensing Regulatory Committee under sections 101 &102 Local Government Act 1972. Failing to ensure that there are two separate committees for these separate functions may leave the Council open to risk of challenge against its licensing related decisions.

7. Equality and Diversity

The considerations and recommendations have a remote or low relevance to the substance of the Equality Act.

8. Section 17 Crime and Disorder considerations

Both the Licensing Act 2003 functions and other non-Licensing Act functions are relevant to public protection and consideration of the prevention of crime and disorder in the District. Having two committees will address the risk of challenge against the committee/s decisions.

9. Conclusion and Recommendations

That there be two distinct committees relating to licensing matters: a statutory Licensing Committee ["The Licensing Committee (Premises and Gambling)"] and a regulatory licensing committee which deals with all other licensing functions ["The Licensing Regulatory Committee]:

- (i) That the current single licensing committee ceases and that two licensing committees be formed for the next Annual Meeting of Council**
- (ii) The first of these committees will deal with Licensing Act 2003 and Gambling Act 2005 matters and will be known as the Licensing Committee (Premises and Gambling).**
- (iii) The second committee will deal with all the other licensing matters not detailed in (ii) above and will be known as the Licensing Regulatory Committee**
- (iv) Both committees will contain the same members but will be distinct committees and may set up their own sub-committees**
- (v) That the Monitoring Officer be authorised to update the Constitution to reflect this change.**

CABINET MEMBERS REPORT TO COUNCIL**09 February 2021****COUNCILLOR A FITCH-TILLET - CABINET MEMBER FOR COAST**

For the period November to December 2021

1 Progress on Portfolio Matters.**Innovative Resilience Fund - Progress Update**

Coastal Partnership East is advancing with content for the Outline Business Case, which is required to be approved by the Environment Agency for the Norfolk and Suffolk Coastal Transition programme. This has included workshops with partners, national leads in specific area and internal workshops. The OBC will need to be completed by spring 2022, although if possible the OBC will be submitted earlier

Cromer Phase 2 and Mundesley Coast Protection Scheme – Progress Update

Draft detailed designs and cost estimates have been received and are under consideration.

Sea Defence Revenue Maintenance

Maintenance of sea defences and beach accesses have continued and included repairs to groynes and navigation markers across the district. Preparations are underway for a recut of the Happisburgh Ramp.

Bacton to Walcott Sandscaping Scheme

Breeding birds comparison report has been received and concludes that the construction and operation of the Sandscaping scheme has had no negative impacts on breeding birds in the locality. The learning from the scheme with regards to working around sand martins is being prepared into a Guidance Note which is sought to be peer reviewed by Natural England and the RSPB and then made available to help guide others. Prices are being sought for windblown sand mitigation measures.

Shoreline Management Plan Refresh

An appointment has been made for the Shoreline Management Plan Co-ordinator to work across SMP6 & on the activities required for the Refresh process.

Cliff Slip – Mundesley

A multi team approach across NNDC responded to a cliff slip adjacent to a property of 5 flats in Mundesley. Following the reporting of the cliff failure North Norfolk District Council:

- Inspected and monitored the location and the property
- Liaised with residents
- Liaised with the media
- Commissioned an initial cliff stability assessment
- Issuing of a Hazard Awareness Notice's to the landlord, owner and tenants

- Offered of temporary accommodation as a precautionary measure over the Christmas / New Year period to allow the Council to commission and consider the Cliff Stability Assessment such that it could consider future options
- Identified and ensured the repair of a burst water on the cliff face by Anglian Water

The Council has now considered the situation further and explored the legislative powers and duties in relation to the property and the residents and have completed the following actions:

- NNDC has highlighted to the Landlord that they have responsibilities towards their tenants and the building. The Cliff Stability Assessment has been made available to them and they may wish to seek further advice and complete further actions.
- NNDC has contacted the residents and highlighted the risk with remaining in the property and offered general housing advice. It is however down to individuals to consider their own safety and to take actions to keep themselves from harm, therefore we are unable to continue to offer temporary accommodation.
- NNDC will continue to monitor the situation and take further actions should the situation change.

It is clear that the legislative powers to local authorities with regards to properties at risk of loss from erosion and cliff slips does not fully meet the requirements we would wish for. As a result, and when the opportunity presents itself, this will be raised with central government.

Greenbuild

The team supported the successful Greenbuild programme.

Coastal Forum

The Norfolk Coastal Forum on the 2 November was successfully run online with many attendees from the North Norfolk and wider coast. Presentation included Richard Powel OBE – Chair of Eastern Regional Flood and Coast Committee highlighting the climate challenges that we face with regards to erosion, flooding and wider environmental issues.

2 Forthcoming Activities and Developments.

Continuation on development and delivery of above projects and initiatives.

3-year Coastal Partnership East Business Plan to be presented to the CPE Officers Group and Board.

3 Meetings attended

- All Council Meetings appointed to
- All Poppyland Parish Councils
- Greenbuild Presentations

- Presentation to Mundesley Parish Council re Coast Protection Scheme
- Meeting with NCC Flood Team re Flooding in Northrepps
- Discussion with NCC Children's Services re School Governors
- Wash & North Norfolk Marine Partnership Advisory Group
- 'Scape' Procurement briefing
- Wash & North Norfolk Marine Partnership Management Group
- Wash & North Norfolk Marine Partnership Stakeholder Group
- Meeting with Interim Manager NCP and NNDC support Officers
- LGA Coastal SIG
- Norfolk Coast Partnership Core Management Group
- Coastal Partnership East Board Meeting
- Local Plan Consultation Briefing
- Broads Internal Drainage Board
- Cromer Town Council Coastal Management Scheme Briefing
- Agents of Change - Update on Cromer Shoal Monitoring
- Regional Flood and Coastal Committee East
- Coastal Partnership East Board Meeting

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CABINET MEMBERS REPORT TO COUNCIL

February 2022

COUNCILLOR WENDY FREDERICKS - CABINET MEMBER FOR HOUSING AND BENEFITS

For the period to December 2021

1 Progress on Portfolio Matters.

Housing

Temporary Housing

As at 31 December 2021 there were **39** households in Temporary Accommodation, this includes the 10 new & former rough sleepers currently accommodated as follows:

- 3 x Protect & Vaccinate (P&V)
- 3 x Reeves Court
- 4 X Former Rough Sleepers: NSAP (Next Steps Accommodation Programme)

When current purchases/works are complete the Council will have a portfolio of 16 homes for use as temporary accommodation – five units of move-on accommodation for rough sleepers and 11 homes as alternatives to bed and breakfast for homeless households.

Five of the 16 homes have been part funded by the government:

- Next Steps Accommodation Programme - £140,000 grant towards four homes for use by ex-rough-sleepers. All four homes are now in use.
- Rough Sleepers Accommodation Programme - £35,000 as a contribution to the refurbishment of a one-bed self-contained flat for rough sleeper move-on housing. This project has now achieved planning permission and the works have been tendered and the successful contractor aims to complete works by February 2022.

Purchase of homes to be used for temporary accommodation has also been possible as Cabinet agreed to the repurposing of £500k Disabled Facilities Grant budget (in March 2021) to purchase accessible temporary accommodation units and £640k of Housing Reserves (in October 2021) to purchase family temporary accommodation homes. The first of these further purchases has completed and the home (an ex-Flagship bungalow) is in use, meaning there are 13 council owned homes being used for temporary accommodation. The remaining three homes are currently in the process of undergoing works to make them ready for occupation.

New Affordable Homes

We project that housing associations will provide 165 new affordable homes in 2021/22. We project 69 affordable rent and 96 shared ownership. These figures

allow for the conversion of two shared ownership homes to affordable rent on a site in Little Snoring. As at the end of December 148 of these homes have been delivered.

Grant for Energy Efficiency Improvement Works

North Norfolk District Council (NNDC) as part of the Norfolk Warm Homes Consortium of five Norfolk districts has been successful in a bid for £3.85 million of government grant to provide energy efficiency improvement works to homes occupied by low income households. The funding is part of the government's sustainable warmth programme.

Households are eligible if their household income is no more than £30,000 gross. Eligible properties must have an EPC of band D or lower. Grant is available to meet 100% of the costs for owner occupiers and up to 2/3rds of the cost for landlords. There is a cap on costs of £10,000 for owner occupiers and £7,500 (maximum grant of £5,000) for landlords of privately rented properties. Eligible works include wall, loft, and underfloor insulation and low carbon heating technologies.

Land Owners Event

On 16th March the Housing Strategy team will run a 'Webinar' for land owners, land agents and Parish/Town Councillors. The webinar will explain the process for land owners wishing to sell land for affordable housing. Our aim is to encourage land owners with suitable sites to offer these for affordable housing development.

Housing Options Team

The team continue to focus on supporting all clients that approach the service.

Your Choice Your Home

As at 31 Dec 2021 there were **2627** households on the housing list of whom:

- **419** were on the Housing Register (highest priority) broken down as follows:
- Priority Card x **3**
- Band 1 x **243**
- Band 2 x **173**

Lets

QTR 1 01 Apr 2021 to 30 June 2021: **88** Households have secured social housing

QTR 2 01 Jul 2021 to 30 Sep 2021: **97** Households have secured social housing

QTR 3 01 Oct 2021 to 31 Dec 2021: **70** Households have secured social housing

Homelessness & Rough Sleeping

20 December 2022 – DLUHC instructed all authorities under the Protect & Vaccinate to bring in Rough Sleepers. NNDC at the 20 Dec 2021 had 8 Rough Sleepers through this programme we have brought in 5 –with 3 still rough sleeping and continue to refuse to come in.

3 x Entrenched rough sleepers

3 x Protect & Vaccinate (P&V)

3 x Rough Sleeper in Reeves Court

4 x Former Rough Sleepers accommodated in the NSAP properties

Following a recent discussion with DLUHC we are still focusing on finding solutions for our single clients to whom the authority is accommodating.

As 17 January 2022, there were 145 active live cases:

- Final Duties accepted: 33
- Prevention duty accepted: 36
- Relief Duty accepted: 41
- Decisions 0
- Reviews: 2
- Triage (mixture of new cases, rough sleepers, clients being supported): 33

Benefits

End of year updates

Our systems will be closing down on the afternoon of 23rd February 2022, for the end of financial year updates. We aim for this work to be completed by Monday 28th February 2022. During this time live systems will not be available. Customers can continue to contact the service via telephone, email or web chat. Our self-serve portal My Bills and Benefits and self-serve forms such as the online claim form and change in circumstance form will not be available over the weekend. Alternative arrangements will be put in place and communicated internally and externally.

Discretionary Housing Payments

Discretionary Housing Payments (DHPs) provide financial support to help with rent or housing costs as a top-up payment to Housing Benefit or Housing Costs as part of a Universal Credit claim. At the beginning of the financial year, North Norfolk District Council was allocated £145,377 in funding from the DWP.

So far this year we have made 128 payments under the fund at a total cost of nearly £93k. This is a priority area of work for the service to ensure households are receiving the financial support they urgently need in order to prevent rent arrears and eviction. In the lead up to the end of the financial year we will be pro-actively identifying households who have not yet claimed support under a DHP.

Test & Trace Support Payment (TTSP)

We are continuing to see a higher number of Test & Trace Support Payment (TTSP) applications. A significant increase has been seen during December and January. The table here shows the number of applications received over the last quarter.

Month	Received	Approved	Rejected	Pending/Outstanding
October 2021	59	39	20	0
November 2021	82	51	31	0
December 2021	128	56	39	33
January up to 16/01/2022	161	16	15	130

Change to Testing Policy

From 11 January 2022 in England, people who receive positive lateral flow results for COVID-19 will be required to self-isolate immediately and won't be required to take a confirmatory PCR test. This is a temporary measure while COVID-19 rates remain high across the UK.

Please note: individuals who self-report a positive LFD test and wish to claim for TTSP will need to take a confirmatory PCR test – the position remains the same.

Change to Self-isolation Rules

From Wednesday, 22 December 2021, people who test positive for COVID-19 can self-isolate for seven days instead of ten days if they receive negative LFD tests on day 6 and day 7 of their self-isolation period (with tests taken at least 24 hours apart).

This applies to vaccinated and unvaccinated people who test positive for COVID-19. The first test must be taken no earlier than day 6 of the self-isolation period. If the LFD test on day 6 is positive, but the two subsequent consecutive daily LFD tests – taken at least 24 hours apart – are negative, a person can leave self-isolation on the day of their second negative LFD test. For example, negative tests on day 7 and day 8 will enable the person to leave self-isolation on day 8.

As applicants will have to isolate for a minimum of seven days and may incur loss of income, they will remain eligible for TTSP. As individuals may need to self-isolate for longer than seven days, and up to ten days, the amount will remain fixed at £500.

There is no change to the guidance for unvaccinated contacts of positive COVID-19 cases who are still required to self-isolate for ten full days after the date of exposure to the virus.

From Monday 17th January 2022 the self-isolation advice for people with coronavirus (COVID-19) has changed. It is now possible to end self-isolation after 5 full days if you have 2 negative LFD tests taken on consecutive days. The first LFD test should not be taken before the fifth day after your symptoms started (or the day your test was taken if you did not have symptoms). The self-isolation period remains 10 full days for those without negative results from 2 LFD tests taken a day apart.

We have not yet received any further guidance from the DHSC on how the latest self-isolation advice affects the TTSP.

Adult Social Care Infection Control Fund

Applications for the TTSP made by staff working in the care sector will be rejected. Instead, the applicant will be directed to the Adult Social Care Infection Control Fund (ICF), which their employer will have access to.

Household Support Fund (HSF)

The Benefits Service is continuing to support the administration of the Household Support Fund. Applications to the fund are being invited through the council's web form and pro-active work is being carried out across People Services to identify eligible cases to the fund. So far we have issued nearly £50k across 96 households. The scheme closes on 31st March 2022. However, as North Norfolk District Council has been allocated a set amount of funding by Norfolk County Council, the scheme may close earlier depending on the number of eligible applications we receive.

Integrated Housing Adaptations Team (IHAT)

The team has received 315 new contacts year to date resulting in 176 recommendations for adaptations. There is a lot of demand in the system, assessments are being completed relatively quickly but a backlog of cases needing

schedules of work is building. This situation is being closely monitored. A further 11 grants were approved in December with a value of approximately £82,500 taking the total approved for the financial year to 63 with a total commitment of approximately £700,000. 53 grants have been completed to the end of December with a total spend of approximately £601,500 (this includes interim payments for some jobs which have started on site but not yet completed).

2 Forthcoming Activities and Developments.

Land Owner Forum March 16th 2022

3 Meetings attended

Cabinet meetings
Portfolio Catch-ups
Business Planning Meetings
Cabinet Working Party
Registered Housing provider meetings
Local Plan Briefings
Intergrated Housing Adaption Team meeting
North Norfolk Sustainable Communities Fund Panel
Planning Policy and Built Heritage Working Party
Site Visit to Thursford potential affordable housing scheme
Cromer Academy visit
Group briefings

CABINET MEMBERS REPORT TO COUNCIL

February 9th 2022

COUNCILLOR VIRGINIA GAY - PORTFOLIO HOLDER FOR LEISURE

1 Progress on Portfolio Matters.

Business as usual activity

Grants

Arts & Culture Fund – Financial year 2021 / 2022. As of 30th November, eight grant applications have been awarded funding totalling £14,313.64.

Community Transport Fund –Financial year 2021 / 2022. As of 30th November four grant applications have been awarded funding totalling 42,750.

North Norfolk Sustainable Communities Fund (NNSCF) – Financial year 2021 / 2022. As of 31st August sixteen applications had been received requesting grants of between £1,000 and £15,000. The Panel recommended that thirteen projects totalling £86,106.75 were approved, one application was ineligible, one deferred and one refused. Eight applications have been received to the Under £1,000 NNSCF. Seven were approved and awards of £5,909.97 made. Grant funding of £92,016.72 awarded to date to twenty organisations. Nine new applications and one deferred application totalling £101,040.42 will be considered by the Panel on 6th December.

Social Prescribing

Between 1st January and 30th November 2021, 799 Social Prescribing referrals have been received. This compares to 571 for the same period last year. People are now able to self-refer to Social Prescribing rather than having to be referred by an organisation. A phone duty line went live in July to triage requests for support from residents and professionals. General advice and support requests will be dealt with over the phone. A Social Prescribing referral will be made where more complex support is needed. There is also a dedicated North Norfolk Help Hub page on NNDC website which gives information about the Social Prescribing service and has links to other related support such as benefits, housing and Domestic Abuse.

The Social Prescribing Service continues to respond to direct requests for support from residents impacted by Covid 19.

The contract with the North Norfolk Primary Care Network for the Social Prescribing Link Worker service that covers nine surgeries in North Norfolk ends in January 2022. An extension of the contract for one year until January 2023 has recently been agreed.

Information, Advice & Guidance

Total core budget for IAA is £66,710. A grant of £55,000 has been awarded to Norfolk CA towards for the provision of generic IAA services in North Norfolk for the period 1.4.2021 – 31.03.2022. Fakenham has recently opened at face to face

service at Fakenham Community Centre initially for one day a week. The Holt service is open one day a week for two hours and the North Walsham service five hours, five days a week. For the three month period between July & September 369 clients were supported, of those 129 were seen in person.

In consultation with the portfolio Holder for Culture & Wellbeing the remainder of the allocated budget £11,710 will be awarded to identified VCSE organisations to enhance IAA services to young people in North Norfolk and / or a VCSE organisation that provides specialist IAA support to residents in North Norfolk who may not be able to access or be supported by generic services IAA services. Meetings with MIND and MAP (Mancroft Advice project) are taking place to progress this.

Covid 19 related activity

The Council continues to work with Norfolk County Council to provide a local Contact Tracing service in North Norfolk. This is for people who have tested positive for Covid 19 but where national or NCC contact tracers have been unable to reach them by phone. A team of Covid Support Workers are available to visit people to request that they register details of people they have been in contact with. Support is also offered to people who have tested positive for Covid 19 to enable them to self-isolate.

NNDC also deliver an Enhanced Contact Tracing service. This service is for the contacts of people who have tested positive for Covid 19 if they meet the criteria should be self-isolating. Daily data reports are received from Public Health. Covid Support officers initially try to contact people by phone to check if they need food, medication or other support to enable them to self-isolate. Face to face visits are carried out if a person cannot be contacted. Requests for emergency food or medication support are fulfilled by NNDC. Referrals for financial or long term support are referred to Social Prescribing or other services including the Norfolk Assistance Scheme as appropriate.

NNDC continues to work with NCC and Third Sector organisations to support Clinically Extremely Vulnerable residents and those experiencing financial hardship or requiring other support due to the impact of Covid 19.

Officers attend regular meetings to ensure NNDC is informed, prepared and equipped to deal with all issues relating to Covid including implementation changes to Government guidance, community outbreaks, surge testing, people requiring support whilst on holiday etc.

North Norfolk Armed Forces Covenant Pledge

The National Armed Forces Covenant represents a promise by the nation that those who serve or have served, and their families, are treated fairly.

North Norfolk District Council (NNDC) signed the Norfolk Armed Forces Covenant at an official ceremony on 7 March 2012.

To further demonstrate North Norfolk District Council's commitment to the Armed Forces Covenant and to ensure compliance with forthcoming legislation, a report to Cabinet proposing that NNDC publishes and signs its own Armed Forces Covenant Pledge was agreed on 4th October.

The North Norfolk District Council Pledge is currently being written. This will be adopted by NNDC early 2022 and will enable applications to the Employer Recognition Scheme to be made.

Health and Social Care Training

The developing skills in health and social care (DSHSC) project, will provide fully funded qualifications to staff working in the health and social care sector across Norfolk and Suffolk. The aim of the project is to empower people working in the sector to develop new skills. This will enable them to continue providing high-quality care to local people. The project has secured up to £7.58 million. Up to £3.79 million is coming from the European Social Fund (ESF).

An update to Full Council was given in both February and April of 2021. In June 2021 figures for the take up of the project by people living or working in North Norfolk were reported. Norfolk County Council have been requested to provide further data to the period 30th November 2021. A response is outstanding.

Media /Communications have been asked to add the NCC link to the Health and Social Care Training to the NNDC web site.

Carer Friendly Tick Award for Employers

An initial discussion has been held with a representative from this organisation. This will be progressed early 2022 with the aim of NNDC achieving the Carer Friendly Tick Award for Employers. This further demonstrates NNDC's commitment and support to employees that are carers.

Care Sector career support work

The Economic Growth Section of the Council is beginning work on a programme of training for the Care Sector. This will be pursued under the DWP's Sector-Based Work Academy Programme. The District's programme will in addition provide mentoring and guidance for these new carers.

Household Support Fund

The Government announced its Household Support Fund (HSF) on 30 September 2021, allocating £6.69 million to Norfolk County Council to be spent by the end of March 2022 to alleviate winter hardship while the economy recovers.

As part of the support package, Norfolk County Council has devolved part of the funding to a range of organisations including district councils across Norfolk to allow for local support in the community. North Norfolk District Council has been allocated £128k from the fund and this is based on the number of Universal Credit claimants in our area.

North Norfolk District Council approach

Due to significant levels of funding already being allocated to Free School Meal (FSM) families and being distributed by VCSE and NCC, the proactive focus of NNDC funding will be on residents with no dependent children who meet the following criteria:

- Vulnerable residents on income related benefits including Pension Credit
- Vulnerable residents on disability and sickness related benefits
- Vulnerable residents living in a property with an Energy Performance Certificate of E and below or known to be in fuel poverty (over 5,000 households in North Norfolk).

Funding will offer both proactive and reactive support to known vulnerable clients on low income particularly those with no children and who are unlikely to proactively request help. The focus of the funding would be on provision of items, services, goods or bill payments to help people keep warm and well or to free up income to spend on food and fuel. Vulnerable residents would include those with long term health conditions, older people or other vulnerabilities that make it more difficult for them to keep and stay warm.

Services including Benefits, Housing, Social Prescribing & IHAT can proactively identify clients that meet the above criteria who will then be contacted to discuss any support needs. If appropriate they will be encouraged to apply for a HSF grant via the NNDC web or they will be supported to make an application by an NNDC officer. Benefits have identified approximately 190 people that meet all of the criteria, proactive phone calls are currently being made. Other services are also identifying and contacting clients. Systems will be shared to avoid duplication. There is also a reactive offer. In the last week 17 applications have been made for support via the NNDC web page. Applications can be made by the applicant or someone on their behalf. Direct referrals from trusted partners can also be made through the online application system.

[Home | Household Support Fund \(north-norfolk.gov.uk\)](http://north-norfolk.gov.uk)

NB. The first report to NCC is due on 13th December. I will let you know how much funding we have awarded then.

Forthcoming Activities & Development

Norfolk County Council is revising its Health and Wellbeing Strategy. It is likely that this will come to the Districts for adoption in due course. Health structures too are about to change to be replaced by an Integrated Care Board. At some point a member briefing on the new structures would perhaps be useful.

Meetings attended

I have attended regularly scheduled Council meetings and portfolio briefings. In addition I have attended meetings for this area in connection with the Zero Based Budgeting Exercise.

CABINET MEMBERS REPORT TO COUNCIL

09 February 2022

COUNCILLOR V GAY - CABINET MEMBER FOR CULTURE

For the period November to January 2021

1 Progress on Portfolio Matters - Culture

North Norfolk District Council's Orchestras Live programme conducted workshops throughout the District in the autumn. Unfortunately, the concert which was supposed to take place at the North Walsham Christmas Lights event had to be cancelled as there was a powerful storm on that night. There was instead a small impromptu concert given inside one of our local bakeries

The work of the Heritage Action Zone's cultural programme is progressing. A budget has been agreed with Heritage England and a Valentine's Day celebration has been planned.

Discussion as to the locations of our North Norfolk Go Go Mammoths is proceeding. Under its agreement with BREAK, NNDC has agreed to purchase two mammoths; one of these is to be installed at West Runton. The location of the other is yet to be decided. BREAK may perhaps seek to install other Mammoths elsewhere within the District.

2 Forthcoming Activities and Developments.

Cultural work under the HAZ project will continue. Our Arts and Culture grant funding programme is continuing and is always seeking new applications from local community groups.

3 Meetings attended

28/01/22 – I attended the quarterly meeting of the Norfolk Records Committee. This committee is part of the governance structure for the truly excellent archives for the County of Norfolk. It's little known that our Record Office does an astonishing amount of outreach work. In the last year, despite Covid, the Archive has worked on a project to support and upskill Community Archives throughout Norfolk; Fakenham Community Archive has benefitted from this. The Record Office has also built a mental well being project called Change Minds which is now being adopted throughout Britain. They have in addition completed a Sound Archive project which is intended to organize and digitize the sounds of the past. All of these projects draw on local community groups and have a significant dimension of well being achieved by means of cultural engagement.

28/01/22 – I attended the Norfolk Joint Museums Committee.

CABINET MEMBERS REPORT TO COUNCIL

February 9th 2022

COUNCILLOR VIRGINIA GAY - PORTFOLIO HOLDER FOR WELLBEING

1 Progress on Portfolio Matters - Wellbeing

Grants

Arts & Culture Fund – Financial year 2021 / 2022. As of 31st December, eight grant applications have been awarded funding totalling £14,313.64.

Community Transport Fund –Financial year 2021 / 2022. As of 31st December four grant applications have been awarded funding totalling 42,750.

North Norfolk Sustainable Communities Fund (NNSCF) – Financial year 2021 / 2022. As of 31st December Grant funding of £135,576.72 awarded to twenty five organisations. Final grant round of this financial year in March 2022.

Social Prescribing

Between 1st January and 31st December there were 927 referrals. In December alone there were 104 referrals to the service, the highest monthly referral figure since the service started. There are approximately 250 open cases at the moment and a waiting list has been established. There is a dedicated North Norfolk Help Hub page on the NNDC website which gives information about the Social Prescribing Service and has links to other related supported such as benefits, housing and Domestic Abuse. §To increase capacity an additional Social Prescriber has been recruited on a temporary basis using some of NNDC's Control Outbreak Management Fund allocation.

Information, Advice & Guidance

Total core budget for IAA is £66,710. A grant of £55,000 has been awarded to Norfolk CA towards for the provision of generic IAA services in North Norfolk for the period 1.4.2021 – 31.03.2022. Fakenham has recently opened at face to face service at Fakenham Community Centre initially for one day a week. The Holt service is open one day a week for two hours and the North Walsham service five hours, five days a week. For the three month period between July & September 369 clients were supported, of those 129 were seen in person.

A proposal has been received from the Mancroft Advice Project (MAP) to provide a dedicated IAA resource for young people in North Norfolk. If agreed, the service will start in April 2022.

Covid 19 related activity

The Council continues to work with Norfolk County Council to provide a local Contact Tracing service in North Norfolk. This is for people who have tested positive for Covid 19 but where national or NCC contact tracers have been unable to reach

them by phone. A team of Covid Support Workers are available to visit people to request that they register details of people they have been in contact with. Support is also offered to people who have tested positive for Covid 19 to enable them to self-isolate.

NNDC also deliver an Enhanced Contact Tracing service. This service is for the contacts of people who have tested positive for Covid 19 if they meet the criteria should be self-isolating. Daily data reports are received from Public Health. Covid Support officers initially try to contact people by phone to check if they need food, medication or other support to enable them to self-isolate. Face to face visits are carried out if a person cannot be contacted. Requests for emergency food or medication support are fulfilled by NNDC. Referrals for financial or long term support are referred to Social Prescribing or other services including the Norfolk Assistance Scheme as appropriate.

NNDC continues to work with NCC and Third Sector organisations to support Clinically Extremely Vulnerable residents and those experiencing financial hardship or requiring other support due to the impact of Covid 19.

Officers attend regular meetings to ensure NNDC is informed, prepared and equipped to deal with all issues relating to Covid including implementation changes to Government guidance, community outbreaks, surge testing, people requiring support whilst on holiday etc.

North Norfolk Armed Forces Covenant Pledge

The National Armed Forces Covenant represents a promise by the nation that those who serve or have served, and their families, are treated fairly.

North Norfolk District Council (NNDC) signed the Norfolk Armed Forces Covenant at an official ceremony on 7 March 2012.

To further demonstrate North Norfolk District Council's commitment to the Armed Forces Covenant and to ensure compliance with forthcoming legislation, a report to Cabinet proposing that NNDC publishes and signs its own Armed Forces Covenant Pledge was agreed on 4th October.

The North Norfolk District Council Pledge has been written and will be adopted by NNDC early 2022.

Health and Social Care Training

The developing skills in health and social care (DSHSC) project, will provide fully funded qualifications to staff working in the health and social care sector across Norfolk and Suffolk. The aim of the project is to empower people working in the sector to develop new skills. This will enable them to continue providing high-quality care to local people. The project has secured up to £7.58 million. Up to £3.79 million is coming from the European Social Fund (ESF).

An update to Full Council was given in both February and April of 2021. In June 2021 figures for the take up of the project by people living or working in North Norfolk were reported. Norfolk County Council has been requested to provide further data to the period 30th November 2021. **A response is outstanding.**

Media /Communications have been asked to add the NCC link to the Health and Social Care Training to the NNDC web site.

The Sustainable Growth section of the Council is in addition beginning its own bespoke training programme for Social Care sector. This will be pursued under the DWP's Sector-Based Work Academy Programme. The District's programme will provide mentoring and guidance for these new carers. Details of this are given elsewhere in these reports.

Carer Friendly Tick Award for Employers

An initial discussion has been held with a representative from this organisation. This will be progressed early 2022 with the aim of NNDC achieving the Carer Friendly Tick Award for Employers. This further demonstrates NNDC's commitment and support for employees who are carers.

Household Support Fund

The Government announced its Household Support Fund (HSF) on 30 September 2021, allocating £6.69 million to Norfolk County Council to alleviate winter hardship while the economy recovers.

As part of the support package, Norfolk County Council has devolved part of the funding to a range of organisations including district councils across Norfolk to allow for local support in the community. North Norfolk District Council has been allocated £128k from the fund and this is based on the number of Universal Credit claimants in our area.

Currently NNDC has awarded approximately £50,000 of funding from our allocated budget of £128,000. In total £24,762 has been awarded to 49 households with children and £27,266 has been awarded to 54 households without children. The funding has predominantly been awarded to help people in arrears with utilities, water, and other bills including Council Tax. The HSF must all be spent by March 2022. HSF applications are being monitored to ensure that this is achieved.

[Home | Household Support Fund \(north-norfolk.gov.uk\)](http://north-norfolk.gov.uk)

2 Forthcoming Activities and Developments.

Norfolk County Council is revising its Health and Well Being Strategy. It is likely that this will come to the Districts for adoption in due course. Health Structures too are about to be replaced by an Integrated Care Board. Dr. Louise Smith, Director of Public Health for Norfolk County Council has requested a meeting with NNDC in order to discuss this with us.

3 Meetings attended

I have attended my regularly scheduled committee meetings, portfolio briefings and grant panels. On 1/10/22 I attended a meeting with Citizens Advice.

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CABINET MEMBERS REPORT TO COUNCIL

09 February 2022

COUNCILLOR R KERSHAW - CABINET MEMBER FOR SUSTAINABLE GROWTH

For the period November to December 2021

1 Progress on Portfolio Matters.

Covid-19 Business Support – additional funding

The Council has distributed over £126m in Covid-related business grants. At the Spring Budget, the Chancellor of the Exchequer announced that Local Authorities could receive an additional top-up to the Additional Restrictions Grant (ARG) allocation (amounting to £760,411 for north Norfolk). In order to qualify, Councils needed to have fully defrayed all of their previous allocation by 30 June 2021 (subsequently extended by one month in line with the national restrictions extension), which the Council was successful in doing.

Utilising the ARG top-up allocation, following Cabinet approval, the Council has developed a programme of business support, including:

- A 'Business Recovery & Resilience Grant Scheme' (BRRG);
- Supporting business digitalisation (through investing in the 'Go Digital' programme);
- Collaborating with Visit Norfolk Norfolk to support visitor economy businesses with marketing and workforce/skills support;
- Developing a programme for the care sector to support career pathways into social care.

The BRRG scheme has received 46 applications, for a project value of £1.1 million approx and grant value of £497,647.55 to date. £276,093.03 of grants have been awarded.

A delivery partner has now been appointed for the Business Support Social Care Recruitment project. This programme will provide:

- Bespoke training - bringing together the Care Certificate, the general induction standards for anyone new to care and sessions covering key topics such as Infection Prevention Control, Fire and Safety and Moving and Positioning;
- Opportunities for candidates to continue learning and undertaking accredited training post sector based work programme
- Access for employers to the fast track induction training when they take on a new member of staff;
- Mentoring for candidates for the first month with a training provider – an opportunity to discuss with a trainer involved in the programme issues/concerns in the first 4 weeks of employment/finding employment;
- Support for employers with access to training and resources to support the new recruit including ESF funded training;
- An evaluation summary of the experience – to provide promotional material for other courses.

North Walsham Town Centre Heritage Action Zone

A number of key activities have commenced/are presently being undertaken, summarised as follows.

- The tender contract to carry out the repairs and restoration work required to bring the Cedars back occupiable use closed on 29 November and responses are presently being reviewed. Potential future users are being solicited via a marketing campaign.
- Between 20 September 2021 and 15 October 2021 a wide range of community engagement activities were undertaken to share the design proposals, invite feedback and to inform the final designs. Feedback from local resident has confirmed that many people who use the town centre are in favour of making it more safe and accessible, encouraging active travel, and improving the public realm through greening and creating areas for rest and relaxation. A report of the findings is presently being prepared which the Council will seek to share and advise on the next steps .
- The Building Improvement Grant scheme is now open to applications. Details can be found at: [Social Pinpoint | Building Improvement Grant \(mysocialpinpoint.co.uk\)](https://mysocialpinpoint.co.uk). An accredited Conservation Architecture firm has recently been appointed to support the scheme and to ensure the effective delivery of the funds to support a number of identified key projects.

Visitor Economy

The Council has continued to collaborate with Visit North Norfolk and to liaise closely with Visit Norfolk and other local authorities and Destination Management Organisations in the region. This has helped keep local tourism businesses informed and has encouraged greater collaboration and support for collective action. Visit North Norfolk's campaign for November and December is 'Wild and Natural North Norfolk'. This can be found on the VNN [home page](#), [YouTube](#) and the accompanying [blog](#)

The film and blog will be promoted via ads on Facebook, Instagram and Google Remarketing as well as e-comms to a database of around 30,000 consumers.

A film is also being promoted which showcases North Norfolk's Christmas events and activities including those at Cromer Pier, Sheringham Little Theatre, Holkham Hall and the Thursford Christmas spectacular.

2 Forthcoming Activities and Developments.

- Delivery of grants/package of wider business support (funded through the ARG top up fund).
- VNN new website to go live in January. The Economic Growth team will shortly implement a membership grant scheme to help businesses to promote their business.
- Continue to support the North Norfolk Kickstart Gateway programme to help 16-14yrs old into employment
- Finalise and publish the HAZ place making consultation report and progress designs

CABINET MEMBERS REPORT TO COUNCIL
09 FEBRUARY 2021

COUNCILLOR NIGEL LLOYD - CABINET MEMBER for Environmental Services, Climate Change & Environment

For the period of November to December 2021

1 Progress on Portfolio Matters.

Environmental Services

Emails have been sent to 2200 households on the garden bin schedules where there is no payment on record. So far this has generated around 600 payments (£30k income). There has been some data base issues which has enabled us to update our records.

Distribution of annual collection calendars for waste and recycling and also garden waste, began this week. Weather conditions unhelpful but we (Serco) are sending out replacements where requested and trying to make available as a download on the website.

New litter bin installed in Blakeney as a result of a sponsorship agreement with local business. Looking at other opportunities for similar arrangements.

Received tender submissions for the removal and replacement of diseased hedges in certain areas of the district (c £25k). Subsequent conversation with the Probation Service (who we already work with for litter picking on beaches) has resulted in the offer from them for tree planting to be undertaken as a community payback type initiative. This will save NNDC around £12,000.

Continued management of issues related to Serco performance. Driver availability continues to cause localised service disruption.

Further meetings and discussions with the Broads Authority and Hoveton Parish Council regarding replacement of Boat Waste facilities.

Ongoing workload challenges from easing of lockdown and reinstating of trade waste contracts and associated admin.

Commercial and Public Protection

The team continue to investigate the issues surrounding Shellfish beds within the district. They have attended a multi-agency meeting to try and establish if

there have been any incidents that have led to the high bacteria count in sampling results. Likely cause is the growth of the seal colony.

There has been an observed trend in food businesses being short-staffed and struggling to keep up with cleaning and maintenance to an acceptable standard. Some food businesses have been down-rated but on the whole the District's food businesses continue to maintain high standards and positively engage with Officers.

Some health and safety risks have been identified such as work at height and unsafe systems of work which are being tackled by Officers.

Focusing on areas where finance may impact on safety such as gas safety checks, maintenance of equipment etc.

Natasha's Law which was introduced in October has brought about changes to allergen labelling requirements. Officers have been offering advice during food safety inspections and the team are planning more focused interventions and support for the New Year. It is surprising that some businesses still don't fully understand the food allergens requirements and how risky this can be to the consumer.

The Dangerous Wild Animal case is still ongoing and the team are meeting with other Council representatives next week to obtain key information about sales and distribution of the animals. Interviews will follow as the next step in this process.

A successful Simple Caution issued to a Cromer business for operating outside of licensable hours.

The taxi trade has asked for a review of fares to reflect the increase in fuel prices this will go out to consultation with the trade and if there is request for the fare structure to change then this will go out to public consultation.

Environmental Protection

The team have issued an abatement notice under the Environmental Protection Act 1990 relating to amplified music.

Fakenham Temporary Stopping place has been occupied in recent weeks, unfortunately the individuals have caused damage to the site which has been reported to the police and arrangements have been made to repair the damage.

Three members of the team have attended a Beach Masters Course and have learnt how to effectively handle an oil spill and reduce the impact on the surrounding environment.

The team have issued a Simple Caution to a hospitality venue in Cromer for breaching an abatement notice previously served for noise issues back in 2019. The operator of the venue attended the Council offices and signed the Caution.

Two team members used their drone handling skills to assist the communications team with video footage of the Reef Leisure Centre.

Covid Support

The team continue to perform contact tracing calls and are supporting residents with self-isolation. In response to the recent change in legislation surrounding face coverings they have been visiting businesses providing information posters for them to display and offering advice and guidance.

Civil Contingencies

The Norfolk Resilience Forum continue to provide cover to this service area for two days a week, in the absence of the Civil Contingencies Manager. A number of policies have already been updated including the District Flood Plan and Out of Hours Response plan. The team have also arranged training for the District's voluntary flood wardens which was well received.

Climate Change

Videos for Greenbuild are now uploaded and on the website – over 350 views of the filmed events have taken place so far and this number continues to climb.

the latest figures for total number of people on Facebook and Twitter who saw the Environmental Charter animation we produced a few months ago are 21,500 – been climbing steadily in the background. Exceeding expectations.

Net Zero Strategy and Action Plan

A Draft Net Zero Strategy and Action Plan (NZSAP) has been developed. The NZSAP is a hugely important document as it outlines how a net-zero 2030 target can be achieved as well as reporting on NNDC's existing emissions pathway for the years 2018/2019 through to 2020/2021.

Three Member workshops have been scheduled to take place prior to the draft NZSAP being taken to Full Council on the 23rd February 2022.

Tree Planting

25,000 trees have been planted this tree planting season taking the overall amount of trees planted since 2019 to 45,000 trees.

Three Miyawaki Forests are being planted across three sites in North Norfolk. This DEFRA funded project aims to explore the effectiveness of the Miyawaki method of urban ecosystem creation.

Miyawaki Forests

This Miyawaki Forest creation process involves careful soil preparation and densely planting a variety of native trees, shrubs and plants to provide valuable habitat to many different species. Designed for urban areas where space is at a premium, the plots are usually the size of a tennis court and fenced off to deter deer and rabbits.

The three sites where Miyawaki Forest will be planted are Warren Avenue in Fakenham, Acorn Road playing field in North Walsham, and Cooper Road play area in Sheringham.

Community Renewal Fund Project – Net Zero Norfolk

The Council's Climate Change and Environmental Policy Manager is project managing, on behalf of the Norfolk Climate Change Partnership, a community renewal Fund project – 'Net-Zero Norfolk'. This project will consist of two feasibility studies each addressing major emission sources within Norfolk (on road emissions and domestic/static energy usage). The two studies will focus on:

- Sustainable Hydrogen Infrastructure for Transport (SHIFT) Study
- Community Energy Kickstarter project

The Funding conditions require the project to be completed by 30 June 2022.

2 Forthcoming Activities and Developments.

Tree give away events have been planned. The next is at Holt Country Park on 29th January with other dates following on.

Tree planting events have been planned at Holt Country park and at Pretty Corner Woods. These events support the many residents who wish to get involved in tree planting. See web site and social media for details.

Officer's at the Council will be leading on the Norfolk Climate Change Partnership CRF funded 'Net-Zero Norfolk' project which will develop two detailed feasibility studies which will aim to progress the net-zero agenda across the whole of Norfolk with a focus on community energy schemes and green hydrogen production.

3 Meetings attended

Norfolk Waste Partnership

East of England Apples and Orchards Project

Serco

HAZ

Cabinet Working Party - projects

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CABINET MEMBERS REPORT TO COUNCIL

9 February 2022

COUNCILLOR E SEWARD - CABINET MEMBER FOR FINANCE, ASSETS, LEGAL, DEMOCRATIC SERVICES AND REVENUES

For the period November to December 2021

1 Progress on Portfolio Matters.

ESTATES

Disposal of assets – The sale of Fair Meadow House, Itteringham has completed for £770,000. 7-9 Bridewell Street, Walsingham sale has fallen through and is being remarketed. The first phase of bidders due diligence for Parklands sale has been undertaken with an interview process as the 2nd phase.

With regard to acquisitions, there is completion of a 4-bedroom property for temporary accommodation on behalf of the Housing team. Two public open space transfers are in progress.

Vacant Properties: Marketing of The Cedars, North Walsham, Industrial units at North Walsham has generated a number of enquiries that are being considered. Proposals at North Lodge Park for use of the tennis courts are supported.

Marrams, Cromer – work being undertaken to consider additional options alongside a review of bowls provision.

The Estates Team is now supporting the Housing Strategy team with managing shared equity transactions, (sale, acquisitions and stair casing).

Lease – Oddfellows Hall, Sheringham support to move forward with regularising the current arrangements.

REVENUES SERVICE UPDATES

Grants – Revenues continue to do reconciliation returns to government for each grant scheme and monthly grant returns for the Additional Restrictions Grant (“ARG”) Scheme.

Council Tax collection on 23 November is 72.71% against 30 November target of 72.35%, excess collection over target of £296k.

Council tax cash collected on 23 November is £59.956m compared to last year £56.804m which is an increase of £3.152m.

Non-Domestic (Business) Rates (NDR) collection on 23 November is 72.98% against 30 November target of 75.25%, a shortfall in collection of £461k. This deficit is due to the NDR debit raise caused by post Budget changes and these figures not being at end of the month.

Non-Domestic (Business) Rates (NDR) cash collected on 23 November is £15.141m compared to last year £10.179m which is an increase of £4.962m.

LEGAL

Eastlaw continue to provide legal services to the Council and to some external clients from the public sector.

Lease of The Reef, Sheringham – with Everyone Active solicitor for final comments. Considering grant for a Licence for occupation if Lease not completed shortly.

Lease of Sheringham Little Theatre – comments back from Tenant, Estates reviewing these.

Blue Sky Café, Cromer – draft new Lease with Tenant's solicitor to review.

Public Open Space Transfer, Market Lane, Wells (Hopkins Homes) – Draft Transfer and enquiries with Hopkins solicitors for reply.

Rectory Farm, Aldborough, pig unit re-development – Secretary of State has screened the application out as not being Environmental Impact Assessment ("EIA") development, position regarding Habitat Regulation Assessment ("HRA") under review together with potential enforcement action for current activities.

DEMOCRATIC SERVICES:

A new member of the team started on 13th December whose main role is to support the regulatory committees – Licensing and Planning.

Members of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee visited the new Reef Leisure Centre on 10th November. This was a project that they had scrutinised in the preceding months and they welcomed the opportunity to see it as it neared completion.

The North Norfolk District Council Town and Parish Council Forum was held remotely on 29th November, with clerks from several councils attending.

An initial meeting has been held with the new County Officer at NALC to explore ways of working together to improve support to town and parish councils across the District and address any recurring issues.

FINANCE

The finance team are drawing together the information with regard to the Zero Based Budgeting project, and has undertaken a public consultation in relation to the draft proposals ahead of pre-Scrutiny in January and ultimately the final budget agreement and council tax setting in February.

Work is also ongoing in relation to the audit of the Council's statement of accounts and also the cyclical internal audit review of the finance function.

The finance team is finalising the budget papers and Medium Term Financial Strategy, which are on Committee agendas for February. The public consultation on the proposals closed on 14th January.

Work is also ongoing in relation to the audit of the Council's statement of accounts and also the cyclical internal audit review of the finance function.

2 Forthcoming Activities and Developments.

ESTATES

Negotiations with the Felbeck Trust to manage some surveyors pits which will result in up to 2,000 trees being planted.

Advertising and sponsorship report being prepared with a number of opportunities that the Council could take forward.

REVENUES

Following the successful presentation to Cabinet members for two level 3 Business Administration Apprentices, there has been shortlisting for the two positions.

Working on improvements to automate part of the processing of council tax valuation officer schedules.

Improving the 14-day notice (post court letter) to make it clearer for customers and changing the process following a business process review to help improve collection and reduce staff hours.

Creating a list of online forms for IT to create that would improve speed of application for customers and efficiencies within revenues.

Updating the Non-Domestic (Business) Rates (NDR) Discretionary Rate Relief Policy. Preparing for year-end/annual billing and the latest announcements to reliefs by the chancellor.

Starting to prepare for the NNDR1 government return.

LEGAL

North Walsham High Street Heritage Action Zone (HAZ) draft offer letter to owners being reviewed together with procedure for securing grant monies.

DEMOCRATIC SERVICES

Upcoming training sessions for members will include Licensing and induction training for the newly elected District member for Stalham ward.

FINANCE

A project is to commence with a view to updating the finance software system.

A number of reports are due to be considered over the following months as follows:

- Budget Monitoring Report Period 10
- Medium Term Financial Strategy 2022/2023 onwards and 2022/23 Budget/Council Tax setting
- Treasury Management Strategy
- Capital Strategy
- Investment Strategy

CABINET MEMBERS REPORT TO COUNCIL

09 February 2022

COUNCILLOR LUCY SHIRES - CABINET MEMBER FOR ORGANISATIONAL RESOURCES

December 2021 to January 2022

1 Progress on Portfolio Matters.

Information Communications Technology

Changes and enhancements to the IT infrastructure to support the move to the cloud for Microsoft software continues

The migration of all users to Microsoft O365 has now been completed.

Works are continuing to deliver significant improvements to the Disaster Recovery/Business Continuity IT arrangements. These works include improvements to both telephony and data infrastructure. When the changes have been implemented extensive testing will be required to ensure they are effective if required.

In the reporting period a significant number of new and changed user requests have been completed.

As a result of the significant changes arising from moving to Office 365, the continued home/office working patterns and new user enquiries the IT service desk has seen an increase in user support requests.

New server environments have been provided for the cash receipting system upgrade.

The IT security policy has been updated published. All users will shortly be required to familiarize themselves with the changes and electronically indicate the understanding and acceptance of the policy.

Work has been completed to reconfigure the telephony systems in preparation for the change to present the Councils telephone number to customers we call rather than an anonymous call. It is expected that this will increase our success when trying to initiate contacts with our customers who might not readily answer anonymous calls. The change will be going live by the end of February 2022.

Multiple new forms have been developed and deployed to allow local

businesses to apply for Omicron related business grants. This has also included making the data from the forms available for assessment and payment to be made.

Work to prepare for a significant version update to the web forms system has been ongoing project to update online forms code estate – this is required to enable an update to the live forms server, without which we would be out of support with the supplier and potentially open to security risks. Also being used as an opportunity for “housekeeping” activity making maintenance more efficient in the future. Currently scheduled to complete mid-February.

Planning has started to enable automatic updating of online Tree Protection Orders in a similar method to Online Licencing Registers. This will enable customers to identify which trees are protected using online self-serve via the Council’s website.

Significant online content creation and publication for the Coastal team is in progress

Significant online content creation and publication in support of the Council’s work to address the issue of domestic abuse is in progress.

Work continues to update all web forms to ensure they remain consistent with central government best practice guidance for web forms “look and feel”.

Work has started on a major upgrade to the Cash Receipting system from Capita. This will be built on new servers and upgrade the software to the latest supported release. Target Go Live June 2022

Revenues & Benefits Year-End

Preparations and testing in progress for upcoming Annual Billing and Benefits Notifications year-end process

Live Processing is scheduled for the end-February 2022

Work has commenced to update the HR and Payroll system software to the latest legislative release

Go live is planned for February 2022

Work continues to implement the Mobile Building Control App which will allow Building control activities to be processed whilst on site.

Go Live is planned for March/April 2022

Environmental Health - Online Licence Registers

Work continues to ensure all statutory registers are published online and automatically updated as they are agreed and signed off by the licensing team

Work is commencing to undertake a significant systems replacement project

to provide a new financial management system. The current system is approaching 12 years old and does not meet the Authority's needs. The project has started to procure and implement a replacement system

Go-live is planned for April 2023

Work is progressing to procure and implement an online recruitment management system to improve the process for applicants and staff involved in the recruitment process.

Go live is planned for march 2022.

Customer Services

An internal audit report on Customer Services has achieved a Substantial Assurance rating. This reflects the ongoing service improvements and the continued performance and flexibility of the team.

In line with the 'One Front Door' concept from within the CS strategy, on the 6th December 2021 we went live and successfully incorporated all incoming Housing Benefit calls to the Customer Services department. 3 months of work took place prior to this with both departments working together to ensure the smooth transition and establish best working practices to ensure an improved customer experience.

This significant change has resulted a slight dip in our resolution rate from 91% to 85%. However, we are confident that with regular scheduled meetings to monitor performance and further training arranged, we will see this increase once again.

Despite the 9.5% increase in calls received in December as a result of taking Housing Benefit calls, we have maintained an average call wait time of 1 minute 33 seconds for the month of December. This is well within our CS standards target of 2 minutes 30 seconds. Customer feedback has continued to highlight that the changes to the automated menu and the significant reduction in wait time before speaking to an advisor has been received positively.

Aside from telephony, we have successfully launched the option for customers to contact us via video appointment. This has further broadening our customer's options to access our services. The first few appointments have proven to be very successful.

Reprographics

There have been many departments requiring outside signage to notify the Public of their safety (printing safety signs) or notifying them of Council consultations.

Support is still being provided from the Reprographics team to produce the signage and documentation for the Covid marshal's.

Additionally, the Reprographics team has just produced the Local Plan consultation document and a number of supporting documents. These are now located across the district for the public to consult on.

Property Services

Cedars North Walsham the tender for the works have been reissued following the outcome of the previous tender where it was not possible to award the contract. Two tenders have now been received and have been assessed. The evaluation of the tenders is expected to be completed early in February.

Public convenience refurbishment works at Wells and Fakenham: Offsite construction of the new facilities continues. Initial on-site works have identified additional works to bring utilities supplies up to modern standards to support the new facilities. The target for completion is now May 2022.

Construction inflation continues to be a significant issue for all live and future works. The cost estimation process will be amended to allow for a contingency to deal with this issue.

Construction supply chain problems also continue to add unexpected delays to project progress.

This along with the general surplus of construction work availability makes maintain a project schedule practically impossible.

Estates and Property have agreed a proposal for Public Convenience facilities in North Walsham and this will be presented for approval in early February. .

Cromer offices LED programme: A site meeting with consultants is scheduled for early February and following the visit a scope for procurement will be produced.

Beach Huts and Chalet programme of works continues at Sheringham. Completion. These works have not been immune to the general construction issues highlighted above and it is likely there will be a small overrun in project timelines..

The Lushers Passage temporary accommodation works have commenced and are progressing well.

Electric Vehicle Charge Points at Bank Loke car park North Walsham: are live and in use. This concludes the current project for EVCP implementation in North Norfolk.

The work to commission additional Temporary Accommodation units and repair and maintenance of existing provision is ongoing and is a significant resourcing issue.

Whilst some urgent works are being progressed the scoping and evaluation of the entirety of the works required continues at North Walsham Town Football Club.

2 Forthcoming Activities and Developments.

Information Technology

Further improvements and testing of Disaster Recovery and Business Continuity scenarios.

Design and specification of the Councils internal network will continue in preparation for the delivery phase of the project in April 2022. The existing hardware which supports the network is approaching the end of its operational life.

E-mail will be integrated with the contact centre system C3 to improve the handling of customer enquiries.

The outgoing telephone number changes will be implemented.

Customer Services

In the coming months Customer Services will be busy assisting our local business customers apply for the recently announced government Omicron Hospitality & Leisure Grant.

We will also be assisting our vulnerable customers apply for the Household Support Fund to help those struggling financially with high energy bills and other essentials this winter.

The council's new Local Plan consultation period begins in January 2022 along with the Public Space Protection Order review which we will be assisting our customers with making their views known.

We will also be preparing for the new financial year which brings with it the usual peak of customer contacts regarding new council tax bills and benefit notification letters. This will be an ideal opportunity to promote other council services and access channels for our customers.

We are continuing to further internally promote the 'one front door' concept and are in discussions with Planning around improving the customer experience. Early discussion have proved positive.

The Corporate Complaints policy has been reviewed by the management team and a new process utilising workbench will be introduced in the near future. The updated policy will enable managers to provide an earlier resolution to complaints, aiming to reduce the need for complaints to be further escalated.

Additional improvements include an auditable trail for all complaints, speedier response times and a system for reporting so we can analyse this data and initiate service improvements. Training will be arranged for all staff and Members throughout February.

The digital mailroom will be initiating the scanning of Building Control applications/documents in the near future. This change in process will enable Building Control officers to work in a more efficient way and improve the service for the customer.

Property Services

The significant programme of out of season repair and maintenance works in Public Conveniences and other Council assets will continue.

Work on the significant number of property related projects will continue to be progressed.

Work will commence with our current partners "About With Friends" on the long term arrangements for the provision of catering facilities at the Council offices

3 Meetings attended

Business Planning
Finance Briefing

Portfolio

Institute of Customer Service & Customer Services
Organisational Resources

Mental Health Champion

Citizens Advice



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CABINET MEMBERS REPORT TO COUNCIL

9 February 2022

COUNCILLOR J TOYE - CABINET MEMBER FOR PLANNING & ENFORCEMENT

For the period November and December 2021

1 Progress on Portfolio Matters.

General overview.

I can report a significant milestone has been reached with the delivery of our local plan to its final stage of public consultation, I should like to place my thanks to the team on record.

We continue to deliver improved speed and decision of decision making on planning applications and maintain an above average market share of Building Control business in North Norfolk with timely outcomes.

Development Management & Major Projects Performance

Latest figures for speed of decision sustain the performance improvements previously reported. Detailed reports are provided to Development Committee on these matters, please refer to these reports for any detailed consideration on matters of speed and quality of decision to the Development Committee.

I have tasked our Director and Assistant Director to specifically look towards improved communication from all parts of the service. I will expect good liaison from the service with our Customer Service team to enable effective answering of queries and comments from our customers. I will explore performance and customer service improvements as part of ongoing improvements under the Team Planning Process.

Planning Policy & neighbourhood planning

The Regulation 19 Consultation process for our emerging local plan commenced on 17 January and will run until 28 February. Full details of the consultation and how to take part are at:

<https://www.north-norfolk.gov.uk/tasks/planning-policy/local-plan-consultation/>

I would encourage members to review the plan and measures proposed that will affect the future of the whole district and their wards. Our officers will be reviewing consultation responses and moving forward to final plan submission in the Summer this year. This should ensure we maintain the schedule for adoption of the plan in late 2022 / early 2023.

Building Control

Our team are making final changes to deliver mobile working with a “paperless” service from Mid-February 2022, this will reduce the use of paper printing and need for travelling to pick up files and documents to facilitate inspections. Those changes will help to deliver efficiency savings and environmental benefits.

NNDC market share (compared to approved inspectors) remains high at 86% market share. National average market share is around 65% Local Authority, our service has a strong reputation for good service and quality advice.

Our Service Manager is reporting to CLT on training and investment needs as we complete the review of new requirements for compliance with the Building Safety Bill. I am briefed that the team continue to perform well and have every expectation to meet the demands of the Building Safety Bill successfully.

I can confirm that all decision notices for building inspections are issued on time and that all inspections are also completed within the statute period.

Enforcement

The team have 305 current live cases; external consultancy support is available to boost capacity in the team.

The web based complaint reporting process went live in 8 November, and has been supported by case inputting from our Planning Processing Unit. I will be supporting officers in a roll out to members and Parishes to promote this new service.

I can report successful recruitment to the Enforcement Officer Vacancy and a month of change as our Interim Enforcement Team Leader Bob Wade moves on and Kevin Peacock takes over as Team Leader. I welcome and support Kevin in his new role.

Staffing

I have been pleased to report success in recruitment since last speaking generally about the issues facing local government in this sector when we last met. I can report recruitment to the team Leader role in Major Developments and also Team Leader Combined Enforcement, a Planning Officer in Development Management, an Enforcement Officer, and a Landscape Officer in our Conservation, Design and Landscape Service.

However, I must also report the following 3 vacancies.

Development Management - 1 Senior Officer Major Projects (under recruitment - interview end January)

Local Plans –1 Senior Officer & 1 Planning Officer – (recruitment campaign January).

Planning & Building Control Support manager – Unsuccessful recruitment campaign – review and restart campaign in January / February.

2 Forthcoming Activities and Developments.

Planning Policy & Build Heritage Working Party – 21 February

Development Committee – 17 February.

3 Meetings attended

Planning Policy & Build Heritage Working Party – 6 December

Development Committee – 16 December & 20 January.

Norfolk Strategic Planning Member Forum. 25 January

Broads and Norfolk Rivers IDB 24 and 27 January

North Norfolk Local Walking and Cycling Infrastructure Plan 19 January

Overview & Scrutiny – 8 December and 12 January

Transport East Strategy consultation – 30 November

Town and Parish Forum – 29 November

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PUBLIC CONVENIENCE INVESTMENT PROGRAMME

Summary: This report outlines proposals in relation to continuing to improve the standard and quality of the District Council's public conveniences as a key element of the district's local infrastructure whilst also proposing a more strategic approach to this service area. The report presents a number of options to improve the public convenience service following on from the previous investment programme and makes a number of recommendations for the next phase of capital works to provide new inclusive, replacement and remodelled facilities in key locations within the District. It also provides a framework for the consideration of a Public Convenience Strategy to help shape the future direction of this important provision.

Options considered: Do nothing.

Explore transfer of public convenience provision to town and parish councils.

Continue the investment programme to make improvements to the quality of the public convenience portfolio.

Adopting a more strategic approach to the management and improvement of these assets.

Conclusions: In conclusion it is recommended that the Cabinet adopt the principles set out in the draft strategy document contained within Appendix A. To further support the Strategy, it is recommended that the capital improvement programme continues to enable the Council to provide quality facilities to residents and visitors alike whilst also focusing on wider accessibility.

Recommendations: **It is recommended that Cabinet resolve to;**

- **Adopt the principles contained within the draft Strategy document contained within Appendix A;**
- **Approve a provisional budget of £30k to support with the evidence gathering recommended within the Strategy, to be funded from the Invest to Save reserve;**
- **Task the Overview and Scrutiny committee with further developing and embedding the draft strategy and considering the further work in relation to evidence collection and engagement proposed and that Cabinet agree the scope of this work; and**

- **Recommend to Full Council that further capital provision of £500,000 is allocated from capital receipts (to include any potential grant funding) to undertake improvements to facilities in Sheringham and North Walsham, to include provision of Changing Places facilities. These facilities will be delivered by the end of the 2022 calendar year.**

Reasons for Recommendations: To provide a more strategic approach to the management and investment off these important assets whilst continuing the capital investment improvement plan.

LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS AS REQUIRED BY LAW

(Papers relied on to write the report, which do not contain exempt information and which are not published elsewhere)

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Cabinet Member(s) Cllr Eric Seward	Ward(s) affected Sheringham, North Walsham
Contact Officer, telephone number and email: Duncan Ellis (Director for Resources), 01263 516330 duncan.ellis@north-norfolk.gov.uk	

1. Introduction

1.1 This report follows on from the previous report brought to Cabinet in September 2018 which secured initial capital funding of £600,000 for investment in the Council’s public convenience facilities. This has since been supplemented by further provision of £137,000 to give a total project budget of £737,000.

1.2 Works completed and scheduled to date include;

- Refurbishment and re-modelling of the following facilities;
 - Lushers Passage, Sheringham
 - Coast Road, Bacton
 - Coast Road, Walcott
- Significant upgrading, remodelling and provision of Changing Places facilities at the following locations;
 - North Norfolk Information Centre, Cromer (completed December 2019)
 - Stearmans Yard, Wells-next-the-Sea (scheduled for completion by the end of the current financial year)
 - Queens Road, Fakenham (scheduled for completion by the end of the current financial year)

- 1.3 At its meeting of October 2017 the Cabinet stated that it would wish to try to provide a Changing Place facility in each of the District's seven principal towns – either directly or in partnership with a private provider or the third sector, so as to meet this specialist need and increase the attraction of the District to all visitors.
- 1.4 The subsequent report in September 2018 outlined the Council's intent in wishing to provide good quality public toilet facilities in locations across the District, recognising that such facilities are key local infrastructure and support the District's thriving tourism economy; building on the District's reputation as being a first class visitor destination.
- 1.5 This first phase of investment will, by the end of the financial year, see the completion and delivery of three new Changing places facilities within the district, being located in Cromer, Wells-next-the-Sea and Fakenham.
- 1.6 This reports looks to secure further capital funding to continue with the programme of public convenience improvements across the district and to support Cabinet's aspirations to provide further Changing Places facilities.

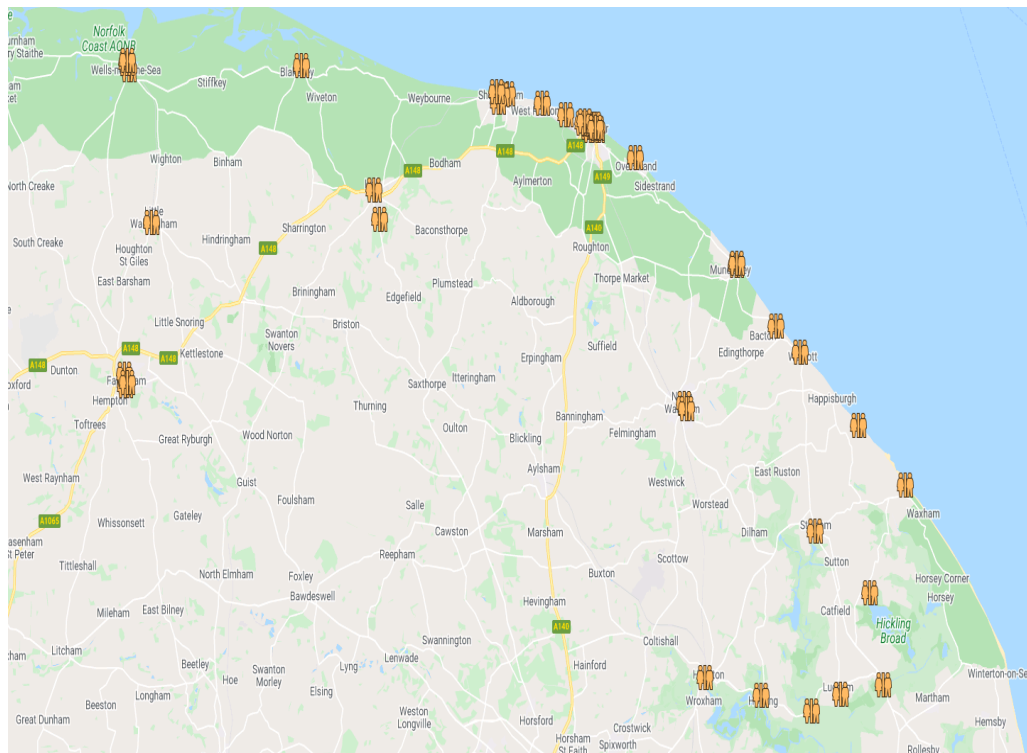
2. Background

- 2.1 The Council has consistently supported the provision of public toilets in the district, acknowledging the elderly demographic of the area, support for the tourism industry and the increasing demand for accessible facilities. Even though the provision of public conveniences is a non-statutory function for local authorities, the Council currently operates 38 public conveniences across the district at key resort and town centre locations including the Broads. Of these, 35 are sited on Council owned property with 3 being on private land leased to the Council. These three are at East Runton, Pauls Lane, Overstrand and Hickling Staithe.
- 2.2 Whilst the Council sees the provision as important, even key to providing infrastructure to support our tourism, leisure and cultural activities, the cost to the Council is significant with the 2021/22 net budget being nearly £730,000. As a discretionary service this leaves the Council with a choice about its provision in the context of decreasing central government funding and budgetary pressures.
- 2.3 The provision of public toilet facilities in North Norfolk spans many decades with facilities in the Broad's villages, seaside resorts and several key market towns and has traditionally been widespread, supporting users of small independent shops as well as busy tourism locations. Many people feel that toilet provision is key to supporting and promoting outdoor activities such as walking, boating and other sporting recreation in a significantly rural area where other provision may be limited.
- 2.4 Many of the facilities are located in key locations such as car parks or high streets and have become an expected provision by many tourists and residents, particularly North Norfolk's aging population. This provision of public toilets, over some 60+ years, has resulted in an array of assets, many that no longer reflect current public expectation of service provision. Small buildings struggle to comply with current Disabled Disability Act (DDA)

standards and despite ongoing refurbishments to update outdated sanitary wear and plumbing, high usage and vandalism makes ongoing maintenance frequent and costly.

- 2.5 Servicing remote and diverse facilities has its challenges, as does the operational issues of a managing facilities over a district spreading some 360 square miles (960 sq/km) and these costs are easy to evidence but, in several cases, where the Council has sought to rationalise or reduce provision, there has been very strong opposition to such proposals.
- 2.6 Maintenance of the provision, such as minor repairs and emergency response, is generally undertaken in-house as part of the Council's Asset Management programme by the Property Services Team. The small team of maintenance operatives is able to undertake works seven days a week when necessary which is very important during peak holiday periods when blockages and breakages can be frequent. Major refurbishments are contracted out but managed by the same team. On a day to day basis, NNDC manages a cleansing contract with Serco to undertake regular cleaning and reporting of maintenance issues.

Figure 1 – location of Council operated public conveniences



3. Public Convenience Strategy

- 3.1 A draft Strategy document is presented within Appendix A for further discussion and consideration. This Strategy provides a framework within which to make objective, informed decisions about the future direction of the service and the stock and makes a number of recommendations regarding further engagement with the public and collection of evidence to support decision making.

- 3.2 It provides the basis of a vision for service delivery and improvement, assesses the current situation and ambitions for the future in terms of service development and delivery and then considers a high level implementation plan. The Strategy also contains a high level assessment of provision across the District and indicates areas where potentially provision is low and two of these areas (Sheringham and North Walsham) are recommended for further improvement works below.
- 3.3 There are also a number of recommendations included in terms of gathering and improving various sources of evidence and information to help better inform decision making. It is recommended that a provisional budget of £30k is allocated from the Invest to Save reserve to support with this work given the current workload of the Property team.
- 3.4 It is recommended that the Overview and Scrutiny committee are tasked with further developing and embedding the draft strategy and considering the further work required in relation to evidence collection and engagement proposed and that Cabinet agree the scope of this work.

4. Changing Places provision

- 4.1 Where previously the Council have sought to keep DDA compliant facilities available through the RADAR key system, more recently there has been a drive for public provision of more inclusive [Changing Places facilities](#).
- 4.2 The Changing Places Consortium campaigns for public toilets, for people with significant/or complex health conditions, that are spacious and clean, with suitable equipment including a changing bench (adult sized), mobile hoist, space for up to two carers and centrally placed toilet and screen.
- 4.3 According to the consortium, there are as many as 250,000 people nationwide who would benefit from this type of facility. Anecdotally, it would seem many people organise their holidays and trips out around the provision of such facilities.
- 4.4 As outlined above, the Council has an aspiration to provide one of these facilities in each resort and market town if possible, the first was opened as part of the Cromer NNIC refurbishment at the end of 2019. On 29 July the government announced funding proposals for a £30m Changing Places Toilet (CPTs) investment programme, the prospectus for which can be accessed [here](#).
- 4.5 Local authorities (district councils and unitary authorities) were invited to lodge Expressions of Interest (EOIs) in this programme by 26th September 2021 to receive funding. Every local authority that opted in to this programme was able to receive capital funding equivalent to the average cost of installing at least one Changing Places toilet in their area (based on cost average assumption of £40k).
- 4.6 Whilst the outcome of this funding submission has not yet been confirmed for the purposes of agreeing this capital request it has been assumed that a minimum of £40k will be forthcoming from this application process. Should the wider bid be successful there will be an opportunity for further development and improvement of other facilities.

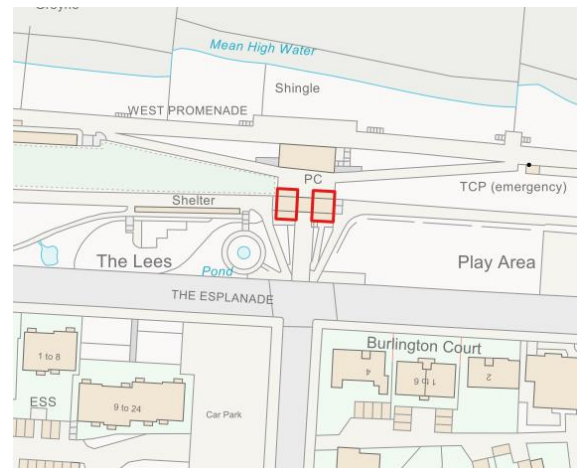
5. Additional work proposals

- 5.1 It is recommended that the next phase of works focuses on facilities in Sheringham (the Leas) and North Walsham (exact location to be agreed but to replace the current Vicarage Street facilities), to include overall modernisation, improvement and provision of Changing Places facilities. These facilities will be delivered by the end of the 2022 calendar year.

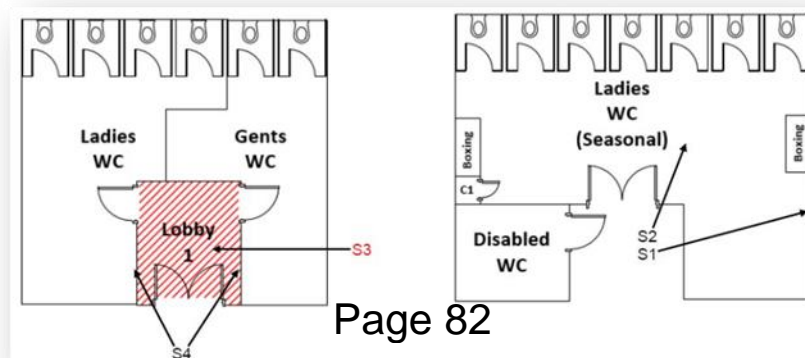
Sheringham – The Leas



- 5.2 These unique toilets are located in the busy and popular area known as Sheringham Leas. Overlooking the west promenade and beaches the two separate blocks are spanned by a pedestrian bridge linking two amenity areas. Their Palladian style include stained glass windows and fully tiled interiors, although it would be fair to say this once decadent facility is now faded. The west block is used year round with the additional east section providing additional seasonal ladies toilets and the accessible toilet.



- 5.3 Alternative uses for this prominent site have been explored but dismissed given the challenge of finding a suitable, alternative site for new facilities.



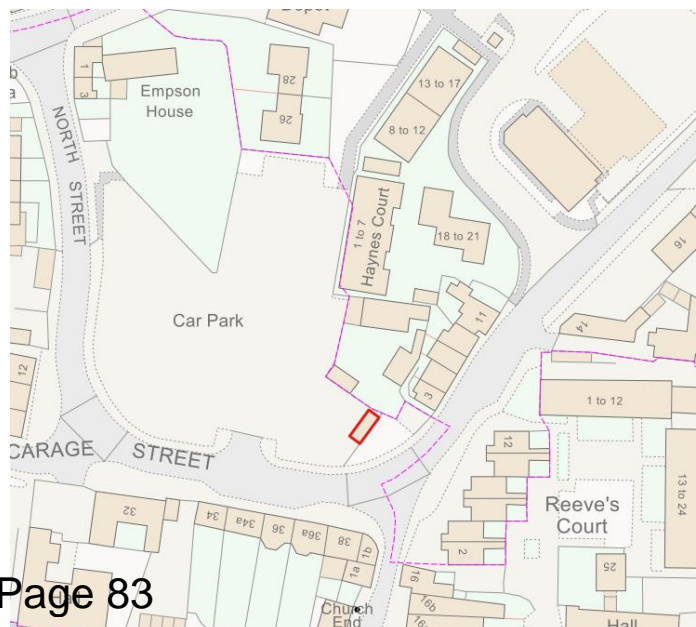
5.4 This premises have the highest running costs of any public convenience in NNDCs portfolio, often due to failure of Victorian drains, with average yearly spend of nearly £12,000.

- **North Walsham - Vicarage Street replacement**



5.5 This public convenience is located on Vicarage Street car park in North Walsham close to a popular thoroughfare between the town and Sainsburys store. The car park also has the town's only public coach park, although this is seldom used for coach parking. The modular block is unique to NNDC having been acquired (second hand) from a London borough in 2012. The individual pods are fitted out in stainless steel to reduce vandalism. It has one accessible toilet with ramped access.

5.6 It has an average spend of just over £6k per annum. It should be noted that, while this investment is to re-provide these facilities, the exact location of this re-provision is yet to be agreed.



6. Corporate Plan Objectives

- 6.1 There are two elements of the Corporate Plan supported by this report, the first directly supports Objective 7 under the 'Quality of Life' theme which includes the following;

Public convenience investment programme to include a Changing Places facility in each of our seven principal settlements

7.1. Maintain the quality and accessibility of public conveniences, ensuring they are suitable to the needs of the community and visitors to the area.

- 6.2 The second comes under Objective 1 of the 'Financial Sustainability and Growth' theme which includes the following;

Continuously reviewing our service delivery arrangements, fees and charges to ensure that we deliver value for money

1.2 Develop a public convenience policy to identify ways in which the current £600k a year spend on the provision of public conveniences (to serve users of town centres, recreational and visitor attractions) can be funded, so that good quality provision can be maintained whilst providing council tax payers with value for money.

- 6.3 Agreeing to the proposals outlined within this report will add a further two Changing Places facilities within the District which will then take the total provision to six facilities including the new development at the Reef in Sheringham.
- 6.4 Further to this adoption of the Strategy will help to provide a framework for consideration of future investment and operation of the facilities.

7. Medium Term Financial Strategy

- 7.1 While this continued improvement programme represents a significant amount to invest in a non-statutory service there is an expectation from residents and visitors alike that there is good provision of public conveniences across the District.

- 7.2 However, this level of investment will see a significant improvement to the highlighted facilities, one of which is the costliest from an operational perspective across the entire portfolio. The investment will have a beneficial impact in terms of ongoing revenue costs and reactive works, which are far costlier by their very nature than planned works and the improved facilities will be more efficient to operate.

- 6.3 There is a risk that if the Council does not invest in these assets that the buildings and facilities will continue to deteriorate leading to increased responsive maintenance costs, undermining the Council's reputation and ambition as a quality tourism destination of choice.

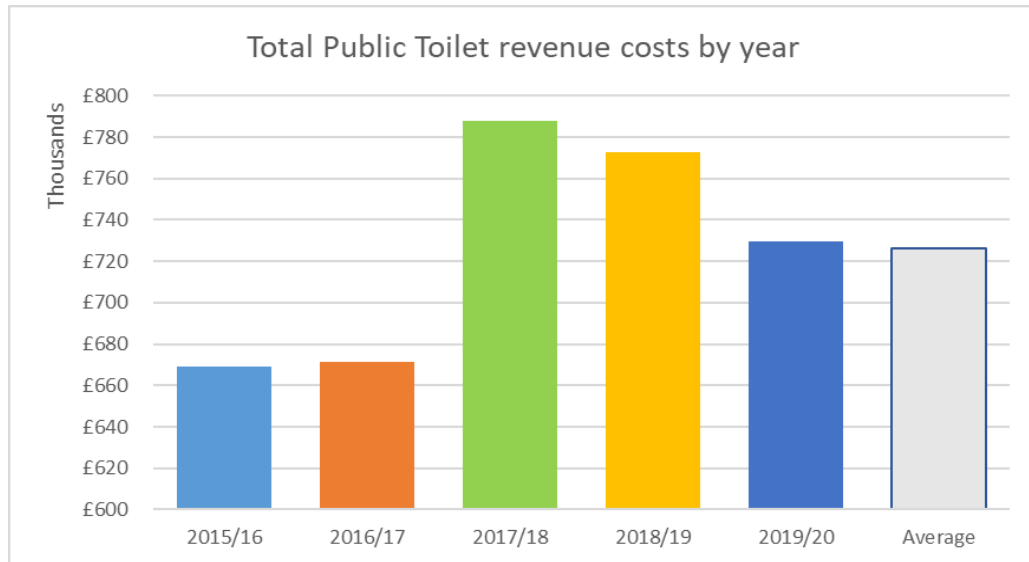
8. Financial and Resource Implications

- 8.1 The cost of operating the Council's public toilets is split across revenue budgets managed by Property Services; which cover general maintenance

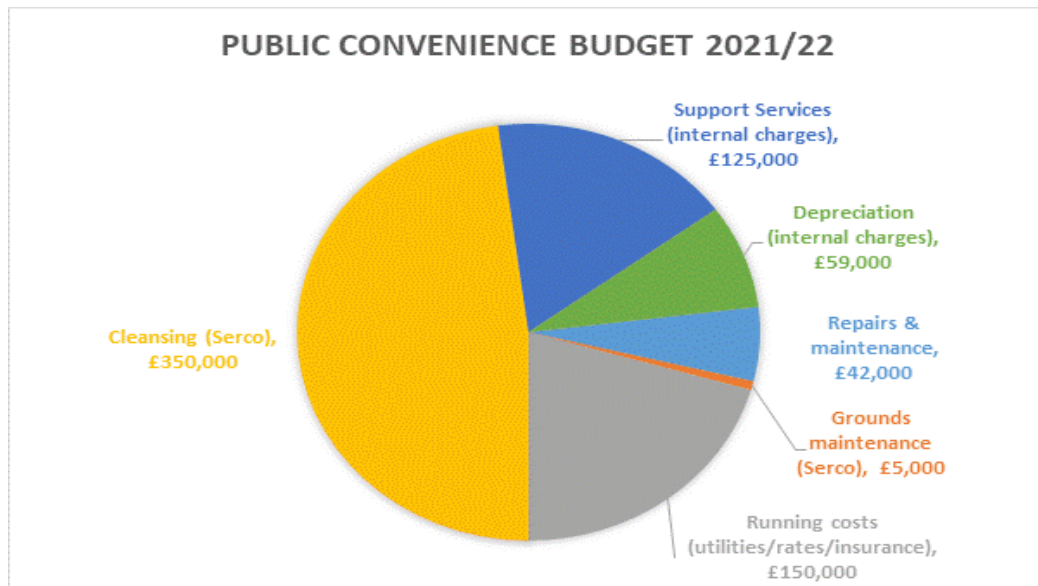
and running costs including repairs and utilities and a separate budget, forming part of the waste contract, which is assigned for daily cleansing. In addition, there have been several capital investment programmes approved for refurbishments over previous years.

8.2 The graph below shows revenue expenditure over the last 5 years. This averages £726k per year. It should be noted that these costs include depreciation and internal service support (MU) recharges.

Graph 1 - Revenue costs per year



8.3 The following diagram shows the high level breakdown of the 2021/22 budget for the annual operation of the Council’s public conveniences.



8.4 This year’s budget totals £731k, of which direct costs represent 75% of the budget while indirect costs (depreciation and support service charges) account for the remaining 25%. As can be clearly seen, the largest element of expenditure is the cleansing contract undertaken by Serco and represents almost half of the entire budget.

9. Legal Implications

- 9.1 There are not considered to be any legal implications as a direct result of this report of these proposals at the current time.

10. Risks

- 10.1 A detailed risk register will be completed as part of the project governance proposals along with the necessary project documentation which will be discussed and agreed with the Corporate Delivery Unit (CDU).
- 10.2 In terms of the general risks associated with not progressing with the proposals as outlined, there is a significant risk that, without an overall Strategy, decisions regarding the future investment and operation of the service provision will be made in an ad hoc and un-coordinated way.
- 10.3 Failure to invest in these facilities will see revenue costs continue to increase as the facilities age and become less fit for purpose. The Council would also be failing to deliver on two of the objectives outlined within the Corporate Plan.
11. Reputationally there is a risk that poor facilities attract negative comments and press coverage in an area which the Council has highlighted as representing key infrastructure for the District.

12. Sustainability

- 12.1 The sustainability of the facilities in terms of their operation, cleansing and fit out will be considered as part of the works specification for the improvement and will be undertaken by the Property Services team in conjunction with key officers and architects.

13. Climate / Carbon impact

- 13.1 The Property team will engage with the Climate and Environmental Policy Manager to ensure that any opportunity to improve the carbon impact of these facilities is taken as part of these improvement works.

14. Equality and Diversity

- 14.1 The inclusion of two further Changing Places facilities as part of these improvement works impacts positively in terms of equality and diversity and these aspects will be further considered as part of the overall design of the general improvement works as well for each facility.

15. Section 17 Crime and Disorder considerations

- 15.1 As with other similar improvement schemes as part of the design process the Council will engage with the police to ensure they have no concerns in relation to anti-social behaviour.

16. Conclusion and Recommendations

- 16.1 In conclusion it is recommended that the Cabinet adopt the principles set out in the draft strategy document contained within Appendix A. To further

support the Strategy, it is recommended that the capital improvement programme continues to enable the Council to provide quality facilities to residents and visitors alike whilst also focusing on wider accessibility.

It is recommended that Cabinet resolve to;

- **Adopt the principles contained within the draft Strategy document contained within Appendix A;**
- **Approve a provisional budget of £30k to support with the evidence gathering recommended within the Strategy, to be funded from the Invest to Save reserve;**
- **Task the Overview and Scrutiny committee with further developing and embedding the draft strategy and considering the further work in relation to evidence collection and engagement proposed and that Cabinet agree the scope of this work; and**
- **Recommend to Full Council that further capital provision of £500,000 is allocated from capital receipts (to include any potential grant funding) to undertake improvements to facilities in Sheringham and North Walsham, to include provision of Changing Places facilities. These facilities will be delivered by the end of the 2022 calendar year.**

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2021

Public Convenience Strategy



NORTH
NORFOLK
DISTRICT
COUNCIL

Maxine Collis

North Norfolk District Council

11/1/2021

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Public Convenience Strategy

Introduction

In order to bring about a refreshed view of how we manage the public convenience portfolio to greater effect, we are seeking to create a strategic view of the public convenience assets and their management. This strategy seeks to provide a structured plan for assessing each facility, prioritising improvements based on public usage/need and to reflect the Council's desire to provide comprehensive, quality toilet amenities to support local residents, town centre businesses and visitors alike.

This strategy forms an integral part of the Council's corporate plan in the areas of both growth and financial sustainability as well as customer focus and quality of life goals. This approach supports wellbeing in the community and echoes the council's 'A better place' ethos.

This strategy will present an overview of the current facilities and reflect on growing trends and needs of our community and visitors. This will include reviewing alternative options for sites with very low usage, identifying any appropriate future need or improvements in the context of a green agenda. Identifying new policies and creating an implementation plan.

Key elements of this Strategy are the:

- Vision
- Ambition
- Implementation Plan
- Public Toilet Decision toolkits

The Implementation Plan will identify a number of recommendations which will lead to a capital works programme being developed which will detail upgrades and refurbishment of existing facilities where needed.

Where there is a community need for a new toilet, two decision making tools have been included to assist the council in making fair and unbiased decisions.

The Vision

To provide and maintain good quality publicly accessible toilets across North Norfolk where there is an identified need for public toilet provision. This is to be supported by a targeted investment programme by the Council and more innovative ways of managing public toilets.

For the management of this service area this means;

- A. On current provision;
 - To ensure a suitable investment programme is in place to maintain toilets to a high standard of cleanliness and functionality to enhance the safety, health and wellbeing of all users.
 - To ensure toilets are well signposted and easily accessible for all users
 - To review the existing provision and resolve strategic network gaps and over provision.
 - Actively consider alternative provision where feasible.
 - To regularly review expenditure and seek ways to reduce revenue costs.

B. On Future design of toilets to;

- reflect need
- be visually attractive and empathic to their surroundings,
- be safe, fully inclusive and accessible to users of all ages and abilities,
- be able to minimising occurrences of anti-social behaviour through careful design and future management,
- have minimal impact on the environment through good design and technology features.

Background

The **Public Convenience Review Document 2021** provides information on each of the **38 public toilets** managed by NNDC as well as an overview of the costs and challenges of the overall provision. The document also undertakes a short review of the approach of other local authorities to this challenge and some of the solutions found. A summary identifies the issues NNDC faces in providing these facilities in the future.

It is generally understood that the provision of public conveniences is not a statutory obligation and that the extensive resource budget is borne through a desire to provide local residents and visitors alike with infrastructure that supports the use of our town centres and coastal and Broad's resorts.

However, with rising costs and shrinking budgets it is appropriate to review provision and identify better, fairer and more efficient ways of working in order to ensure continued provision at a good standard.

The review document was discussed by the Business Planning Group who identified some aspects for the Strategy to consider. These elements are listed below.

Business PG comments

- The Council should aim to provide 1 'high standard' public provision at Cromer, Fakenham, Wells, Sheringham, North Walsham and Holt. These will include a separate accessible toilet, changing places facility, family room and all-gender facilities (where possible) with appropriate directional signage and fit-out decoration in NNDC's corporate colours.
- Explore:
 - outsourcing with assurance of continuation / the creation of a proactive programme to identify toilets to be transferred to new ownership along with limited budgets
 - different forms of operation
 - installation of solar panels and other green solutions
 - advertising/sponsorship
 - community toilet schemes
- Identify ways to:
 - Cap rising costs and lower expenditure - maintain toilets with same/less money
 - Target investment only where needed.
 - Maximise relief on NNDR (already completed)
- DO NOT consider charging

The current situation

We currently provide 39 separate toilet blocks in 23 localities. We have minimal accurate data on usage but we know many have high seasonal use in line with the many resort locations along our coastline and in the broad's region.



The Public Convenience Review document 2021 gives further details of each asset including its layout, provision and current condition.

Gathering Evidence

One of the key issues with changing how the service is managed is that public toilets can be a very emotive subject. Therefore, decisions are not always based on need or in the context of the wider portfolio, due, in part, to a lack of evidence from monitoring any change. This leads to decisions sometimes being made in isolation or at best on anecdotal evidence. Therefore, in order to progress the service; to clarify its function and determine best practice for the future it is necessary to gain solid evidence where possible.

In the Public Convenience Review document 2021 the result of counters measuring footfall of public convenience use was illustrated. This data collection was carried out at 9 of our 39 facilities. Whilst there are no real surprises in the diverse usage shown by the data collection exercise, we have no other information collated to help us make better, more informed decisions. We have anecdotal evidence of the need to keep facilities open, but no actual evidence on what exactly users want. Equally, we know there is some public provision through local visitor attractions and businesses, but we do not know the saturation of such provision, assuming it to be minimal because of the lack of national or large food/retail chains in the area.

With this in mind the service will need to undertake an audit to seek responses to some of the following questions:

- What is the true need? i.e. Do people value quality over extent of provision? Feeling safe over extended opening? (in other words - what exactly do the local population and visitors want?)
- Where is there (geographically) greatest need?
- Where use is low – is it because better provision is made close by?
- How many changing places should we / do we want to provide?

- Are there other services that could be included?
- Are we prepared for spending on toilet provision to increase? And if so by how much?
- If not – how do we reduce costs without reducing the ability to support local economies?

Our ambition

- 1) There is a keen desire to ensure all the district's key towns and resorts are served by at least one **High Standard facility**.

Currently, although it does not offer gender-neutral facilities (these are offered elsewhere in the town), we would consider that Cromer's North Norfolk Visitor Centre offers a 'high standard' of public toilet provision. In 2022, new facilities being installed at Wells and Fakenham will also be considered 'high standard' provision. Consideration is now being given to future facilities at North Walsham and Sheringham.

Where possible external funding opportunities need to be sought to reduce the cost to the Council.

In that vein, on 29 July 2021 the government announced funding proposals for a £30m Changing Places Toilet (CPTs) investment programme. Expressions of interest has been declared by NNDC. Every local authority that opted in to this programme was able to receive capital funding equivalent to the average cost of installing at least one Changing Places toilet in their area (based on cost average assumption of £40k).

Whilst the outcome of this funding submission has not yet been confirmed for the purposes of agreeing this capital request it has been assumed that a minimum of £40k will be forthcoming from this application process.

- 2) That a periodic 'assessment of need' is carried out to determine any changes to provision that may be required. This should include reviewing feasibility of alternative provision such as through a **Community Toilet Scheme** or **adoption** of the facility by alternative statutory body or, if appropriate future proofing safeguards are in place, a private provider.
- 3) Any facilities where it is considered a new facility would be more compliant and more cost effective than updating the current one, AND no other provision is feasible, must seek to:
 - include green energy solutions such as solar panels or ground source heat pumps.
 - use Decision Matrix 2 to assess the number of WCs required for that location and that these should include accessible toilets, a family room and all-gender facilities and,
 - include a changing place facility if it is a) located in a key resort or town (and no other provision is made) and b) if site size permits.
 - ensure the internal design is compliant with corporate branding and standard fitting/fixtures
- 4) Where a location could be considered to offer more WCs than required for that location and a facility is particularly difficult to maintain, is non DDA compliant and is within 800m of another facility, then this facility could be considered for closure.
- 5) Closure may also be considered where provision on an alternative site in the same locality is preferable and where the sale of the redundant asset would enable the construction of a new facility.

- 6) That periodic surveys of each asset should be undertaken to identify absences in standard provision based on customer experience to include aspects of convenience, lighting, etc as set out in the Loo of the year criteria.
- 7) That either a periodic survey (approx. 5 years?) be carried out to obtain customer satisfaction feedback on toilet provision in North Norfolk or an on-line public feedback system in enabled to capture feedback for consideration of issues and ideas to further improve service provision.

Key elements of High Quality Facilities

Accessible toilets Accessible toilets with standard provision of space and equipment have been in operation since the 1970s so many of the Council facilities provided these as part of the creation of the building. The council uses the radar key system to restrict use, although these are now widely and cheaply purchased by anyone. Accessible toilets assume some level of ability to use the facility alone or with some assistance and these differ from the equipment required by changing rooms or changing places facilities.

Changing Places Originating in 2006, Changing Places facilities are designed for people who require a hoist to use a toilet. The facilities differ from standard accessible or disabled toilets as they include additional features such as an adult change table, hoist, shower, screens and large circulation spaces. There has been an increasing interest in the provision of Changing Places facilities across both the private and government sectors, particularly in locations that attract regular crowds, such as sports and recreation facilities.

Changing Places facilities are vital pieces of community infrastructure which allow members of the public who with specific needs to participate in the day-to-day activities across the District.

The key barrier that constrains Council's in providing these facilities is lack of space/footprint requirements of the facility (min 12m²) and expense of facility (£12k for kit alone).

Family Rooms – offer a larger gender neutral space for families – specifically young children/babies to use. They would include a toilet, baby change, and sufficient space for sole use of a small family group and pushchair/pram etc. Space/footprint of current facilities is usually a barrier to the Council offering this facility.

All Gender toilets – (aka Gender neutral/unisex) are becoming more popular to keep in line with equality and diversity legislation. Although not universally popular they do offer a completely self-contained room with hand washing and drying facilities and individual external doors. This does enable improved management of the facility because during maintenance or repair, it is rare to have to close all units at the same time.

Considered opening times - High standard facilities should offer long opening hours to service evening customers as well as early morning ones, such as market traders. This is particularly key where the facility is close to a transport hub.

Regular cleansing/inspection – High standard facilities require regular cleaning and inspection particularly in peak season/times. Complaints need to be dealt with quickly and effectively and should be seen as a key indicator for change.

Maintenance and Décor – Such facilities need to be well maintained through surveys and inspections with priority given to any remedial work. Corporate colours, quality fixtures and fittings and clear signage is also a key element of these facilities.

Loo of the year awards¹- The ‘Loo of the Year Awards’ offer a useful criteria tick box list that the Council should seek to comply with whether or not the facility is entered for the competition. The criteria include things like; cubicle size, user convenience, cleanliness, flooring, lighting etc. Full details can be seen via the link below.

Q Are there any more?

Managing the service

The service needs to continue on the basis of providing an excellent service. In order to do this effectively it needs to gather evidence where possible to inform future decision making and this includes collecting customer feedback, actively taking a more strategic view of its portfolio and regularly reviewing how and why something is being done.

Ability to reduce costs

With the current situation regarding rising interest rates (particularly to energy supplies) and pressures to find green solutions not to mention supply chain difficulties with obtaining goods and materials it could be concluded that making substantial cuts to running costs is not realistic or feasible if the current desire to provide a geographically wide ranging, quality service is upheld.

It would be anticipated that an increase in improvements to assets would realise a short term reduction in wear and tear related maintenance as would the installation of improved designs around vandalism but it would be unrealistic to assume these would be negated entirely.

Resources are an ongoing issue for the Service and it is easy in such circumstances to focus on reactionary maintenance over strategic planning. This is entirely understandable as a prime need by the user of the convenience is that they function! However, it is important to get ahead of the curve and to look at the long term provision and how this is best provided. Only on a solid evidence base can we ensure the delivery of the ambition.

Ensuring due diligence and consideration

It must be remembered that whilst a holistic approach is desirable for clarity and focus, determining the most appropriate response to an issue should be site/context specific and what works in one location to deter anti-social behaviour may not apply in other locations. Responses should also consider the diversity and density of activities around the toilet, particularly evening activities, 24-hour availability presents a range of challenges, particularly in relation to safety and perceptions around anti-social behaviour during the evening. The provision of additional toilets to service the night time economy is not considered necessary due to the availability of privately owned toilets found in restaurants and bars. It is therefore recommended that the Council should retain existing operating arrangements continue to monitor this need as development and land use patterns change over time.

¹ [Enter The Loo of the Year Awards](#)

Implementation Plan

Step 1: Seek to enable periodic or ongoing customer feedback (by April 2022)

Through an on line submission of comments/feedback or through a dedicated questionnaire, obtain feedback on the public conveniences, what the needs are and where they are required. Aim to create a base line to work against to gauge the effect of improvements.

Step 2: Undertake a holistic audit of NNDC's public convenience assets (by June 2022)

One of the key features of reviews undertaken by other authorities is to take a holistic view of the portfolio. What this enables is the ability to take an objective view of the provision and align it with other data including visitor numbers, local businesses and attractions and other local provision. In addition, information on accessibility, convenience and desirability can help to shape future provision and prioritise key developments. By acknowledging 'not all things are equal' will enable budgets to be spent proportionately, helping to identify where capital spend should be allocated and where new, additional or key facilities should be sited.

Given the general desire to maintain current facilities it is difficult to identify significant budget savings without reducing provision but as part of this process a review of costs could be undertaken to identify any savings or income generating elements such as advertising or car park levy.

In addition to seeking to ensure our provision fulfils need, it may be possible to created added value by taking a fresh look at other elements, for example;

- Are there opportunities to make environmental improvements? (ie PV panels)
- Are there better ways to provide the service?
- What future demands and legislation may change what we provide in the future?

In addition, a comprehensive review could culminate in a strong vision or statement of intent – a written 'standard' on what the Council wishes to provide, backed up by evidence and supported by key stakeholders alike.



Ensure the audit contains information on each site with regard to; cleansing requirements, opening hours, perceived safety, lighting etc.

NB This element is likely to require additional funding and should proceed as a separate project through due process.

Step 3: Review audit (by Sept 2022)

Identify and prioritise improvements identified. Submit capital bids and implementation changes if funding is approved. Use Sheringham and North Walsham proposals as a test bed for evidencing change.

Step 4: Evidence work requests and needs (on going)

When requests for new build or refurbishments of public toilet facilities are received then use the decision matrix to determine the priority of the request or whether a different approach would be more suitable.

Step 5: Create supporting policies to clarify decision making processes (by Sept 2022)

Step 6: Prepare a 10-year plan/works programme (as part of Asset Management Plan - autumn 2022)

It is important to future proof the provision through a realistic improvement/management programme. This should be a holistic plan showing the results of the audit and identifying costs for improvements. The plan should also include conclusions regarding outsourcing and/or community toilet scheme development.

Whilst stronger evidence is gathered to inform the requirements the following decision matrixes (appendix 1) can be used to identify need and prioritise refurbishments.

As the plan is implemented it will be necessary to submit project proposals and capital bid forms in line with Council procedures.

Appendix 1 Decision Toolkits

Decision matrix 1 – assessing need

Public Toilet use - assessment of need												
Locations	Resident Pop	Key tourist hot spot?	Nos of Key facilities (ie banks, range of shops)	Other stand alone public toilet facilities?	Estimated provision by shops, cafes etc to customers?	Less than 500m to public car park, railway/ bus station?	KEY					
Bacton	1249	MEDIUM	LOW	NO	LOW	NO						
Blakeney	758	HIGH	MED	YES	MED	YES						
Cromer	7738	V HIGH	V HIGH	NO	VERY HIGH	YES						
Fakenham	7785	MEDIUM	V HIGH	NO	HIGH	YES						
Cart Gap (Happisburgh)	875	MEDIUM	LOW	NO	LOW	YES						
Holt	4189	HIGH	V HIGH	YES	VERY HIGH	YES						
Horning	1146	MEDIUM	MED	NO	MED	NO						
Hoveton	2078	MEDIUM	HIGH	NO	MED	YES						
Hickling	935	MEDIUM	LOW	NO	LOW	YES						
Ludham	1278	MEDIUM	MED	NO	LOW	NO						
Mundesley	2727	HIGH	HIGH	YES	MED	YES						
North Walsham	12901	LOW	V HIGH	NO	MED	YES						
Overstrand	980	HIGH	MED	NO	MED	YES						
Potter Heigham	1045	MEDIUM	LOW	NO	LOW	YES						
East & West Runton	1639	HIGH	MED	NO	MED	YES						
Sea Palling	596	HIGH	MED	NO	HIGH	YES						
Sheringham	7365	V HIGH	V HIGH	YES	LOW	YES						
Stalham	3615	MEDIUM	HIGH	NO	MED	YES						
Walcott	546	MEDIUM	LOW	NO	LOW	NO						
Walsingham	761	HIGH	MED	NO	MED	NO						
Wells	2283	V HIGH	V HIGH	YES	HIGH	YES						
Weybourne	513	MEDIUM	LOW	NO	LOW	YES						

Key tourist spot?	Very High	Has significant hostelry enterprises and visitor attractions throughout the year
	High	Caters for large seasonal influx with some B&Bs, cafes etc but no single attraction
	Medium	Has a good number of seasonal visitors primarily with specific aim (ie visit beach, racecourse, broads, pilgrimage)
	Low	Local economy not largely reliant on visitors
Nos of Key facilities (ie banks, range of shops)	Very High	Lots of shops , banks, service provision inc schools and libraries
	High	A range of small shops
	Medium	Likely to be one or two food stores and other gift or specialist shops
	Low	One or two shops
Other standalone toilets	As identified on British toilet map or local knowledge	
Customer toilets <small>Cafes, Restaurants, Hotels, Large shops and chains</small>	Very High	> 8 may be provided
	High	>5 but <8 toilets may be provided
	Medium	>2 but <5 toilets may be provided
	Low	<2 places toilets may be provided

Scoring Need	Pop.	Tourism	No of facilities	Other PUBLIC toilets	Customer provision	Close to transport hub?			
	1pt/1000 (rounded)	VH 10, High 7, med 3, low 1		approx no WCs provided	Est no (ie pubs, cafes) low = -1, high = -5	Yes = 1 No=0	Min WC provision	Actual prov	Tolerance within 2
Bacton	1	3	1	0	-1	0	4	4	ok
Blakeney	1	7	3	-1	-3	1	8	9	ok
Cromer	8	10	10	0	-5	1	24	49	high
Fakenham	8	1	10	0	-3	1	17	18	ok
Cart Gap (Happisburgh)	1	3	1	0	-1	1	5	6	ok
Holt	4	10	10	-5	-5	1	15	8	low
Horning	1	3	3	0	-3	0	4	6	ok
Hoveton	2	3	7	0	-3	1	10	15	high
Hickling	1	3	1	0	-1	0	4	7	high
Ludham	1	3	1	0	-1	0	4	13	high
Mundesley	3	10	7	-4	-3	1	14	13	ok
North Walsham	13	1	10	0	-3	1	22	12	low
Overstrand	1	7	3	0	-3	1	9	7	ok
Potter Heigham	1	7	1	0	-1	0	8	7	ok
East & West Runton	2	7	3	0	-1	1	12	11	ok
Sea Palling	1	7	3	0	-1	1	11	9	ok
Sheringham	7	10	10	-5	-5	1	18	30	High
Stalham	3	3	7	0	-3	0	10	5	low
Walcott	1	3	1	0	-1	0	4	5	ok
Walsingham	7	3	1	0	-3	0	8	7	ok
Wells	2	10	10	-8	-5	1	10	24	high
Weybourne	1	3	1	0	-1	1	5	1	low

Decision matrix 2 – for refurbishment or replacement decision

Question	For example	Response	Suitable Evidence base
Does the implementation of Matrix 1 show an on-going need?		YES/NO	Undertake survey
Is there a demonstrated community demand or volume of requests for this facility to be replaced or refurbished?		YES/NO	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evidence from the community or Council audits/records that the existing facility is not adequately functioning • Maintenance requests from community • Community surveys • Local masterplans
Is there a H&S reason these facilities should be replaced or refurbished?	Broken or dangerous fittings/structures/poor hygiene, evidence of vermin	YES/NO	Internal or external surveys
Is the existing public toilet in poor condition?	Vandalism, wear and tear, features not working, issues with smell or vermin	YES/NO	observations or anecdotal information from the community, Council staff, cleaning, service or maintenance contractors
Does the existing toilet have a low level of usage?	Location and siting, opening hours and availability	YES/NO	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Counters if previously used • Observations or anecdotal information from the community, Council staff, cleaning, service or maintenance contractors • Maintenance costs • Water usage, levels of toilet paper, soap consumed weekly, monthly or annually

Does the toilet have appropriate fixtures or fittings?	DDA Compliance Universal access Site specific features	YES/NO	Inspections / surveys set against optimum provision levels
Is there an existing public or planned toilet nearby?	Toilets within 800m of the proposed location Evidence of community toilets that are accessible within 800m? (e.g. libraries, community centres, indoor sport/ recreation centres) Privately operated public toilets within close proximity? (e.g. Shopping Centre, restaurant)	YES/NO	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Site survey and investigation • Town centre strategies • National Toilet map
Does the toilet enhance community safety, health and wellbeing or offer social value?	Does it significantly contribute to existing network? Needs of different groups? Locality & environment	YES/NO	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Site survey and investigation • Social engine to measure social value of investment

Introduction

The Authority has adopted the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy's *Treasury Management in the Public Services: Code of Practice* (the CIPFA Code) which requires the Authority to approve treasury management semi-annual and annual reports. This quarterly report provides an additional update.

The Authority's treasury management strategy for 2021/22 was approved at a meeting on 24th February 2021. The Authority has borrowed and invested substantial sums of money and is therefore exposed to financial risks including the loss of invested funds and the revenue effect of changing interest rates. The successful identification, monitoring and control of risk remains central to the Authority's treasury management strategy.

The 2017 Prudential Code includes a requirement for local authorities to provide a Capital Strategy, a summary document approved by full Council covering capital expenditure and financing, treasury management and non-treasury investments. The Authority's Capital Strategy, complying with CIPFA's requirement, was approved by full Council on 24th February 2021.

External Context

Economic background: The economic recovery from coronavirus pandemic continued to dominate the first half of the financial year. By the end of the period over 48 million people in the UK had received their first dose of a COVID-19 vaccine and almost 45 million their second dose.

The Bank of England (BoE) held Bank Rate at 0.1% throughout the period and maintained its Quantitative Easing programme at £895 billion, unchanged since the November 2020 meeting. In its September 2021 policy announcement, the BoE noted it now expected the UK economy to grow at a slower pace than was predicted in August, as the pace of the global recovery had shown signs of slowing and there were concerns inflationary pressures may be more persistent. Within the announcement, Bank expectations for GDP growth for the third (calendar) quarter were revised down to 2.1% (from 2.9%), in part reflecting tighter supply conditions. The path of CPI inflation is now expected to rise slightly above 4% in the last three months of 2021, due to higher energy prices and core goods inflation. While the Monetary Policy Committee meeting ended with policy rates unchanged, the tone was more hawkish.

Government initiatives continued to support the economy over the quarter but came to an end on 30th September 2021, with businesses required to either take back the 1.6 million workers on the furlough scheme or make them redundant.

The latest labour market data showed that in the three months to July 2021 the unemployment rate fell to 4.6%. The employment rate increased, and economic activity rates decreased, suggesting an improving labour market picture. Latest data showed growth in average total pay (including bonuses) and regular pay (excluding bonuses) among employees was 8.3% and 6.3% respectively over the period. However, part of the robust

growth figures is due to a base effect from a decline in average pay in the spring of last year associated with the furlough scheme.

The Bank of England now expects inflation to exceed 4% by the end of the calendar year owing largely to developments in energy and goods prices. The Office of National Statistics' (ONS') preferred measure of CPIH which includes owner-occupied housing was 3.0% year/year, marginally higher than expectations for 2.7%.

The easing of restrictions boosted activity in the second quarter of calendar year, helping push GDP up by 5.5% q/q (final estimate vs 4.8% q/q initial estimate). Household consumption was the largest contributor. Within the sector breakdown production contributed 1.0% q/q, construction 3.8% q/q and services 6.5% q/q, taking all of these close to their pre-pandemic levels.

Financial markets: Monetary and fiscal stimulus together with rising economic growth and the ongoing vaccine rollout programmes continued to support equity markets over most of the period, albeit with a bumpy ride towards the end. The Dow Jones hit another record high while the UK-focused FTSE 250 index continued making gains over pre-pandemic levels. The more internationally focused FTSE 100 saw more modest gains over the period and remains below its pre-crisis peak.

Inflation worries continued during the period. Declines in bond yields in the first quarter of the financial year suggested bond markets were expecting any general price increases to be less severe, or more transitory, that was previously thought. However, an increase in gas prices in the UK and EU, supply shortages and a dearth of HGV and lorry drivers with companies willing to pay more to secure their services, has caused problems for a range of industries and, in some instance, lead to higher prices.

Credit review: Over the period Fitch and Moody's upwardly revised to stable the outlook on a number of UK banks and building societies on our counterparty list, recognising their improved capital positions compared to last year and better economic growth prospects in the UK.

The successful vaccine rollout programme is credit positive for the financial services sector in general and the improved economic outlook has meant some institutions have been able to reduce provisions for bad loans. While there is still uncertainty around the full extent of the losses banks and building societies will suffer due to the pandemic-related economic slowdown, the sector is in a generally better position now compared to earlier this year and 2020.

As ever, the institutions and durations on the Authority's counterparty list recommended by treasury management advisors Arlingclose remain under constant review.

Local Context

On 31st March 2021, the Authority had net investments of £41.810m arising from its revenue and capital income and expenditure. The underlying need to borrow for capital purposes is measured by the Capital Financing Requirement (CFR), while usable reserves and working capital are the underlying resources available for investment.

Lower official interest rates have lowered the cost of short-term, temporary loans and investment returns from cash assets that can be used in lieu of borrowing. The Authority pursued its strategy of keeping borrowing and investments below their underlying levels, sometimes known as internal borrowing, in order to reduce risk.

The treasury management position on 30th September 2021 and the change over the six months is shown in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Treasury Management Summary

	31.3.21 Balance £m	Movement £m	30.9.21 Balance £m	30.9.21 Rate %
Long-term borrowing	0.000	0.000	0.000	N/A
Short-term borrowing	7.000	(4.000)	3.000	
Total borrowing	7.000	(4.000)	3.000	
Long-term investments	32.000	0.000	32.000	
Short-term investments	0.000	0.000	0.000	
Cash and cash equivalents	9.810	(8.715)	1.095	
Total investments	41.810	(8.715)	33.095	
Net investments	34.810	(4.715)	30.095	

Borrowing Update

Local authorities can borrow from the PWLB provided they can confirm they are not planning to purchase ‘investment assets primarily for yield’ in the current or next two financial years, with confirmation of the purpose of capital expenditure from the Section 151 Officer. Authorities that are purchasing or intending to purchase investment assets primarily for yield will not be able to access the PWLB except to refinance existing loans or externalise internal borrowing.

Acceptable use of PWLB borrowing includes service delivery, housing, regeneration, preventative action, refinancing and treasury management.

Competitive market alternatives may be available for authorities with or without access to the PWLB. However, the financial strength of the individual authority and borrowing purpose will be scrutinised by commercial lenders. Further changes to the CIPFA Prudential Code expected in December 2021 are likely to prohibit borrowing for the primary purpose of commercial return even where the source of borrowing is not the PWLB.

The Authority is currently reviewing its capital programme in light of PWLB lending arrangement changes and may consider the cancellation of planned purchases of assets primarily for yield so as to retain access to the PWLB.

Revised PWLB Guidance

HM Treasury published further guidance on PWLB borrowing in August 2021 providing additional detail and clarifications predominantly around the definition of an 'investment asset primarily for yield'. The principal aspects of the new guidance are:

- Capital expenditure incurred or committed to before 26th November 2020 is allowable even for an 'investment asset primarily for yield'.
- Capital plans should be submitted by local authorities via a DELTA return. These open for the new financial year on 1st March and remain open all year. Returns must be updated if there is a change of more than 10%.
- An asset held primarily to generate yield that serves no direct policy purpose should not be categorised as service delivery.
- Further detail on how local authorities purchasing investment assets primarily for yield can access the PWLB for the purposes of refinancing existing loans or externalising internal borrowing.
- Additional detail on the sanctions which can be imposed for inappropriate use of the PWLB loan. These can include a request to cancel projects, restrictions to accessing the PLWB and requests for information on further plans.

Changes to PWLB Terms and Conditions from 8th September 2021

The settlement time for a PWLB loan has been extended from two working days (T+2) to five working days (T+5). In a move to protect the PWLB against negative interest rates, the minimum interest rate for PWLB loans has also been set at 0.01% and the interest charged on late repayments will be the higher of Bank of England Base Rate or 0.1%.

Municipal Bonds Agency (MBA): The MBA is working to deliver a new short-term loan solution, available in the first instance to principal local authorities in England, allowing them access to short-dated, low rate, flexible debt. The minimum loan size is expected to be £25 million. Importantly, local authorities will borrow in their own name and will not cross guarantee any other authorities.

If the Authority intends future borrowing through the MBA, it will first ensure that it has thoroughly scrutinised the legal terms and conditions of the arrangement and is satisfied with them.

UK Infrastructure Bank: £4bn has been earmarked for of lending to local authorities by the UK Infrastructure Bank which is wholly owned and backed by HM Treasury. The availability of this lending to local authorities, for which there will be a bidding process, is yet to commence. Loans will be available for qualifying projects at gilt yields plus 0.6%, which is 0.2% lower than the PWLB certainty rate.

Borrowing Strategy during the period

At 30th September 2021 the Authority held £3m of loans, (a decrease of £4m to 31st March 2021), as part of its strategy for funding previous and current years' capital programmes. Outstanding loans on 30th September are summarised in Table 2 below.

Table 2: Borrowing Position

	31.3.21 Balance £m	Net Movement £m	30.9.21 Balance £m	30.9.21 Weighted Average Rate %	30.9.21 Weighted Average Maturity (years)
Local authorities (short-term)	7.000	(4.000)	3.000		<1
Total borrowing	7.000	(4.000)	3.000		

The Authority's chief objective when borrowing has been to strike an appropriately low risk balance between securing low interest costs and achieving cost certainty over the period for which funds are required, with flexibility to renegotiate loans should the Authority's long-term plans change being a secondary objective.

With short-term interest rates remaining much lower than long-term rates and with surplus of liquidity continuing to feature in the LA to LA market, the Authority considered it to be more cost effective in the near term to use internal resources or borrowed rolling temporary / short-term loans instead. The net movement in temporary / short-term loans is shown in table 3 above.

The Authority's borrowing decisions are not predicated on any one outcome for interest rates.

PWLB funding margins have lurched quite substantially and there remains a strong argument for diversifying funding sources, particularly if rates can be achieved on alternatives which are below gilt yields plus 0.80%. The Authority will evaluate and pursue these lower cost solutions and opportunities with its advisor Arlingclose.

Treasury Investment Activity

The Authority holds significant invested funds, representing income received in advance of expenditure plus balances and reserves held. During the year, the Authority's investment balances ranged between £33.095 and £71.747 million due to timing differences between income and expenditure. The investment position is shown in table 3 below.

Table 3: Treasury Investment Position

	31.3.21 Balance £m	Net Movement £m	30.9.21 Balance £m	30.9.21 Income Return %
Banks & building societies (unsecured)	0.000	0.000	0.000	N/A
Money Market Funds	9.810	(8.715)	1.095	0.01
Other Pooled Funds				
- <i>Cash plus funds</i>	3.000	0.000	3.000	0.45
- <i>Short-dated bond funds</i>	3.000	0.000	3.000	0.41
- <i>Strategic bond funds</i>	5.000	0.000	5.000	1.59
- <i>Equity income funds</i>	8.000	0.000	8.000	3.03
- <i>Property funds</i>	5.000	0.000	5.000	5.19
- <i>Multi asset income funds</i>	8.000	0.000	8.000	3.83
Total investments	41.810	(8.715)	33.095	2.36

Both the CIPFA Code and government guidance require the Authority to invest its funds prudently, and to have regard to the security and liquidity of its treasury investments before seeking the optimum rate of return, or yield. The Authority's objective when investing money is to strike an appropriate balance between risk and return, minimising the risk of incurring losses from defaults and the risk of receiving unsuitably low investment income.

Ultra low short-dated cash rates which have been a feature since March 2020 when Bank Rate was cut to 0.1% have resulted in the return on sterling low volatility net asset value money market funds (LVNAV MMFs) being close to zero even after some managers have temporarily waived or lowered their fees. At this stage net negative returns are not the central case of most MMF managers over the short-term, and fee cuts or waivers should result in MMF net yields having a floor of zero, but the possibility cannot be ruled out.

Deposit rates with the Debt Management Account Deposit Facility (DMADF) are also largely around zero.

The progression of risk and return metrics are shown in the extracts from Arlingclose's quarterly investment benchmarking in Table 4 below.

Table 4: Investment Benchmarking – Treasury investments managed in-house

	Credit Score	Credit Rating	Bail-in Exposure	Weighted Average Maturity (days)	Rate of Return %
31.03.2021	4.92	A+	100%	1	0.15%
30.09.2021	4.75	A+	100%	1	0.01%
Similar LAs	4.66	A+	69%	32	0.08%

*Weighted average maturity

Externally Managed Pooled Funds: £32m of the Authority’s investments are held in externally managed strategic pooled bond, equity, multi-asset and property funds where short-term security and liquidity are lesser considerations, and the objectives instead are regular revenue income and long-term price stability. These funds generated an average total return of £1.349m, comprising a £0.458m income return which is used to support services in year, and £0.891m of capital growth.

The Authority is invested in bond, equity, multi-asset and property funds. The improved market sentiment in the past 6 months is reflected in equity, property and multi-asset fund valuations and, in turn, in the capital values of the Authority’s equity and multi-asset income funds in the Authority’s portfolio. The prospect of higher inflation and rising bond yields resulted in muted bond fund performance. The change in capital values and income earned is shown in Table 4.

Because these funds have no defined maturity date, but are available for withdrawal after a notice period, their performance and continued suitability in meeting the Authority’s medium- to long-term investment objectives are regularly reviewed. Strategic fund investments are made in the knowledge that capital values will move both up and down on months, quarters and even years; but with the confidence that over a three- to five-year period total returns will exceed cash interest rates. Investment in these funds has been maintained during the half year.

The Authority has budgeted £1,172,889 income from these investments in 2021/22. Income received to date was £458,000.

Non-Treasury Investments

The definition of investments in CIPFA’s revised Treasury Management Code now covers all the financial assets of the Authority as well as other non-financial assets which the Authority holds primarily for financial return. This is replicated in the Investment Guidance issued by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) and Welsh Government, in which the definition of investments is further broadened to also include all such assets held partially for financial return.

The Authority also held £2.947m of such investments in

- directly owned property £0.390m
- loans to housing associations and community housing £2.558m

These investments generated £0.066m of investment income for the Authority after taking account of direct costs, representing a rate of return of 4.48%. This compares favourably against Treasury investment rates, particularly against shorter term deposits. These investments represent a different risk to the Authority, as property investments do not carry the same interest rate or credit risk, but there is the risk of loss of income through voids and other market factors. They also require more staff time to manage than externalised pooled investments.

The Authority does not currently rely on these funds from Non-Treasury investments to balance the budget, but in a climate of reduced Government funding, is likely to do so more in the future. To guard against the risk of reducing levels of income from these investments, they are proactively managed by experienced and qualified individuals within the Authority, with external advice as required.

Treasury Performance

The Authority measures the financial performance of its treasury management activities both in terms of its impact on the revenue budget and its relationship to benchmark interest rates, as shown in table 5 below.

Table 5: Performance

	Actual £m	Budget £m	Over/ under	Actual %	Benchmark %	Over/ under
Money Market Funds	0.000	0.000	N/A	0.01%	N/A	Over
Pooled Funds	0.458	0.586	Under	2.85%	3.45%	Under
Total treasury investments	0.458	0.586	Under	2.36	3.45%	Under

Compliance

The Chief Finance Officer reports that all treasury management activities undertaken during the quarter complied fully with the CIPFA Code of Practice and the Authority's approved Treasury Management Strategy. Compliance with specific investment limits is demonstrated in table 6 below.

Compliance with the authorised limit and operational boundary for external debt is demonstrated in table 6 below.

Table 6: Debt Limits

	H1 Maximum	30.9.21 Actual	2021/22 Operational Boundary	2021/22 Authorised Limit	Complied? Yes/No
Borrowing	10.000m	3.000m	23.530m	28.400m	Yes
Total debt	10.000m	3.000m	23.530m	28.400m	Yes

Since the operational boundary is a management tool for in-year monitoring it is not significant if the operational boundary is breached on occasions due to variations in cash flow, and this is not counted as a compliance failure.

Table 7: Investment Limits

	H1 Maximum	30.9.21 Actual	2021/22 Limit	Complied? Yes/No
Local authorities & other government entities	nil	nil	Unlimited	Yes
Secured investments	nil	nil	Unlimited	Yes
Banks (unsecured)	nil	nil	£5m	Yes
Building societies (unsecured)	nil	nil	£5m	Yes
Registered providers (unsecured)	nil	nil	£10m	Yes
Money market funds	£14.080	£1.095m	£20m	Yes
Strategic pooled funds	£32m	£32m	Unlimited	Yes
Real estate investment trusts	nil	nil	£10m	Yes
The UK Government	£26m	nil	Unlimited	Yes
Other investments	nil	nil	£5m	Yes
Any group of pooled funds under the same management	£7m	£7m	£15m	Yes
Negotiable instruments held in a broker's nominee account	nil	nil	£10m	Yes
Foreign countries	nil	nil	£6m	Yes

Treasury Management Indicators

The Authority measures and manages its exposures to treasury management risks using the following indicators.

Security: The Authority has adopted a voluntary measure of its exposure to credit risk by monitoring the value-weighted average [credit rating] or [credit score] of its investment portfolio. This is calculated by applying a score to each investment (AAA=1, AA+=2, etc.) and taking the arithmetic average, weighted by the size of each investment. Unrated investments are assigned a score based on their perceived risk.

	30.9.21 Actual	2021/22 Target	Complied?
Portfolio average credit score	4.75	6.0	Yes

Liquidity: The Authority has adopted a voluntary measure of its exposure to liquidity risk by monitoring the amount of cash available to meet unexpected payments within a rolling three-month period, without additional borrowing.

	30.9.21 Actual	2021/22 Target	Complied?

Total sum borrowed in past 3 months without prior notice	£0m	£10m	Yes
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Interest Rate Exposures: This indicator is set to control the Authority's exposure to interest rate risk. The upper limits on the one-year revenue impact of a 1% rise or fall in interests was:

Interest rate risk indicator	30.9.21 Actual	2021/22 Limit	Complied?
Upper limit on one-year revenue impact of a 1% <u>rise</u> in interest rates	£335,281	£600,000	Yes
Upper limit on one-year revenue impact of a 1% <u>fall</u> in interest rates	£335,281	£600,000	Yes

The impact of a change in interest rates is calculated on the assumption that maturing loans and investment will be replaced at current rates.

Maturity Structure of Borrowing: This indicator is set to control the Authority's exposure to refinancing risk. The upper and lower limits on the maturity structure of all borrowing were:

	30.9.21 Actual	Upper Limit	Lower Limit	Complied?
Under 12 months	100%	100%	0%	Yes
12 months and within 24 months	0%	100%	0%	Yes
24 months and within 5 years	0%	100%	0%	Yes
5 years and within 10 years	0%	100%	0%	Yes
10 years and above	0%	100%	0%	Yes

Time periods start on the first day of each financial year. The maturity date of borrowing is the earliest date on which the lender can demand repayment.

Principal Sums Invested for Periods Longer than a year: The purpose of this indicator is to control the Authority's exposure to the risk of incurring losses by seeking early repayment of its investments. The limits on the long-term principal sum invested to final maturities beyond the period end were:

	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
Actual principal invested beyond year end	£32m	£32m	£32m
Limit on principal invested beyond year end	£50m	£50m	£50m
Complied?	Yes	Yes	Yes

Revisions to CIPFA Codes

In February 2021 CIPFA launched two consultations on changes to its Prudential Code and Treasury Management Code of Practice. These followed the Public Accounts Committee's recommendation that the prudential framework should be further tightened following

continued borrowing by some authorities for investment purposes. In June, CIPFA provided feedback from this consultation.

In September CIPFA issued the revised Codes and Guidance Notes in draft form and opened the latest consultation process on their proposed changes. The changes include:

- Clarification that (a) local authorities must not borrow to invest primarily for financial return (b) it is not prudent for authorities to make any investment or spending decision that will increase the Capital Financing Requirement, and so may lead to new borrowing, unless directly and primarily related to the functions of the authority.
- Categorising investments as those (a) for treasury management purposes, (b) for service purposes and (c) for commercial purposes.
- Defining acceptable reasons to borrow money: (i) financing capital expenditure primarily related to delivering a local authority's functions, (ii) temporary management of cash flow within the context of a balanced budget, (iii) securing affordability by removing exposure to future interest rate rises and (iv) refinancing current borrowing, including replacing internal borrowing.
- For service and commercial investments, in addition to assessments of affordability and prudence, an assessment of proportionality in respect of the authority's overall financial capacity (i.e. whether plausible losses could be absorbed in budgets or reserves without unmanageable detriment to local services).
- Prudential Indicators
 - New indicator for net income from commercial and service investments to the budgeted net revenue stream.
 - Inclusion of the liability benchmark as a mandatory treasury management prudential indicator. CIPFA recommends this is presented as a chart of four balances – existing loan debt outstanding; loans CFR, net loans requirement, liability benchmark – over at least 10 years and ideally cover the authority's full debt maturity profile.
 - Excluding investment income from the definition of financing costs.
- Incorporating ESG issues as a consideration within TMP 1 Risk Management.
- Additional focus on the knowledge and skills of officers and elected members involved in decision making

MHCLG Improvements to the Capital Finance Framework: MHCLG published a brief policy paper in July outlining the ways it feels that the current framework is failing and potential changes that could be made. The paper found that “while many authorities are compliant with the framework, there remain some authorities that continue to engage in practices that push the bounds of compliance and expose themselves to excessive risk”.

The actions announced include greater scrutiny of local authorities and particularly those engaged in commercial practices; an assessment of governance and training; a consideration of statutory caps on borrowing; further regulations around Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) and ensuring that MHCLG regulations enforce guidance from CIPFA and the new PWLB lending arrangements.

A further consultation on these matters is expected soon.

Arlingclose's Economic Outlook for the remainder of 2021/22 (based on the October 2021 interest rate forecast)

	Dec-21	Mar-22	Jun-22	Sep-22	Dec-22	Mar-23	Jun-23	Sep-23	Dec-23	Mar-24	Jun-24	Sep-24	Dec-24
Official Bank Rate													
Upside risk	0.00	0.15	0.00	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.25
Arlingclose Central Case	0.10	0.10	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.50	0.50	0.50	0.50	0.50	0.50	0.50	0.50
Downside risk	0.00	0.00	0.15	0.15	0.15	0.40	0.40	0.40	0.40	0.40	0.40	0.40	0.40

Arlingclose expects Bank Rate to rise in Q2 2022. We believe this is driven as much by the Bank of England's desire to move from emergency levels as by fears of inflationary pressure.

Investors have priced in multiple rises in Bank Rate to 1% by 2024. While Arlingclose believes Bank Rate will rise, it is by a lesser extent than expected by markets.

The global economy continues to recover from the pandemic but has entered a more challenging phase. The resurgence of demand has led to the expected rise in inflationary pressure, but disrupted factors of supply are amplifying the effects, increasing the likelihood of lower growth rates ahead. This is particularly apparent in the UK due to the impact of Brexit.

While Q2 UK GDP expanded more quickly than initially thought, the 'pingdemic' and more latterly supply disruption will leave Q3 GDP broadly stagnant. The outlook also appears weaker. Household spending, the driver of the recovery to date, is under pressure from a combination of retail energy price rises, the end of government support programmes and soon, tax rises. Government spending, the other driver of recovery, will slow considerably as the economy is taken off life support.

Inflation rose to 3.2% in August. A combination of factors will drive this to over 4% in the near term. While the transitory factors affecting inflation, including the low base effect of 2020, are expected to unwind over time, the MPC has recently communicated fears that these transitory factors will feed longer-term inflation expectations that require tighter monetary policy to control. This has driven interest rate expectations substantially higher.

The supply imbalances are apparent in the labour market. While wage growth is currently elevated due to compositional and base factors, stories abound of higher wages for certain sectors, driving inflation expectations. It is uncertain whether a broad-based increased in wages is possible given the pressures on businesses.

Government bond yields increased sharply following the September FOMC and MPC minutes, in which both central banks communicated a lower tolerance for higher inflation than previously thought. The MPC in particular has doubled down on these signals in spite of softer economic data. Bond investors expect higher near-term interest rates but are also clearly uncertain about central bank policy.

The MPC appears to be playing both sides, but has made clear its intentions to tighten policy, possibly driven by a desire to move away from emergency levels. While the economic outlook will be challenging, the signals from policymakers suggest Bank Rate will rise unless data indicates a more severe slowdown.

DECISION TO OPT INTO THE NATIONAL SCHEME FOR AUDITOR APPOINTMENTS MANAGED BY PSAA AS THE 'APPOINTING PERSON'

Purpose of the report

This report sets out proposals for appointing the external auditor to the Council for the accounts for the five-year period from 2023/24.

Recommendation

That the Council/Authority accepts Public Sector Audit Appointments' invitation to opt into the sector-led option for the appointment of external auditors to principal local government and police bodies for five financial years from 1 April 2023.

Reasons for Recommendation

The current auditor appointment arrangements cover the period up to and including the audit of the 2022/23 accounts. The Council opted into the 'appointing person' national auditor appointment arrangements established by Public Sector Audit Appointments (PSAA) for the period covering the accounts for 2018/19 to 2022/23.

PSAA is now undertaking a procurement for the next appointing period, covering audits for 2023/24 to 2027/28. During Autumn 2021 all local government bodies need to make important decisions about their external audit arrangements from 2023/24. They have options to arrange their own procurement and make the appointment themselves or in conjunction with other bodies, or they can join and take advantage of the national collective scheme administered by PSAA.

The report concludes that the sector-wide procurement conducted by PSAA will produce better outcomes and will be less burdensome for the Council/Authority than a procurement undertaken locally because:

- collective procurement reduces costs for the sector and for individual authorities compared to a multiplicity of smaller local procurements;
- if it does not use the national appointment arrangements, the Council/Authority will need to establish its own auditor panel with an independent chair and independent members to oversee a local auditor procurement and ongoing management of an audit contract;
- it is the best opportunity to secure the appointment of a qualified, registered auditor - there are only nine accredited local audit firms, and a local procurement would be drawing from the same limited supply of auditor resources as PSAA's national procurement; and
- supporting the sector-led body offers the best way of ensuring there is a continuing and sustainable public audit market into the medium and long term.

If the Council wishes to take advantage of the national auditor appointment arrangements, it is required under the local audit regulations to make the decision at Full Council. The opt-

in period starts on 22 September 2021 and closes on 11 March 2022. To opt into the national scheme from 2023/24, the Council needs to return completed opt-in documents to PSAA by 11 March 2022.

Procurement of External Audit for the period 2023/24 to 2027/28

Under the Local Government Audit & Accountability Act 2014 (“the Act”), the council is required to appoint an auditor to audit its accounts for each financial year. The council has three options;

- To appoint its own auditor, which requires it to follow the procedure set out in the Act.
- To act jointly with other authorities to procure an auditor following the procedures in the Act.
- To opt in to the national auditor appointment scheme administered by a body designated by the Secretary of State as the ‘appointing person’. The body currently designated for this role is Public Sector Audit Appointments Limited (PSAA).

In order to opt in to the national scheme, a council must make a decision at a meeting of the Full Council.

The Appointed Auditor

The auditor appointed at the end of the procurement process will undertake the statutory audit of accounts and Best Value assessment of the council in each financial year, in accordance with all relevant codes of practice and guidance. The appointed auditor is also responsible for investigating questions raised by electors and has powers and responsibilities in relation to Public Interest Reports and statutory recommendations.

The auditor must act independently of the council and the main purpose of the procurement legislation is to ensure that the appointed auditor is sufficiently qualified and independent.

The auditor must be registered to undertake local audits by the Financial Reporting Council (FRC) employ authorised Key Audit Partners to oversee the work. As the report below sets out there is a currently a shortage of registered firms and Key Audit Partners.

Auditors are regulated by the FRC, which will be replaced by a new body with wider powers, the Audit, Reporting and Governance Authority (ARGA) during the course of the next audit contract.

Councils therefore have very limited influence over the nature of the audit services they are procuring, the nature and quality of which are determined or overseen by third parties.

Appointment by the Council itself or jointly

The Council may elect to appoint its own external auditor under the Act, which would require the council to;

- Establish an independent auditor panel to make a stand-alone appointment. The auditor panel would need to be set up by the Council itself, and the members of the panel must be wholly or a majority of independent members as defined by the Act. Independent members for this purpose are independent appointees, excluding current and former elected members (or officers) and their close families and friends. This

means that elected members will not have a majority input to assessing bids and choosing to which audit firm to award a contract for the Council's external audit.

- Manage the contract for its duration, overseen by the Auditor Panel.

Alternatively, the Act enables the Council to join with other authorities to establish a joint auditor panel. Again, this will need to be constituted of wholly or a majority of independent appointees. Further legal advice would be required on the exact constitution of such a panel having regard to the obligations of each Council under the Act and the Council would need to liaise with other local authorities to assess the appetite for such an arrangement.

The national auditor appointment scheme

PSAA is specified as the 'appointing person' for principal local government under the provisions of the Act and the Local Audit (Appointing Person) Regulations 2015. PSAA let five-year audit services contracts in 2017 for the first appointing period, covering audits of the accounts from 2018/19 to 2022/23. It is now undertaking the work needed to invite eligible bodies to opt in for the next appointing period, from the 2023/24 audit onwards, and to complete a procurement for audit services. PSAA is a not-for-profit organisation whose costs are around 4% of the scheme with any surplus distributed back to scheme members.

In summary the national opt-in scheme provides the following:

- the appointment of a suitably qualified audit firm to conduct audits for each of the five financial years commencing 1 April 2023;
- appointing the same auditor to other opted-in bodies that are involved in formal collaboration or joint working initiatives to the extent this is possible with other constraints;
- managing the procurement process to ensure both quality and price criteria are satisfied. PSAA has sought views from the sector to help inform its detailed procurement strategy;
- ensuring suitable independence of the auditors from the bodies they audit and managing any potential conflicts as they arise during the appointment period;
- minimising the scheme management costs and returning any surpluses to scheme members;
- consulting with authorities on auditor appointments, giving the Council/Authority the opportunity to influence which auditor is appointed;
- consulting with authorities on the scale of audit fees and ensuring these reflect scale, complexity, and audit risk; and
- ongoing contract and performance management of the contracts once these have been let.

Pressures in the current local audit market and delays in issuing opinions

Much has changed in the local audit market since audit contracts were last awarded in 2017. At that time the audit market was relatively stable, there had been few changes in audit requirements, and local audit fees had been reducing over a long period. 98% of those bodies eligible opted into the national scheme and attracted very competitive bids from audit firms. The resulting audit contracts took effect from 1 April 2018.

During 2018 a series of financial crises and failures in the private sector year led to questioning about the role of auditors and the focus and value of their work. Four independent reviews were commissioned by Government: Sir John Kingman's review of the Financial Reporting Council (FRC), the audit regulator; the Competition and Markets Authority review of the audit market; Sir Donald Brydon's review of the quality and effectiveness of audit; and Sir Tony Redmond's review of local authority financial reporting and external audit. The recommendations are now under consideration by Government, with the clear implication that significant reforms will follow. A new audit regulator (ARGA) is to be established, and arrangements for system leadership in local audit are to be introduced. Further change will follow as other recommendations are implemented.

The Kingman review has led to an urgent drive for the FRC to deliver rapid, measurable improvements in audit quality. This has created a major pressure for audit firms to ensure full compliance with regulatory requirements and expectations in every audit they undertake. By the time firms were conducting 2018/19 local audits during 2019, the measures they were putting in place to respond to a more focused regulator were clearly visible. To deliver the necessary improvements in audit quality, firms were requiring their audit teams to undertake additional work to gain deeper levels of assurance. However, additional work requires more time, posing a threat to the firms' ability to complete all their audits by the target date for publication of audited accounts. Delayed opinions are not the only consequence of the FRC's drive to improve audit quality. Additional audit work must also be paid for. As a result, many more fee variation claims have been needed than in prior years.

This situation has been accentuated by growing auditor recruitment and retention challenges, the complexity of local government financial statements and increasing levels of technical challenges as bodies explore innovative ways of developing new or enhanced income streams to help fund services for local people. These challenges have increased in subsequent audit years, with Covid-19 creating further significant pressure for finance and audit teams.

None of these problems is unique to local government audit. Similar challenges have played out in other sectors, where increased fees and disappointing responses to tender invitations have been experienced during the past two years.

The invitation

PSAA is now inviting the Council to opt in for the second appointing period, for 2023/24 to 2027/28, along with all other eligible authorities. Based on the level of opt-ins it will enter into contracts with appropriately qualified audit firms and appoint a suitable firm to

be the Council's auditor. Details relating to PSAA's invitation are provided in an Appendix to this report.

The next audit procurement

The prices submitted by bidders through the procurement will be the key determinant of the value of audit fees paid by opted-in bodies. PSAA will:

- seek to encourage realistic fee levels and to benefit from the economies of scale associated with procuring on behalf of a significant number of bodies;
- continue to pool scheme costs and charge fees to opted-in bodies in accordance with the published fee scale as amended following consultations with scheme members and other interested parties (pooling means that everyone within the scheme will benefit from the prices secured via a competitive procurement process – a key tenet of the national collective scheme);
- continue to minimise its own costs, around 4% of scheme costs, and as a not-for-profit company will return any surplus funds to scheme members. In 2019 it returned a total £3.5million to relevant bodies and in 2021 a further £5.6million was returned.

PSAA will seek to encourage market sustainability in its procurement. Firms will be able to bid for a variety of differently sized contracts so that they can match their available resources and risk appetite to the contract for which they bid. They will be required to meet appropriate quality standards and to reflect realistic market prices in their tenders, informed by the scale fees and the supporting information provided about each audit. Where regulatory changes are in train which affect the amount of audit work suppliers must undertake, firms will be informed as to which developments should be priced into their bids.

The scope of a local audit is fixed. It is determined by the Code of Audit Practice (currently published by the National Audit Office)¹, the format of the financial statements (specified by CIPFA/LASAAC) and the application of auditing standards regulated by the FRC. These factors apply to all local audits irrespective of whether an eligible body decides to opt into PSAA's national scheme or chooses to make its own separate arrangements. The requirements are mandatory; they shape the work auditors undertake and have a bearing on the actual fees required.

There are currently nine audit providers eligible to audit local authorities and other relevant bodies under local audit legislation. This means that a local procurement exercise would seek tenders from the same firms as the national procurement exercise, subject to the need to manage any local independence issues. Local firms cannot be invited to bid. Local procurements must deliver the same audit scope and requirements as a national procurement, reflecting the auditor's statutory responsibilities.

¹ MHCLG's Spring statement proposes that overarching responsibility for Code will in due course transfer to the system leader, namely ARGA, the new regulator being established to replace the FRC.

Assessment of options and officer recommendation

If the Council did not opt in there would be a need to establish an independent auditor panel to make a stand-alone appointment. The auditor panel would need to be set up by the Council itself, and the members of the panel must be wholly or a majority of independent members as defined by the Act. Independent members for this purpose are independent appointees, excluding current and former elected members (or officers) and their close families and friends. This means that elected members will not have a majority input to assessing bids and choosing to which audit firm to award a contract for the Council's external audit.

Alternatively, the Act enables the Council to join with other authorities to establish a joint auditor panel. Again, this will need to be constituted of wholly or a majority of independent appointees. Further legal advice would be required on the exact constitution of such a panel having regard to the obligations of each Council under the Act and the Council would need to liaise with other local authorities to assess the appetite for such an arrangement.

These would be more resource-intensive processes to implement for the council, and without the bulk buying power of the sector-led procurement would be likely to result in a more costly service. It would also be more difficult to manage quality and independence requirements through a local appointment process. The council is unable to influence the scope of the audit and the regulatory regime inhibits the council's ability to affect quality.

The Council and its auditor panel would need to maintain ongoing oversight of the contract. Local contract management cannot, however, influence the scope or delivery of an audit.

The national offer provides the appointment of an independent auditor with limited administrative cost to the council. By joining the scheme, the council would be acting with other councils to optimise the opportunity to influence the market that a national procurement provides.

The recommended approach is therefore to opt in to the national auditor appointment scheme.

The way forward

Regulation 19 of the Local Audit (Appointing Person) Regulations 2015 requires that a decision to opt in must be made by a meeting of the Council (meeting as a whole), except where the authority is a corporation sole.

The Council then needs to respond formally to PSAA's invitation in the form specified by PSAA by the close of the opt-in period (11 March 2022).

PSAA will commence the formal procurement process in early February 2022. It expects to award contracts in August 2022 and will then consult with authorities on the appointment of auditors so that it can make appointments by the statutory deadline of 31 December 2022.

Risk Management

The principal risks are that the Council:

- fails to appoint an auditor in accordance with the requirements and timing specified in local audit legislation; or
- does not achieve value for money in the appointment process.

These risks are considered best mitigated by opting into the sector-led approach through PSAA.

Legal implications

Section 7 of the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 requires a relevant Council to appoint a local auditor to audit its accounts for a financial year not later than 31 December in the preceding year.

Section 8 governs the procedure for appointment including that the Council must consult and take account of the advice of its auditor panel on the selection and appointment of a local auditor. Section 8 provides that where a relevant Council is a local Council operating executive arrangements, the function of appointing a local auditor to audit its accounts is not the responsibility of an executive of the Council under those arrangements.

Section 12 makes provision for the failure to appoint a local auditor. The Council must immediately inform the Secretary of State, who may direct the Council to appoint the auditor named in the direction or appoint a local auditor on behalf of the Council.

Section 17 gives the Secretary of State the power to make regulations in relation to an 'appointing person' specified by the Secretary of State. This power has been exercised in the Local Audit (Appointing Person) Regulations 2015 (SI 192) and this gives the Secretary of State the ability to enable a sector-led body to become the appointing person. In July 2016 the Secretary of State specified PSAA as the appointing person.

Financial Implications

There is a risk that current external audit fee levels could increase when the current contracts end. It is clear that the scope of audit has increased, requiring more audit work. There are also concerns about capacity and sustainability in the local audit market.

Opting into a national scheme provides maximum opportunity to ensure fees are as realistic as possible, while ensuring the quality of audit is maintained, by entering into a large scale collective procurement arrangement.

If the national scheme is not used some additional resource may be needed to establish an auditor panel and conduct a local procurement. Until a procurement exercise is completed it is not possible to state what, if any, additional resource may be required for audit fees from 2023/24.

22 September 2021

To: Mr Blatch, Chief Executive
North Norfolk District Council

Copied to: Mr Ellis, S151 Officer
Mr Rest, Chair of Audit Committee or equivalent

Dear Mr Blatch,

Invitation to opt into the national scheme for auditor appointments from April 2023

I want to ensure that you are aware the external auditor for the audit of your accounts for 2023/24 has to be appointed before the end of December 2022. That may seem a long way away but, as your organisation has a choice about how to make that appointment, your decision-making process needs to begin soon.

We are pleased that the Secretary of State has confirmed PSAA in the role of the appointing person for eligible principal bodies for the period commencing April 2023. Joining PSAA's national scheme for auditor appointments is one of the choices available to your organisation.

In June 2021 we issued a draft prospectus and invited your views and comments on our early thinking on the development of the national scheme for the next period. Feedback from the sector has been extremely helpful and has enabled us to refine our proposals which are now set out in the [scheme prospectus](#) and our [procurement strategy](#). Both documents can be downloaded from our website which also contains a range of useful information that you may find helpful.

The national scheme timetable for appointing auditors from 2023/24 means we now need to issue a formal invitation to you to opt into these arrangements. In order to meet the requirements of the relevant regulations, we also attach a form of acceptance of our invitation which you must use if your organisation decides to join the national scheme. We have specified the five consecutive financial years beginning 1 April 2023 as the compulsory appointing period for the purposes of the regulations which govern the national scheme.

Given the very challenging local audit market, we believe that eligible bodies will be best served by opting to join the scheme and have attached a short summary of why we believe that is the best solution both for individual bodies and the sector as a whole.

I would like to highlight three matters to you:

1. if you opt to join the national scheme, we need to receive your formal acceptance of this invitation by Friday 11 March 2022;

2. the relevant regulations require that, except for a body that is a corporation sole (e.g. a police and crime commissioner), the decision to accept our invitation and to opt in must be made by the members of the authority meeting as a whole e.g. Full Council or equivalent. We appreciate this will need to be built into your decision-making timetable. We have deliberately set a generous timescale for bodies to make opt in decisions (24 weeks compared to the statutory minimum of 8 weeks) to ensure that all eligible bodies have sufficient time to comply with this requirement; and
3. if you decide not to accept the invitation to opt in by the closing date, you may subsequently make a request to opt in, but only after 1 April 2023. We are required to consider such requests and agree to them unless there are reasonable grounds for their refusal. PSAA must consider a request as the appointing person in accordance with the Regulations. The Regulations allow us to recover our reasonable costs for making arrangements to appoint a local auditor in these circumstances, for example if we need to embark on a further procurement or enter into further discussions with our contracted firms.

If you have any other questions not covered by our information, do not hesitate to contact us by email at ap2@psaa.co.uk. We also publish answers to [frequently asked questions](#) on our website.

If you would like to discuss a particular issue with us, please send an email also to ap2@psaa.co.uk, and we will respond to you.

Yours sincerely

Tony Crawley
Chief Executive

Encl: Summary of the national scheme

Why accepting the national scheme opt-in invitation is the best solution

Public Sector Audit Appointments Limited (PSAA)

We are a not-for-profit, independent company limited by guarantee incorporated by the Local Government Association in August 2014.

We have the support of the LGA, which in 2014 worked to secure the option for principal local government and police bodies to appoint auditors through a dedicated sector-led national body.

We have the support of Government; MHCLG's Spring statement confirmed our appointment because of our "strong technical expertise and the proactive work they have done to help to identify improvements that can be made to the process".

We are an active member of the new Local Audit Liaison Committee, chaired by MHCLG and attended by key local audit stakeholders, enabling us to feed in body and audit perspectives to decisions about changes to the local audit framework, and the need to address timeliness through actions across the system.

We conduct research to raise awareness of local audit issues, and work with MHCLG and other stakeholders to enable changes arising from Sir Tony Redmond's review, such as more flexible fee setting and a timelier basis to set scale fees.

We have established an advisory panel, which meets three times per year. Its membership is drawn from relevant representative groups of local government and police bodies, to act as a sounding board for our scheme and to enable us to hear your views on the design and operation of the scheme.

The national scheme for appointing local auditors

In July 2016, the Secretary of State specified PSAA as an appointing person for principal local government and police bodies for audits from 2018/19, under the provisions of the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 and the Local Audit (Appointing Person) Regulations 2015. Acting in accordance with this role PSAA is responsible for appointing an auditor and setting scales of fees for relevant principal authorities that have chosen to opt into its national scheme. 98% of eligible bodies made the choice to opt-in for the five-year period commencing in April 2018.

We will appoint an auditor for all opted-in bodies for each of the five financial years beginning from 1 April 2023.

We aim for all opted-in bodies to receive an audit service of the required quality at a realistic market price and to support the drive towards a long term competitive and more sustainable market for local audit. The focus of our quality assessment will include resourcing capacity and capability including sector knowledge, and client relationship management and communication.

What the appointing person scheme from 2023 will offer

We believe that a sector-led, collaborative, national scheme stands out as the best option for all eligible bodies, offering the best value for money and assuring the independence of the auditor appointment.

The national scheme from 2023 will build on the range of benefits already available for members:

- transparent and independent auditor appointment via a third party;
- the best opportunity to secure the appointment of a qualified, registered auditor;
- appointment, if possible, of the same auditors to bodies involved in significant collaboration/joint working initiatives, if the parties believe that it will enhance efficiency;
- on-going management of any independence issues which may arise;
- access to a specialist PSAA team with significant experience of working within the context of the relevant regulations to appoint auditors, managing contracts with audit firms, and setting and determining audit fees;
- a value for money offer based on minimising PSAA costs and distribution of any surpluses to scheme members - in 2019 we returned a total £3.5million to relevant bodies and more recently we announced a further distribution of £5.6m in August 2021;
- collective efficiency savings for the sector through undertaking one major procurement as opposed to a multiplicity of smaller procurements;
- avoids the necessity for local bodies to establish an auditor panel and undertake an auditor procurement, enabling time and resources to be deployed on other pressing priorities;
- updates from PSAA to Section 151 officers and Audit Committee Chairs on a range of local audit related matters to inform and support effective auditor-audited body relationships; and
- concerted efforts to work with other stakeholders to develop a more sustainable local audit market.

We are committed to keep developing our scheme, taking into account feedback from scheme members, suppliers and other stakeholders, and learning from the collective post-2018 experience. This work is ongoing, and we have taken a number of initiatives to improve the operation of the scheme for the benefit of all parties.

Importantly we have listened to your feedback to our recent consultation, and our response is reflected in [the scheme prospectus](#).

Opting in

The closing date for opting in is 11 March 2022. We have allowed more than the minimum eight-week notice period required, because the formal approval process for most eligible bodies is a decision made by the members of the authority meeting as a whole [Full Council or equivalent], except police and crime commissioners who are able to make their own decision.

We will confirm receipt of all opt-in notices. A full list of eligible bodies that opt in will be published on our website. Once we have received an opt-in notice, we will write to you to request information on any joint working arrangements relevant to your auditor appointment, and any potential independence matters which may need to be taken into consideration when appointing your auditor.

Local Government Reorganisation

We are aware that reorganisations in the local government areas of Cumbria, Somerset, and North Yorkshire were announced in July 2021. Subject to parliamentary approval shadow elections will take place in May 2022 for the new Councils to become established from 1 April 2023. Newly established local government bodies have the right to opt into PSAA's scheme under Regulation 10 of the Appointing Person Regulations 2015. These Regulations also set out that a local government body that ceases to exist is automatically removed from the scheme.

If for any reason there is any uncertainty that reorganisations will take place or meet the current timetable, we would suggest that the current eligible bodies confirm their acceptance to opt in to avoid the requirement to have to make local arrangements should the reorganisation be delayed.

Next Steps

We expect to formally commence the procurement of audit services in early February 2022. At that time our procurement documentation will be available for opted-in bodies to view through our e-tendering platform.

Our recent webinars to support our consultation proved to be popular, and we will be running a series of webinars covering specific areas of our work and our progress to prepare for the second appointing period. Details can be found on [our website](#) and in [the scheme prospectus](#).

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DRAFT PROGRAMME OF MEETINGS 2022-23

Summary: A draft Programme of Meetings for 2022-23 has been prepared and circulated for consultation and is attached at **Appendix A**.

Conclusions: Following review, the proposed draft Programme of Meetings 2022-23 follows the established cycle of meetings as closely as possible.

Recommendations: **That Members adopt the Programme of Meetings for 2022-23.**

Cabinet Member(s)	Ward(s) affected
	All
Contact Officer, telephone number and email: Alison Argent, Tel: 01263 516058, Email: alison.argent@north-norfolk.gov.uk	

1. Preparation of Programme of Meetings 2022-23

1.1 A draft Programme of Meetings for 2022-22 has been prepared and circulated for consultation. The following issues should also be noted:

- 1.2
- a) It has been assumed that the times of the meetings will be as they are currently, so all meetings will be held in the day, with the exception of Full Council.
 - b) Most standing committees meet on set cycles and this cycle has been retained as closely as possible within this draft programme. However, some variations have been made to avoid clashes with other meetings, particularly Full Council, Cabinet and Overview and Scrutiny Committee meetings.
 - c) The Queen's Platinum Jubilee celebrations will take place over a four-day weekend; 2 – 5 June 2022. The May Bank Holiday Weekend will be moved to Thursday 2 June and there will be an additional Bank Holiday on Friday 3 June.
 - d) The Norfolk Rivers Internal Drainage Board and the Broads Internal Drainage Board have forwarded dates of their meetings for 2022 so that we can highlight where there will be meeting clashes in our 2022/23 programme, as there is very little flexibility to change these dates:

Meeting date	IDB meeting	NNDC meeting
19 May 2022	Norfolk Rivers IDB	Site meetings (reserve day)
18 July 2022	Broads IDB	Licensing Sub-Cttee
21 July 2022	Norfolk Rivers IDB	Development Cttee (reserve day)
3 November 2022	Norfolk Rivers IDB	Site meetings (reserve day)

2. Financial Implications and Risks to the Council

- 2.1 If we did not have an agreed schedule of meetings, the Council would not be able to adequately carry out its business. This would have wide-ranging financial implications and make it difficult, if not impossible, to plan and agree a budget.
- 2.2 An agreed programme of meetings is essential to the management of the Council's business to ensure that it is carried out in a timely manner in accordance with legislation. Failure to do so could result in financial penalty and litigation. Furthermore, if the programme of meetings was not published in the public domain, the Council would not be complying with legislation and would be open to challenge.

3. Equality and Diversity

- 3.1 The process of preparing the programme of meetings has included reference to the multi-faith calendar. The times of the meetings reflects the preference of the majority of Members in the current Council.

DRAFT PROGRAMME OF MEETINGS 2022/2023 DRAFT

			2022								2023			
MEETING	DAY	TIME	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEPT	OCT	NOV	DEC	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR
FULL COUNCIL	Wed	18.00	18	22	27	-	21	-	16	20 (Tues)	-	22	-	26
CABINET	Mon	10.00	3 (Tues)	6	11	-	6 (Tues)	3	7	5	3 (Tues)	6	6	3
OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE	Wed	9.30	11	15	20	-	14	12	9	14	11	15	15	19
DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE	Thurs	9.30	12	9	7	4	1/29	27	24	22	26	23	23	20
DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE (RESERVE)	Thurs	9.30	26	23	21	18	15	13	10	8	12	9	9	6
SITE MEETINGS**	Thurs		5	1 (Wed)	1(Fri) /28	25	22	20	17	15	19	16	16	13
SITE MEETINGS (RESERVE)**	Thurs		19	16	14	11	8	6	3	1	5	2	2/30	27
PLANNING POLICY AND BUILT HERITAGE WORKING PARTY	Mon	10.00	23	20	19 (Tues)	15	19	17	14	12	16	20	27	24
LICENSING AND APPEALS COMMITTEE	Mon	10.00	17 (Tues)	-	13 (Wed)	-	26	-	21	-	23	-	1 (Weds)	-
LICENSING SUB-COMMITTEES	Mon/ Tues/ Wed	10.00	25 (Wed)	27 (Mon)	18 (Mon)	24 (Wed)	12 (Mon)	19 (Wed)	23 (Wed)	13 (Tues)	31 (Tues)	28 (Tues)	29 (Wed)	25 (Tues)
GOVERNANCE, RISK AND AUDIT COMMITTEE ^SP MTG- ANNUAL ACCOUNTS	Tues	14.00	-	14	12^	-	27	-	-	6	-	-	7	-
CONSTITUTION WORKING PARTY**	Tues	10.00	-	7	-	-	13	-	29	-	-	-	21	-
STANDARDS COMMITTEE	Tues	14.00	-	-	-	-	-	11	-	-	-	-	-	18
JOINT STAFF CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE*	Mon/ Tues/ Wed	14.00	-	8 (Wed)	-	-	7 (Wed)	-	8 (Tues)	-	-	7	13 (Mon)	-
MEMBER DEVELOPMENT GROUP** ^RESERVE DAY FOR MEMBER DEVELOPMENT WORKSHOP	Tues	10.00	10	21^	-	9	-	4^	15	-	17^	27 (Mon)	-	-
COASTAL FORUM** ^FIELD TRIP	Tues	10.00	-	-	5^	-	-	-	2 (Weds)	-	-	-	28	-
SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES FUND**	Mon	13.00	-	6	-	-	6 (Tues)	-	-	5	-	-	13	-
GENERAL RESERVE DAYS (FOR POSSIBLE EXTRA MEETINGS)			4/24	13/24	4/22	2/16	9/23	10/21	1/18	2/16	18/25	1/24	3/24	21/28

Notes: Committees marked * are occasional Committees and will not meet unless express notification is given.
Meetings marked ** are not formal meetings and are recorded here for convenience.

Community Governance Reviews

Summary: Following consultation with relevant stakeholders, final recommendations are now being made on the series of Community Governance Reviews to reflect changes to the boundaries of several parishes within the district; as well as the proposed grouping of the Hempton and Pudding Norton parishes which had previously been requested by the two Parish Councils. We have also run a recent consultation on whether or not a warding arrangement should be implemented within the parish of Raynham, should the boundary change with Helhoughton be implemented.

Conclusions: The report contained herewith details final recommendations relating to the series of Community Governance reviews to be considered by Full Council for implementation.

Recommendations: **That Full Council considers the community governance reviews and approves implementation.**

Reasons for Recommendations: These final recommendations are being made in order to address some historical administrative anomalies, reflect better, clearer boundaries which reflect the identities of those living within the areas concerned and establish sustainable community governance structures.

LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS AS REQUIRED BY LAW

(Papers relied on to write the report, which do not contain exempt information and which are not published elsewhere)

*Appendix 1: Maps and summaries of proposals pdf
Appendix 2: Sculthorpe/Fakenham proposals and implications pdf
Appendix 3: Cromer/Roughton/Northrepps revised final recommendations and implications pdf
Appendix 4: Raynham and Helhoughton proposed mapping and implications pdf*

Cabinet Member(s) Cllr S Butikofer, Leader	Ward(s) affected Various
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Contact Officer, telephone number and email:
Rob Henry. X6327, robert.henry@north-norfolk.gov.uk

1. Introduction

Having concluded relevant consultation into the series of Community Governance Reviews which commenced earlier in the year, Final Recommendations are now being put to members of Full Council for approval.

2. Administrative Corrections

2.1 The following proposals are recommended as previously submitted to Full Council in July 2021 as draft recommendations and in the maps and explanations shown in Appendix 1. Mostly these are inconsequential boundary anomaly changes but the ones marked with an * do have slight changes in Council Tax and or Governance from the parish/ward they currently sit in and further details are provided later in the main report. Orders in respect of these changes will now be drawn up and mapping data will be changed to reflect the amendments:

- 1) Aldborough and Alby;
- 2) Barsham and Fakenham North;
- 3) Binham and Hindringham;
- 4) Blakeney and Wiveton;
- 5) Brinton and Stody;
- 6) East and West Beckham;
- 7) East Runton and Cromer (West)*
- 8) Felbrigg, Cromer Town and Roughton;
- 9) Gunthorpe (South) and Briningham;
- 10) Gresham and Sustead;
- 11) Sidestrand and Northrepps and Sidestrand and Trimmingham;
- 12) Upper Sheringham and Sheringham (South)

2.2 Fakenham North/South and Sculthorpe:

This proposal is made to relocate properties in Sandy Lane and Sculthorpe Eastgate which currently fall within the parish of Sculthorpe into the Fakenham parish i.e. the Land east of the A1065/A148 bypass.

The opinion on this review is split with the majority of respondents affected being against the idea. The District Member for Lancaster North had previously backed the proposal for his own ward while stating he could see it being more of an issue for those in Lancaster South and that he would leave it to members representing that ward to provide feedback. Cllr Punchard, member for Lancaster South indicated that 'proposals aligned residents to the town which serves them and the representation more appropriately more so in terms of NCC divisional boundaries currently under Wells Division' Following a meeting at Sculthorpe Parish Council, opposition to the plans was received which was echoed by the County Member, Cllr FitzPatrick. The Parish Council indicated they had previously undertaken a consultation through doorstop canvassing and stated that comments received were mostly not in support or was ambivalent to the changes proposed. The Chair of the Parish Council in summing up commented 'If it is not broke, why fix it' and the proposals being an exercise to make the boundaries look tidier. Following the meeting of Sculthorpe Parish Council meeting of 3rd November a petition has been carried out by the parish council to which 40 responses have been received from residents who do not support the proposals being put forward.

The financial implications of the proposed changes can be seen in appendix 2 but in summary, it has been advised by Finance that the reduction of funds to Sculthorpe Parish Council would be £1308.85 which based on a band D property assumption would be an extra £4.22 per year or £0.35 per month to the remaining Council Tax Payers within the parish.

While acknowledging the feedback received officers do consider the proposals to align the properties on Sandy Lane and Sculthorpe Eastgate within Lancaster South ward, due to their geographical proximity and the reasonable expectation that they could both identify as being a resident of the ward, and where they are likely to be using the town services and infrastructure.

2.3 Northrepps and Cromer:

This proposal sought to include those parts of the Northrepps parish north of the Norwich Road railway bridge i.e. Norwich Road, Stevens Road, Christophers Close, The Ridgeway, Finch Close and Nightingale Close into Cromer parish.

The proposal has not received support during the consultation process including from the Parish Council in Northrepps, local parishioners and the local ward member for Poppyland ward, Cllr Fitch-Tillett and indeed was met with resistance at the Parish Council meeting attended by Officers in October 2021.

As such the proposal has been amended for final recommendations as shown in the map and explanation in Appendix 3. In summary, the proposed boundary would still be amended such that properties on The Ridgeway, Finch Close and Nightingale Close which are accessed off Hillside in Cromer, are moved into the Cromer Town ward. For consistency, the two properties at the end of Stevens Road, Capri and Maryfield which are currently within Cromer Town ward would be moved to Northrepps parish with the rest of the road and all other properties on Norwich Road, Christophers Close would remain in Northrepps parish. Appendix 3 also shows a breakdown of the revised proposal's effect on Council Tax parish precept for both the properties which would remain in the parish of Northrepps, including the two properties on Stevens Road which would be moving from Cromer and finally the effect of the change on Cromer Town Councils precept and the properties which would now find themselves in that Parish ward.

2.4 West Raynham and Helhoughton:

The initial part of the proposals to change the boundary between Helhoughton and Raynham to place all properties at the former RAF West Raynham into Raynham parish is recommended to proceed as originally proposed given the favourable response received in the initial consultation period.

There are 128 houses proposed to move from Helhoughton to Raynham parish with 126 of them being Band A properties and two being Band B. The difference between the two is an increase of parish precept of £1.84 per year and £2.14 per year respectively.

It has been advised by Finance that the reduction of funds to Helhoughton Parish Council would be £3067.50 per annum which, based on a band D property assumption would be an extra £26.67 per year or £2.22 per month to the remaining Council Tax Payers in the parish. Mapping and details of the properties relating to this proposal is shown in appendix 4.

N.B The follow up proposals into the warding arrangement within Raynham parish which is currently being consulted does not form part of the final recommendations at this point and will form a separate decision at a later date.

2.5 Sheringham and Upper Sheringham:

This proposal was to amend the boundary between Sheringham and Upper Sheringham so that the new Norfolk Homes development on Holway Road would be within the Sheringham parish.

This proposal received acceptance from residents living in the streets in close proximity to the development, however, it did not have the support of the parish council in Upper Sheringham and one of the District Members for Sheringham South aligned themselves with the Parish Council's reasons for objections. However, while acknowledging the comments made we consider the proposal should be agreed as proposed and for the new properties in the new development be designated within the parish ward of Sheringham South given the distance to town facilities, schools and polling arrangements and indeed the strong links and common identities which will be established with residencies in their immediate proximity. The mapping for this proposal is within appendix 1.

2.6 East Runton and Cromer;

This is boundary anomaly which does have consequences in terms of council tax precept and governance for the three properties concerned, however no response was received during consultation and the proposal to move the properties from East Runton Parish to Cromer Town West, in line with the remaining properties on Sandy Lane and Bittern Rise remains unchanged. The mapping for this proposal is shown within appendix 1.

2.7 Grouping of Hempton and Pudding Norton Parish Councils

This proposal is following a request from both Hempton and Pudding Norton (with Testerton) parish councils to implement a grouping arrangement between the two parish councils. Over recent years it has been a challenge to maintain membership levels so the grouping arrangement would be a way of alleviating that issue with both current parish councils being dissolved and a new common parish council being implemented.

Consultation was undertaken during autumn which provided a small number of positive responses with none being received in objection. Conversations have taken place with the clerk and chair of the Parish Council who are keen on implementing this grouping arrangement at the earliest opportunity so the grouping arrangement is recommended for approval in order to allow the parishes to move forward with sufficient local representation.

3. Conclusion

In respect of the inconsequential boundary anomaly proposals, these changes are recommended for approval as they will deliver sensible revisions to district boundary mapping. Where there are more consequential changes in terms of Council Tax and governance, it is believed that the proposals do bring about sensible adjustments which either reflect more recent developments or align them with the parish where they are closer to geographically or could be reasonably considered to identify as being a part of.

4. Implications and Risks

Council Tax implications in terms of Parish Precept for both Parish Councils and also residents affected either by moving or those staying in a parish with a reduced tax base.

Possible change in governance for some residents who would change ward if proposed changes are adopted.

5. Financial Implications and Risks

There will be changes to Council Tax precepts in some of the properties where they will be moving to a different parish as a result of the changes that have been suggested. These are all outlined in the appendices to show the impact on the properties which will be moving and broken down in to each band. Also the impact on each Parish Council in terms of loss or gain and what the average increase will be in terms of parish precept to each property remaining in a parish with a reduction in Council Tax Base.

6. Sustainability

There are no sustainability implications relating to this report.

7. Equality and Diversity

There are no considerations in relation to this.

8. Section 17 Crime and Disorder considerations

There are no considerations required in relation to this.

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2021 Community Governance Reviews
Report to Full Council – 15 December 2021

FINAL RECOMMENDATIONS
APPENDIX 1

Map Key

Blue Lines – existing parish Boundaries

Red lines – proposed parish boundaries

Aldborough – Alby



Properties Affected:

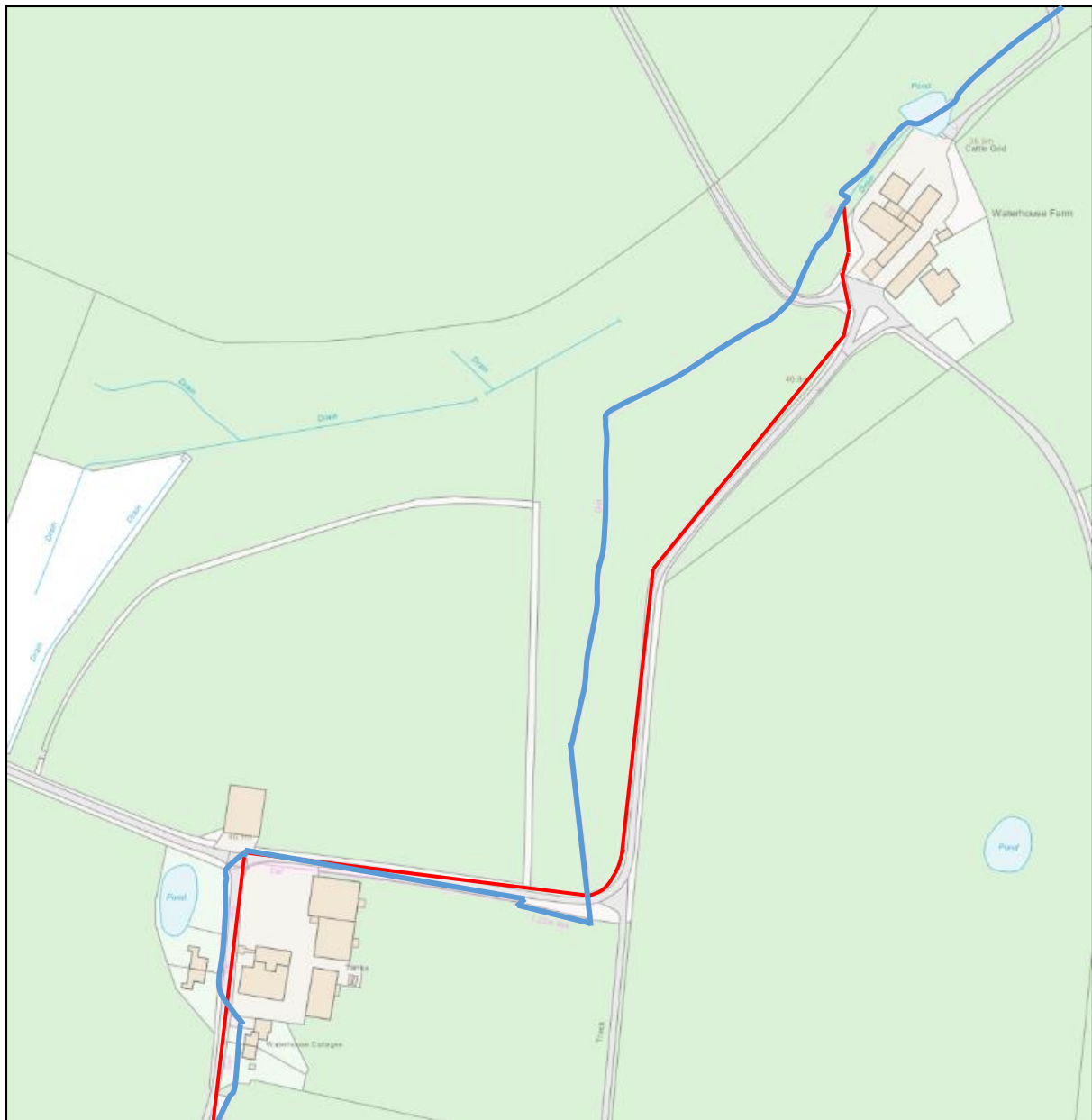
1 Aldborough Mill, Mill Lane, Aldborough, NR11 7NS

Proposal:

This Review seeks to tidy the boundary between Aldborough and Alby by running the boundary line along the stream to the south of the property up to the point it meets the existing boundary the boundary line.

The property affected would be moved from Alby Parish to Aldborough Parish so there is a modest change in terms of Council Tax precept and also a governance change to Aldborough Parish Council however both District Ward and County Divisions would remain unchanged.

Barsham – Fakenham North



Properties Affected:

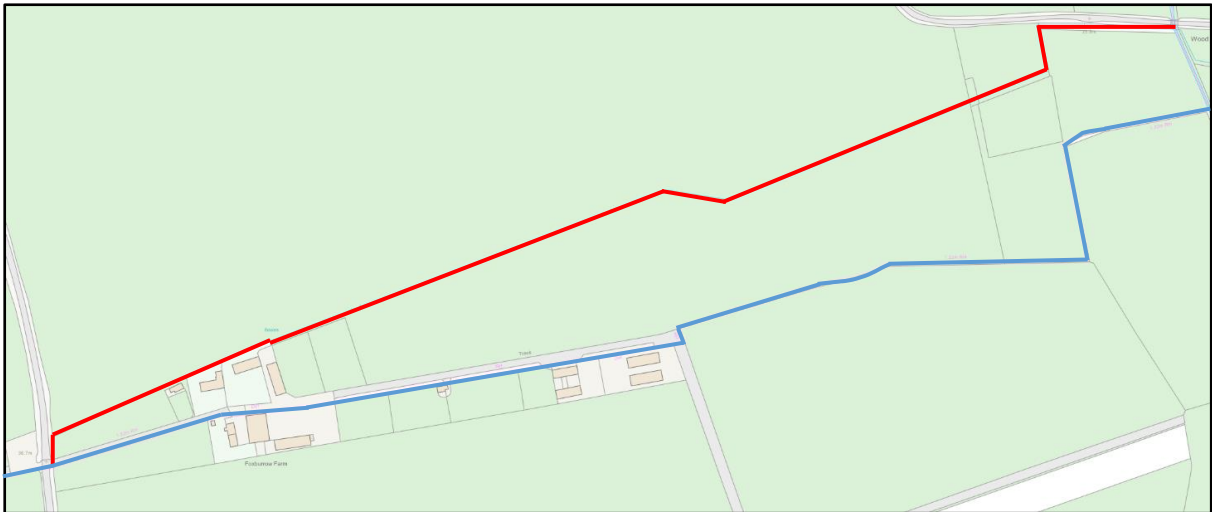
None

Proposal:

This Review seeks to tidy the boundary at Waterhouse Farm Cottages by running the boundary line along the track towards Waterhouse Farm rather than across the field between them.

This change is purely to correct an anomaly and doesn't impact any property in any way.

Binham – Hindringham



Properties Affected:

Foxburrow Farm, Binham Road, Hindringham, NR21 0DH

Annexe At, Foxburrow Farm, Binham Road, Hindringham, NR21 0DH

The Bungalow, Foxburrow Farm, Binham Road, Hindringham, NR21 0DH

Proposal:

This Review seeks to tidy the boundary at Foxburrow Farm Cottages by running the boundary line to the rear of The Bungalow and The Annexe at Foxburrow Farm and then eastwards along the drain until it meets the boundary with Field Dalling.

This change would bring The Bungalow at Foxburrow Farm into the Hindringham Parish in terms of Council Tax as it currently falls within Binham. All three are currently on the Electoral Register within the Hindringham Parish so there is no change in terms of Governance.

Blakeney – Wiveton



Properties Affected:

Monks Orchard, Friary Farm, Cley Road;

NNDR

The National Trust at Friary Farm;

1 Friary Farm Cottage, Cley Road;

Friary Farm Caravan Park, Cley Road,

Blakeney Lodge, Cley Road, Blakeney

Proposal:

To consolidate the properties and businesses established at Friary Farm into the Blakeney Parish.

Access to each is down the track off Cley Road which falls in Blakeney Parish so this change to the boundary brings this whole site together.

Brinton – (Holt Road, Brinton, NR24 2DZ)



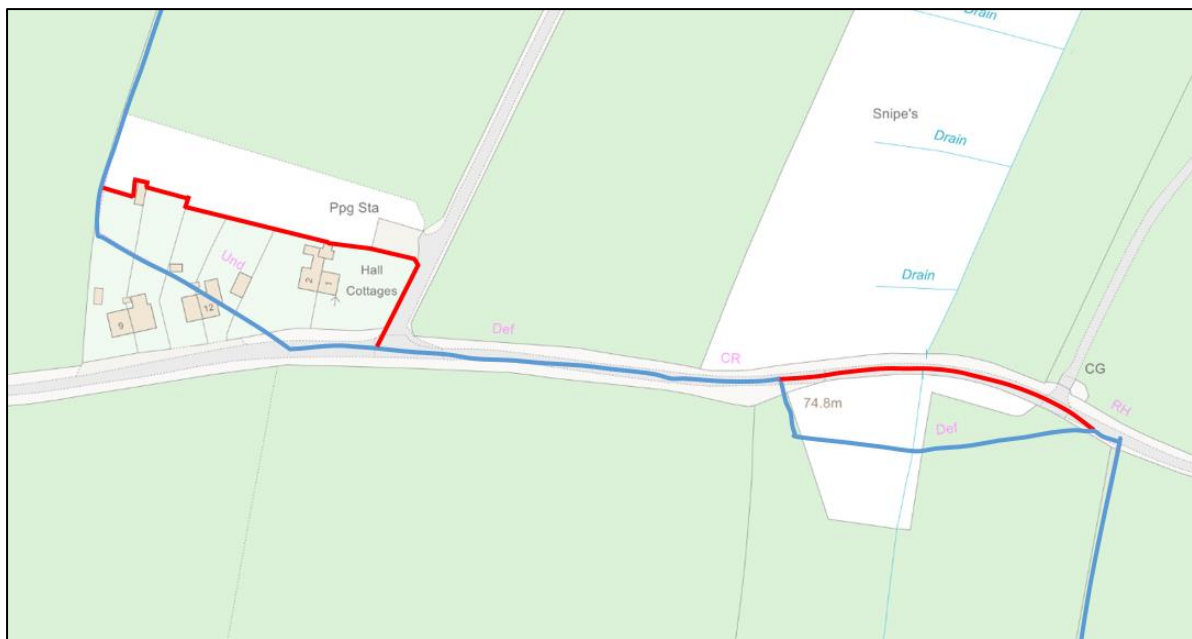
Properties Affected:

Grove House; Milestone House; Oak Tree House; Old Dairy House; Tilham

Proposal:

Move the boundary line to the eastern boundary of each property so all of the property footprint falls within Brinton Parish. This change is purely to correct an anomaly and doesn't impact any property in any way.

East and West Beckham



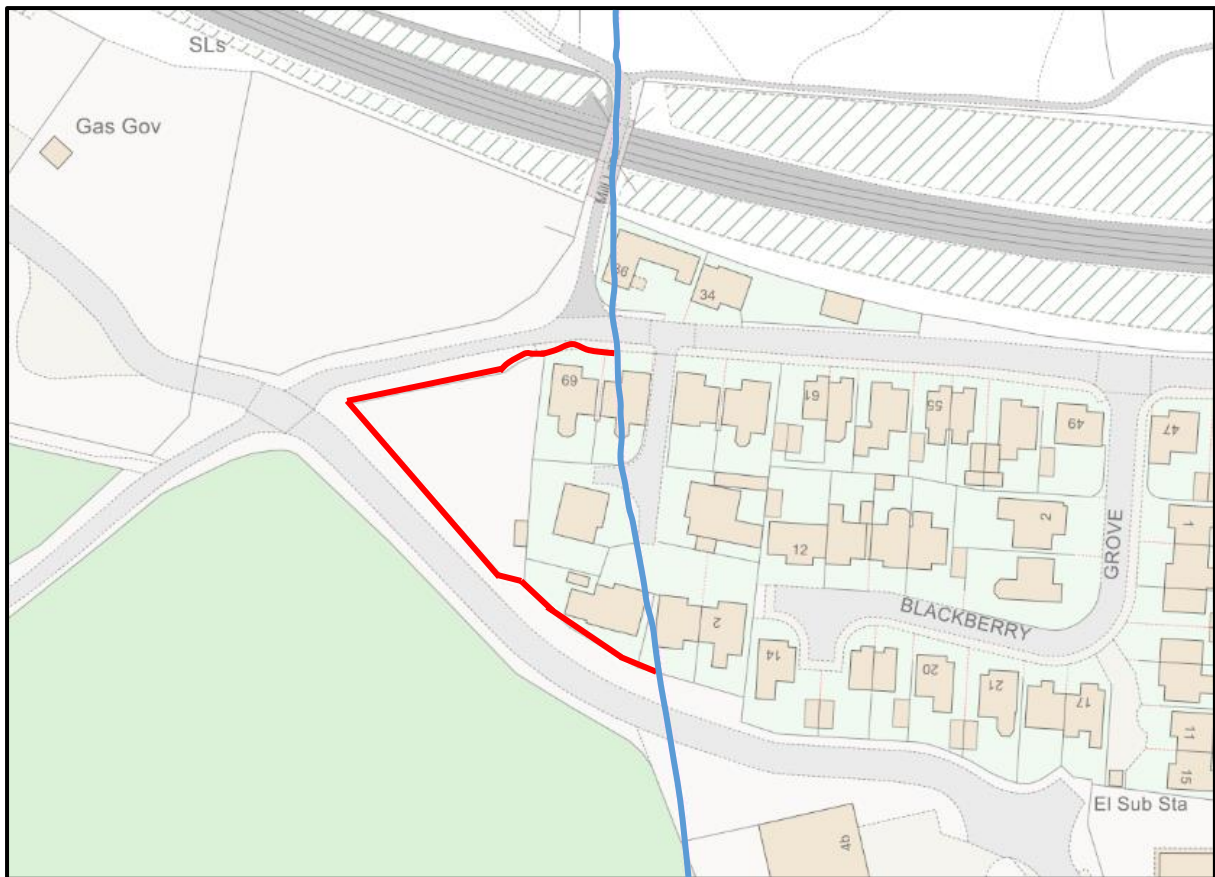
Proposal:

Currently within boundary between West and East Beckham runs through the gardens of 9, 10 and 11 Church Road West Beckham and through the dwelling at number 12 Church Road. This review seeks to address this anomaly by running behind the aforementioned properties including 1 and 2 Hall Cottages and down onto the existing boundary on Church Road before heading eastwards.

The further anomaly further along Church Road can be addressed by moving the boundary where it moves away from Church Road into the copse back onto the road until it joins up with the existing boundary before it starts moving south.

This proposal would bring about no change to the affected properties in terms of Council Tax or governance. Although currently situated within East Beckham the two properties at Hall Cottages are listed as West Beckham on all records.

East Runton – Cromer



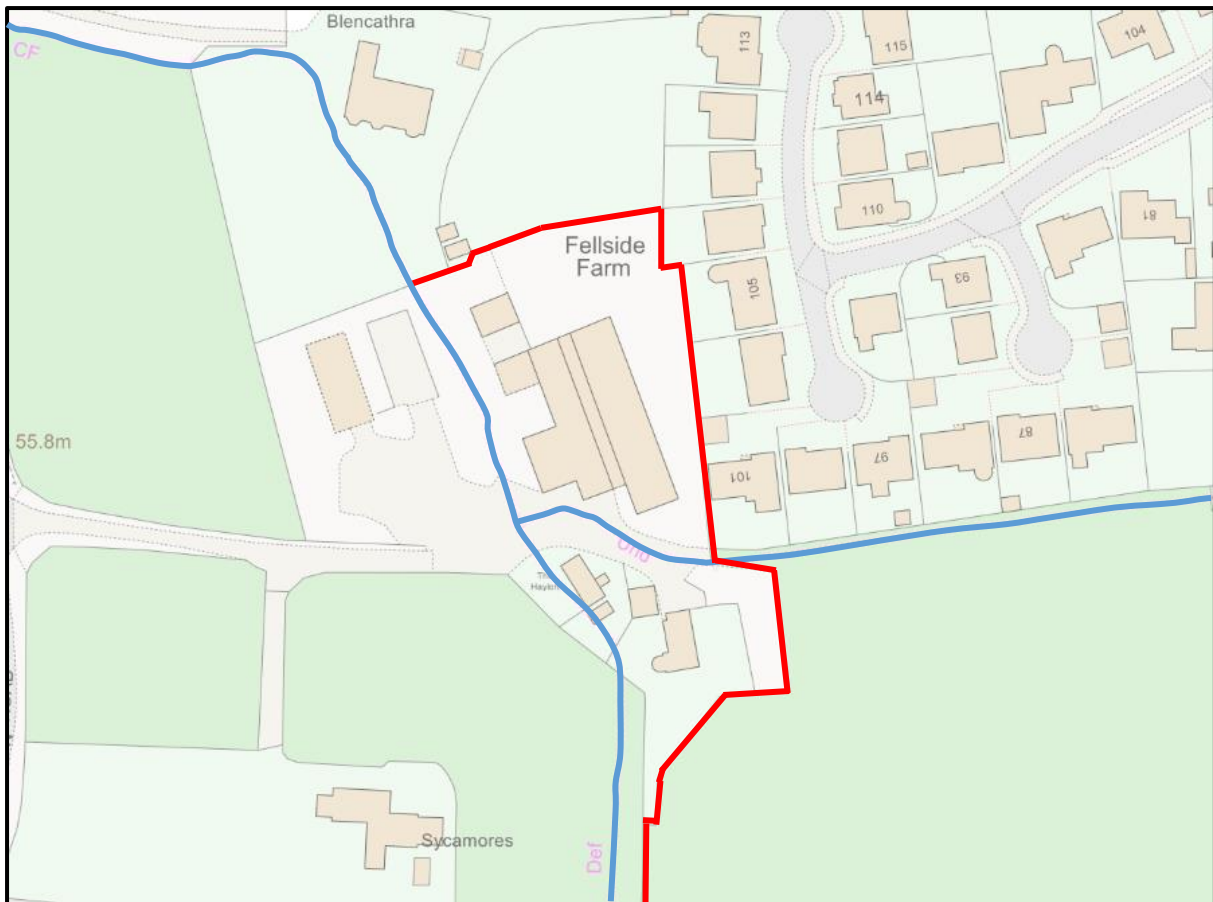
Properties Affected:

- 69 Sandy Lane, Cromer, NR27 9JT
- 4 Bittern Rise, Cromer
- 5 Bittern Rise, Cromer

Proposal:

Currently these properties fall within East Runton parish for Council Tax and the Electoral Register. The Review would move them into Cromer Town for Council Tax purposes and into the Cromer Town West Ward in respect of the Electoral Register. This would create equality with the other properties on their street and correct this boundary anomaly.

Felbrigg – Cromer – Roughton



Properties Affected:

Fellside Farm, Metton Road, Cromer, NR27 9JH

The Hayloft, Fellside Farm, Metton Road, Cromer, NR27 9JH

Proposal:

Currently these properties fall within Roughton parish for Council Tax and the Electoral Register. The Review would move them into Felbrigg parish for Council Tax purposes and in respect of the Electoral Register.

The Parish precept would increase from £33.43 to £53.35 in respect of Fellside Farm and in respect of The Hayloft.

This proposal would have a minor affect in terms of governance in that there would be a change of Parish Council, however the District Ward and the County Division would remain unchanged.

Gresham – Sustead



Properties Affected:

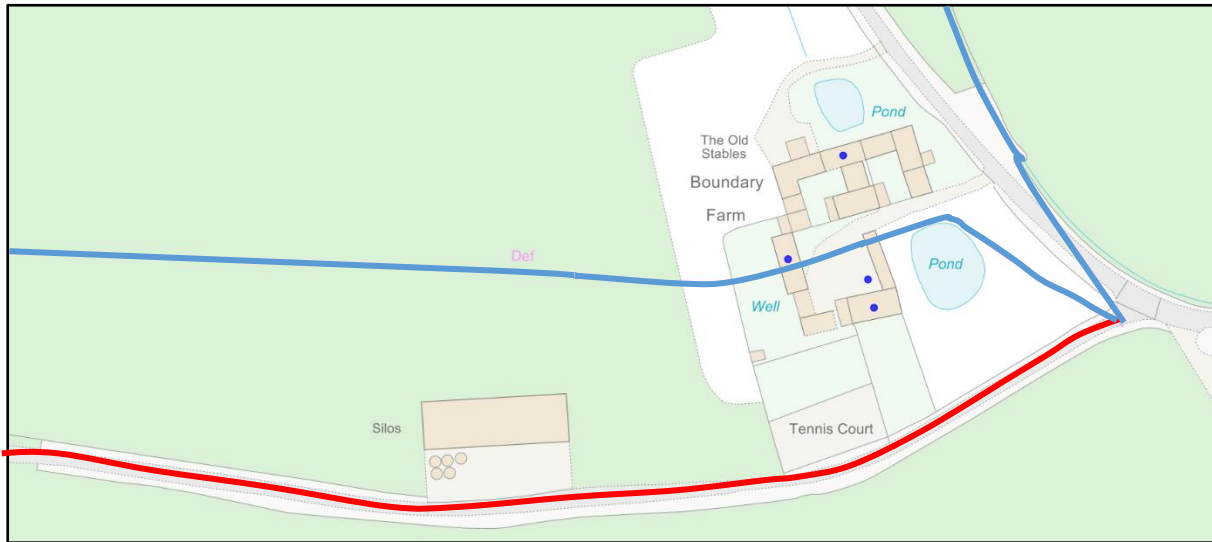
3,4,5 Sustead Lane Cottages, Sustead Lane, Sustead, NR11 8RR

Proposal:

This Review seeks to tidy the boundary at Sustead Lane Cottages by running the boundary line to the north of properties rather than it running through them.

This change is purely to correct an anomaly and doesn't impact any property in any way.

Gunthorpe – Briningham

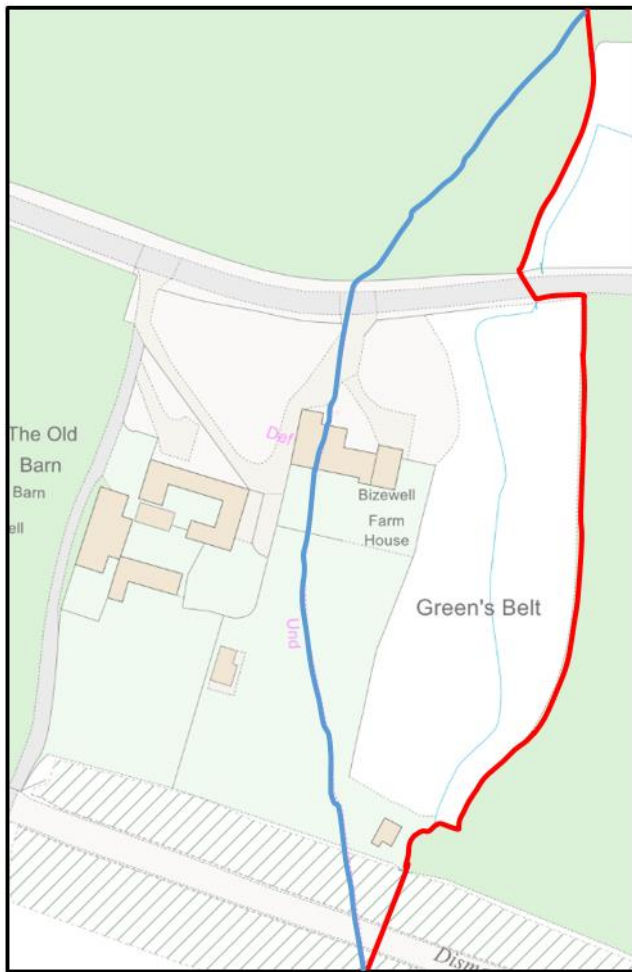
**Property Affected:**

The Barn, Boundary Farm, Swanton Road, Gunthorpe, NR24 2NS

Proposal:

Move the boundary line so it continues along the track to the south of Boundary Farm until it reaches the existing boundary line running north along Swanton Road. The Property currently sits within Gunthorpe Parish for Council Tax but would need moving from Briningham in respect of the Electoral Register.

Sidestrand and Trimingham



Proposal:

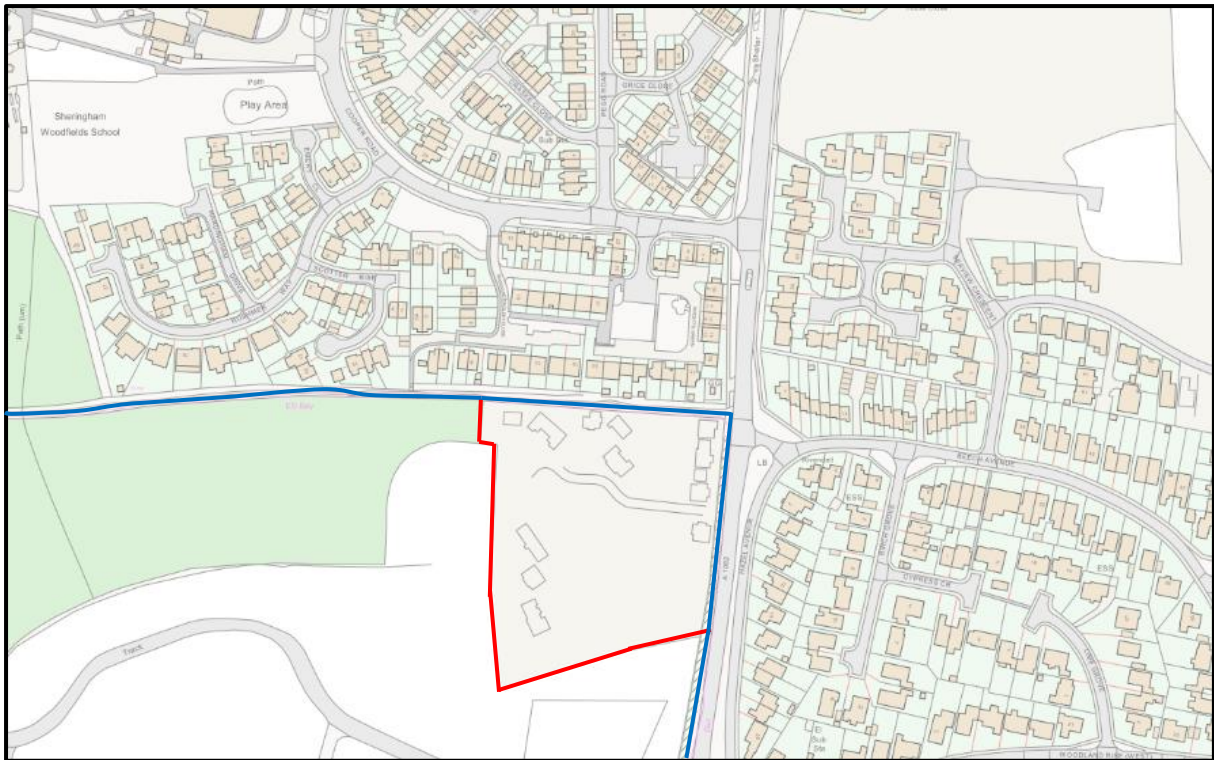
To amend historical plotting anomalies at the three properties at Bizewell Farm on the boundary between Trimingham and Sidestrand and also at the boundary between Trimingham and Northrepps at Pond Farm House.

There is no effect on any of the properties in terms of Council Tax or governance as a result of these changes.

Sidestrand and Northrepps



Upper Sheringham – Sheringham South



Properties Affected:

New Development of 52 homes at Holway Road, Sheringham

Proposal:

The development site for this property currently falls within the neighbouring Parish of Upper Sheringham. This review proposes to move the boundary line which currently runs along the Butts Lane footpath to Holway Road so it moves south on the northwest corner of the development and runs south along the development site before moving eastward along the development until it reaches Holway Road where it will continue south along the existing boundary line.

Those who will occupy homes on this development will identify as Sheringham residents in terms of schooling, medical services and retail. Furthermore they are on the doorstep of the designated Polling Station situated at the Sheringham Community Centre.

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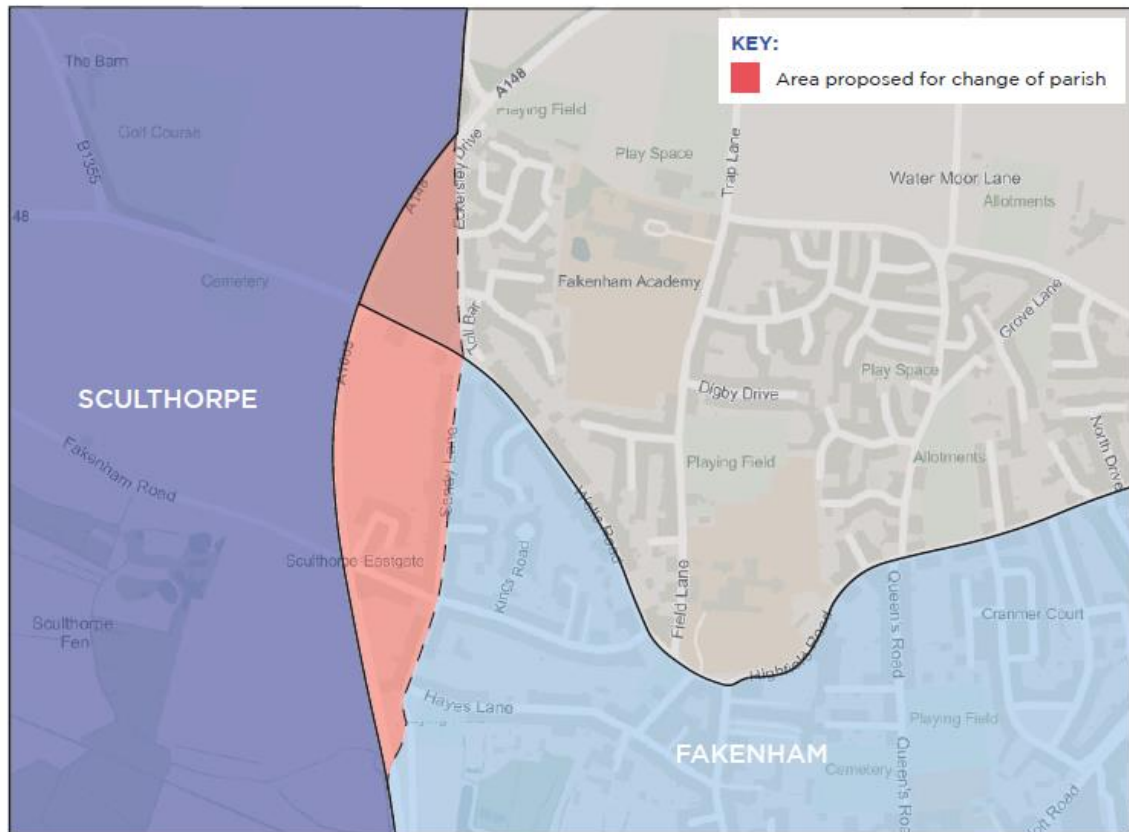
2021 Community Governance Reviews

Report to Full Council – 15 December 2021

FINAL RECOMMENDATIONS

APPENDIX 2

Sculthorpe to Fakenham (South)



Proposed boundary changes to Fakenham and Sculthorpe with the current boundaries as a dotted line.

Properties proposed to move:

1 – 55 Sandy Lane, Fakenham
 1 – 16, Barley End and Windy Ridge
 Sculthorpe Eastgate
Total properties: 50

Band	Sculthorpe	Fakenham	Difference
A	£19.34	£53.76	£34.42
B	£22.57	£62.72	£40.15
C	£25.79	£71.68	£45.89
D	£29.01	£80.64	£51.63
E	£35.46	£98.56	£63.10
F	£41.91	£116.48	£74.57
G	£48.36	£134.40	£86.04

Proposals:

The boundary line currently crosses the A148 Fakenham Bypass, moving southwards down Toll Bar/Seppings Road before continuing down Sandy Lane and joining the A1065.

This review proposes the movement of the boundary so that rather than cross the A148 it runs along it towards the roundabout before continuing along the A1065 until it joins the existing boundary line further along this road.

This will mean the properties on the west side of Sandy Lane and the properties on Sculthorpe Eastgate will be moved from Sculthorpe Parish to Fakenham South.

The current boundary between Fakenham North and South will continue along the Creake Road until it meets the new boundary line at the roundabout.

This will have implications in terms of Council Tax where their precepts will increase and also their governance from being moved from Sculthorpe Parish to the Fakenham South Ward at Parish level, from the Walsingham Ward to Lancaster South Ward at District Council Level and to Fakenham Division from the Wells Division at County Council level.

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In terms of properties remaining in Sculthorpe; it is anticipated there will be an increase of approx. £4 per year or 35pence per month to cover the shortfall of £1309



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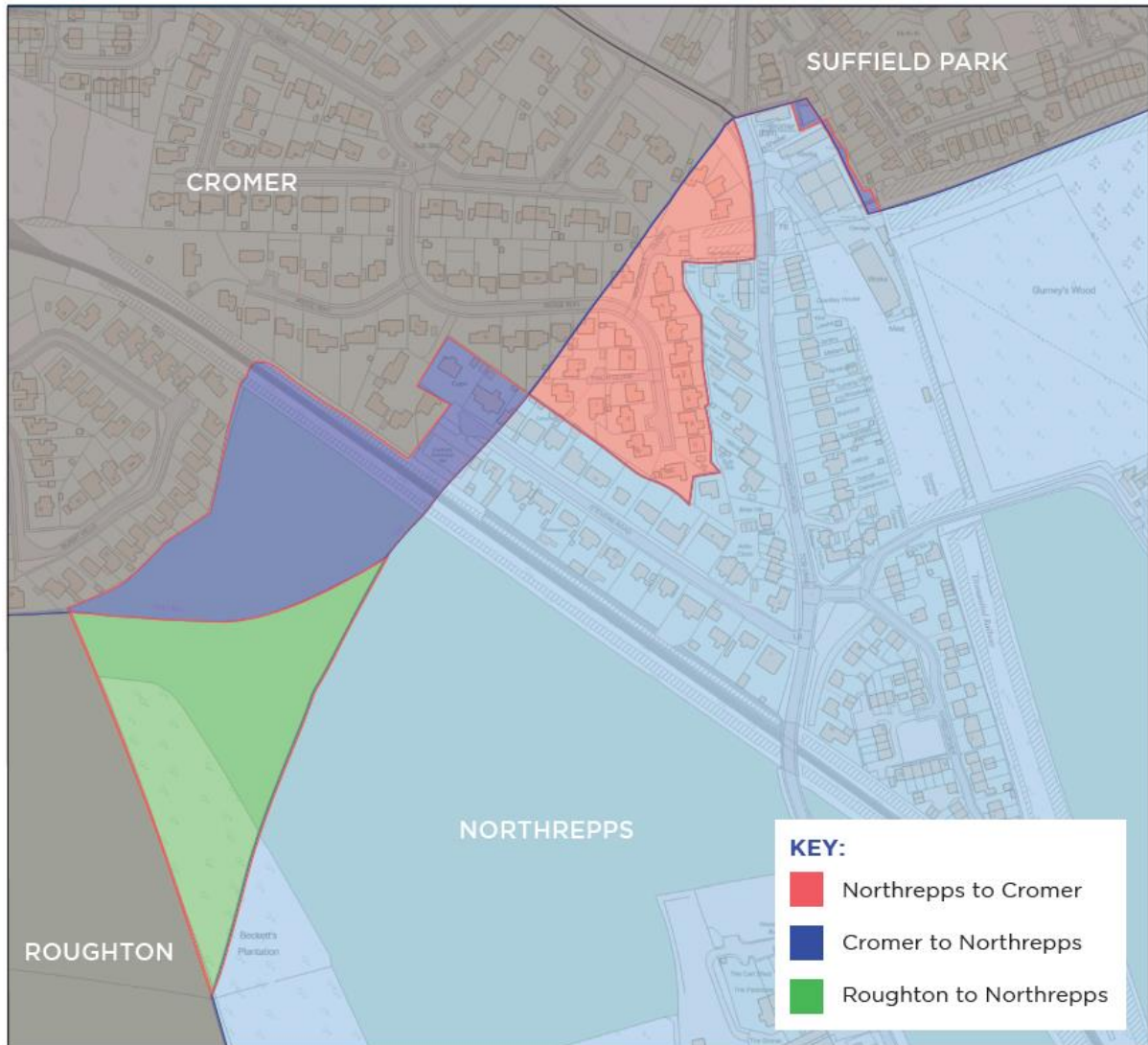
Report to Full Council – 15 December 2021

FINAL RECOMMENDATIONS

APPENDIX 3

Northrepps, Cromer, Roughton

Revised mapping and Council Tax implications to properties moving from Northrepps to Cromer and vice versa and also the effect of the moves on the remaining Council Tax base in Northrepps.



Council Tax implication for properties remaining in Northrepps Parish:

Based on a band D the remaining 526 properties in Northrepps would have to find an extra £1.75 per year / 14 pence per month

In terms of the properties moving to and from Cromer, it will affect them as follows:

The 15 properties on The Ridgeway, four properties on Nightingale Close and three properties on Finch Close are all **band D** properties. The difference in parish precept is **£41.93** per year for Northrepps and **£93.93** per year for Cromer so an increase of **£52 per year/ £4.33 per month**.

The two properties moving from Stevens Road from Cromer into Northrepps parish are also both **band D** so the same amounts as above will apply and they will see their Parish Precept decrease by **£52 per year / £4.33 per month**.

The proposed changes highlighted in green have no consequence but serves to tidy up the boundary to take in natural features and the tidying up of the Northrepps boundary with Suffield Park ward has no consequences to any of the properties which had previously been split by the boundary.



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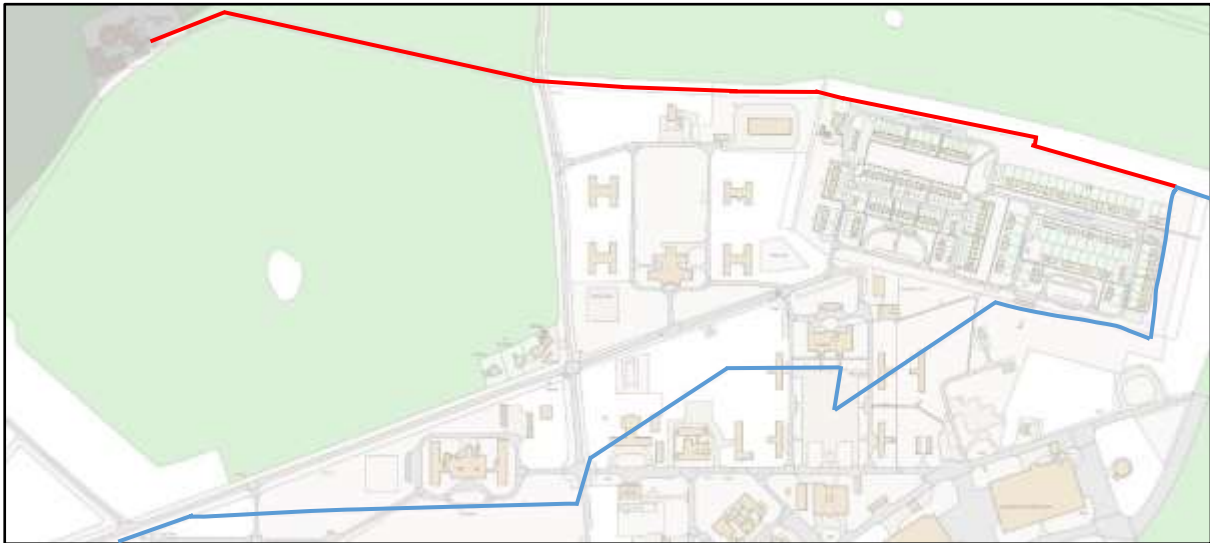
FINAL RECOMMENDATIONS
APPENDIX 4

Map Key

Blue Lines – existing parish Boundaries

Red lines – proposed parish boundaries

West Raynham – Helhoughton (1)



Properties Affected:

9 -76 Barsham Close, West Raynham
77 – 94 & 121 – 130 Blickling Street, West Raynham
1 – 8 Felbrigg Walk, West Raynham
27 – 38 & 115 - 120 Holkham Green, West Raynham
39 – 58 Oxburgh Square, West Raynham
95 – 102 Raynham Way, West Raynham
103 – 114 Sandringham Crescent, West Raynham

Massingham Road, West Raynham:
The Bungalow; Dursley; The Old Stores; West Raynham Auto Clinic,

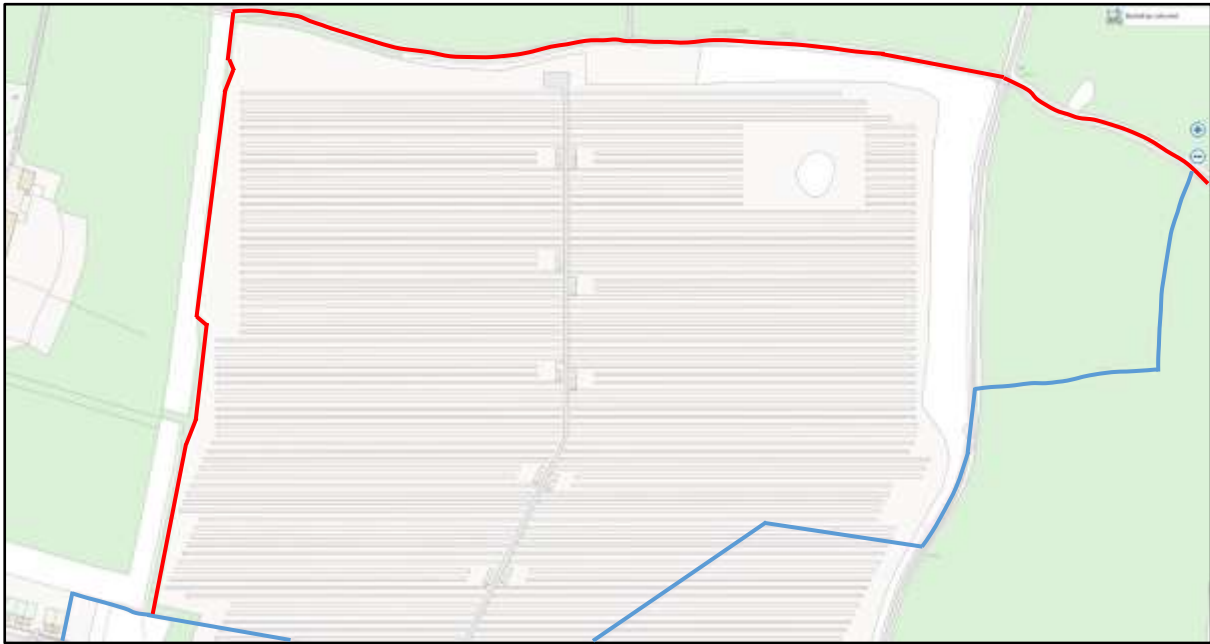
NB: A full breakdown of each affected property and the Council Tax implications of moving this boundary is attached

Proposal:

This Review seeks to bring all properties who identify with the former RAF West Raynham site together within the same parish. Currently the boundary line splits the properties on the former base so it is proposed that the boundary line is move to the north so it runs along the track from the District boundary at the former Sewage works and continues along the hedgerow behind the former base and the properties on Barsham Close and Blickling Street

There will be a decrease in the Parish precept for the individual properties concerned and in terms of governance electors will have a change of polling station from Helhoughton Village Hall to Raynham Village Hall but in terms of warding arrangements, they will remain the same.

West Raynham – Helhoughton (2)



Area Affected: Raynham Solar Farm

Proposal:

Currently the boundary cuts across the site of the Solar Farm. This review seeks to tidy this boundary so the entire Solar Farm site sits within Raynham Parish by running the boundary northwards along the western side of the farm until it meets Paxfield Road. From here the Boundary would run eastwards along Paxfield road across the road until it joins with the existing Helhoughton Boundary.

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Motion for The Ocean

Why is this declaration needed now?

The health of our ocean is inextricably linked with our climate and with human health, wellbeing and prosperity. A healthy ocean is fundamental in regulating the global climate system and is an essential ally in our fight against climate change. The ocean absorbs more than 90% of the excess heat in the climate system as well as absorbing around 20% of annual carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions generated by human activity.

However, decades of irresponsible marine exploitation and pollution have led to significant levels of degradation, and this together with the detrimental impacts of our changing climate on marine ecosystems has led to national and global recognition that the world ocean is in crisis. An unhealthy ocean does not absorb or store carbon as effectively as a healthy one, further worsening the impacts of the climate crisis.

The UK government's recent Marine Strategy assessment confirms that our marine environment is not healthy. An ocean in crisis is not only bad news for our climate, but also for our local fishing and tourism industries and for the health, wellbeing and prosperity of our coastal communities.

In North Norfolk, like the rest of planet, we are witnessing the ocean crisis first-hand. Fish stocks continue to collapse from permitted and illegal overfishing and poor water quality is impacting seafood and safe bathing. Our beaches are covered in litter with each tide, much of it plastic, though this is just the tip of the iceberg of the amount of litter in our oceans. Marine microplastics have been found in all marine environments and in the bodies of many species, including humans and the species of fish we regularly eat.

Our residents are on the frontline of climate change and are being disproportionately impacted relative to inland communities. The impact of the climate crisis on the ocean is profound, from rising water temperatures and changes in ocean chemistry, to sea level rise and increased storminess, including in our local waters. This is changing what seafood is caught locally, accelerating the erosion of our coastline - increasing the risk to infrastructure and properties, and increasing the risk of flooding and storm damage.

Urgent action is needed to halt these devastating changes and recover the health of our ocean to enable it to deliver the full range of benefits, including climate regulation, carbon storage in coastal and marine habitats, coastal protection, a thriving local economy, clean safe recreation and happy, healthy coastal communities. We must play our part in recovering the health of the ocean.

In North Norfolk, the ocean is at the heart of our heritage and economy. From the maritime and marine expertise around the Ports of Wells and Blakeney and all the commercial users of our beaches, to the millions of visitors who come to North Norfolk to experience the sight, sound and feel of the ocean. The ocean can play a vital role in our economic recovery and we must strive to develop a sustainable and equitable blue economy that delivers both ocean recovery and local prosperity. We must ensure that ocean recovery is embedded in our relevant strategic decision-making,

policymaking and budget-setting; as well as being considered in future strategies and plans, including those seeking to improve the health and wellbeing of our residents.

At present, not everyone has the opportunity or means to access and enjoy the ocean. Even within North Norfolk, there are people of all ages who have never experienced the joy of our ocean. First-hand experience of the ocean is essential if people are to be motivated to play their part in protecting it, whether that is through disposing of their litter responsibly, recycling what they can or volunteering in ocean conservation with local organisations. Helping individuals develop their ocean literacy (understanding of the relationship between people and the ocean) is an essential part of this motion, as is individual and collective marine citizenship (promoting and demanding an ocean recovery through local, national and international policy changes).

Local authorities cannot solve the ocean crisis alone, but we can – and must – play our part.

This Council declares an urgent need for Ocean Recovery.

We recognise that we need ocean recovery to meet our net zero carbon targets, and we need net zero carbon to recover our ocean.

This Council pledges to:

1. Report to Full Council within 12 months on the actions and projects that will begin an ocean recovery in North Norfolk
2. Consider ocean recovery in all strategic decisions, plans, budgets and approaches to decisions by the Council (particularly in planning, regeneration, skills and economic policy), aligning with climate change mitigation and adaptation requirements, and considering ocean-based solutions in our journey towards a carbon neutral and climate resilient future.
3. Promote closer working between North Norfolk District Council and the Marine Management Organisation and embed strong links between the Local Plan and the East Marine Plan to support ocean recovery.
4. Ensure that the Local Nature Recovery Strategy strives to support ocean recovery.
5. Work with partners locally and nationally to deliver increased sustainability in marine industries and develop a sustainable and equitable blue economy that delivers ocean recovery and local prosperity.
6. Grow ocean literacy and marine citizenship in North Norfolk including ensuring all pupils are given the opportunity to experience the ocean first-hand before leaving primary school- striving to include home-schooled children - and promote equitable access to the ocean through physical and digital

experiences for all residents.

7. Create a link on the Council website to partners updates on ocean recovery progress, signpost to ocean literacy development opportunities, and marine citizenship pledges.
8. Write to the Government asking them to put the ocean into net recovery by 2030 by
 - a) Ensuring Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authorities and Natural England have the resources they need to effectively research and monitor our growing number of marine protected areas, and to set and enforce appropriate fishing levels that support local economies and deliver environmental sustainability.
 - b) Ensuring coastal communities have a meaningful say in the development of marine policy to ensure it delivers equitable and sustainable outcomes.
 - c) Appoint a dedicated Minister for Coastal Communities.
 - d) And by listening to marine scientific advice, including marine social science, to update the Marine Policy Statement and produce a national Ocean Recovery Strategy which will:
 - i. Enable the recovery of marine ecosystems rather than managing degraded or altered habitats in their reduced state.
 - ii. Consider levelling up, marine conservation, energy, industrial growth, flood and coastal erosion risk management, climate adaptation and fisheries policy holistically rather than as competing interests.
 - iii. Develop a smarter approach to managing the health of the entire ocean that moves beyond Marine Protected Areas and enables links to be made across sectors towards sustainability.
 - iv. Establish improved processes for understanding the benefits of ocean recovery, leaving no doubt the links between this and human lives, livelihoods, and wellbeing.
 - v. Stop plastic pollution at source by strengthening the regulations around single-use plastics and set standards for microfibre-catching filters to ensure that all new domestic and commercial washing machines are fitted with a filter that captures a high percentage of microfibres produced in the wash cycle.

Glossary

A “Blue Economy” is one which uses ocean resources sustainably or even regeneratively whilst improving community wellbeing and social equity. It is not simply marine or maritime economic activity.

“Ocean literacy” is where a person understands the ocean's influence on them and their influence on the ocean. For example, an understanding that the ocean stores carbon and an understanding that what they put down the drain can impact on ocean health.

“Marine citizenship” is where an individual practices their rights and duties relating to the health of the marine environment, e.g. a resident writing to their local Councillor to ask them to take action for ocean recovery; or collective marine citizenship, e.g. promoting or making local, national or international policy changes.