

Council



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12 December 2023

A meeting of the **Council** of North Norfolk District Council will be held in the Council Chamber - Council Offices on **Wednesday, 20 December 2023 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 are requested to arrive at least 15 minutes before the start of the meeting. It will not always be possible to accommodate requests after that time. This is to allow time for the Committee Chair to rearrange the order of items on the agenda for the convenience of members of the public. Further information on the procedure for public speaking can be obtained from Democratic Services, Tel:01263 516010, Email:Emma.Denny@north-norfolk.gov.uk.

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. Please note that this meeting is livestreamed: [NNDC eDemocracy - YouTube](#)

Emma Denny
Democratic Services Manager

To: Cllr T Adams, Cllr P Bailey, Cllr M Batey, Cllr K Bayes, Cllr D Birch, Cllr H Blathwayt, Cllr J Boyle, Cllr A Brown, Cllr G Bull, Cllr S Bütikofer, Cllr C Cushing, Cllr N Dixon, Cllr P Fisher, Cllr A Fitch-Tillett, Cllr T FitzPatrick, Cllr W Fredericks, Cllr M Hankins, Cllr C Heinink, Cllr P Heinrich, Cllr V Holliday, Cllr N Housden, Cllr R Macdonald, Cllr G Mancini-Boyle, Cllr P Neatherway, Cllr L Paterson, Cllr S Penfold, Cllr P Porter, Cllr J Punchard, Cllr C Ringer, Cllr L Shires, Cllr R Sims, Cllr E Spagnola, Cllr M Taylor, Cllr J Toye, Cllr K Toye, Cllr E Vardy, Cllr A Varley, Cllr L Vickers and Cllr L Withington

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 - 16

To confirm the minutes of the meeting of the Council held on 22 November 2023.

3. TO RECEIVE DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS FROM MEMBERS

17 - 22

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)

4. 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.

5. CHAIRMAN'S COMMUNICATIONS

To receive the Chairman's communications, if any.

6. LEADER'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

7. PUBLIC QUESTIONS AND STATEMENTS

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

8. APPOINTMENTS TO COMMITTEES, SUB-COMMITTEES, WORKING PARTIES AND OUTSIDE BODIES

To receive any changes to appointments to Committees, sub-committees, Working Parties and Outside Bodies as notified by the Group Leaders.

9. REPORT OF THE INDEPENDENT REMUNERATION PANEL ON THE REVIEW OF THE SCHEME OF MEMBERS' ALLOWANCES 2024

23 - 38

Executive Summary	This report makes recommendations to Full Council on the allowances and expenses to be paid to Members to take effect from 01 May 2024. In accordance with the requirements of the Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003, the Council established an Independent Remuneration Panel at the meeting of Full Council held on 20 September 2023. The terms of reference for the Panel were also agreed at the September meeting of Full Council.
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	<p>Although members can choose not to support the recommendations of the Panel, the legislation requires the following: 'Before an authority makes or amends a scheme, it shall have regard to the recommendations made in relation to it by an independent remuneration panel'. The findings and recommendations of the Panel are detailed in this report.</p>
Options considered	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To support all of the recommendations made by the Independent Remuneration Panel (IRP) 2. To support some of the recommendations made by the Independent Remuneration Panel (IRP), whilst rejecting some. 3. To reject all of the recommendations made by the Independent Remuneration Panel (IRP)
Consultation(s)	<p>Members were consulted throughout the process. They were invited to submit comments for the IRP to consider and a survey was circulated for completion. Two group leaders met with the panel to share their views.</p>
Recommendations	<p>That Members consider the recommendations of the Independent Remuneration Panel, adopt a scheme of allowances and amend the Constitution accordingly.</p> <p>Specifically, it is recommended that:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) the Basic Allowance should increase to £6,491 pa (to include £180 Broadband Allowance); b) the Scheme should remain index linked to officers' pay awards c) the Special Responsibility Allowance (SRA) for the Leader of the Council should remain calculated by way of a multiplier of x2 the basic allowance; d) A new SRA for the Deputy Leader should be introduced, calculated by way of a multiplier of x1.6 the basic allowance e) the SRA for Cabinet Members with Portfolio should remain calculated by way of a multiplier of x1.33 the basic allowance; f) the SRA for Chairmen of Committees of the Council (except Development Committee, Licensing Committee and Standards Committee) should remain calculated by way of a multiplier of x0.67 the basic allowance; g) the SRA for the Chairman of Development Committee to remain at x0.75 of the basic allowance, with the SRA for the Vice-chairman of Development Committee remaining at x0.25 of the basic allowance.

	<p><i>h)</i> Payments for the Chairmen of Standards Committee and Licensing Committee should be based on a per meeting payment of 2% of the Basic Allowance</p> <p><i>i)</i> A new payment for Chairmen of Planning Policy & Built Heritage Working Party to be introduced based on a per meeting payment of 2% of the basic Allowance or £129.82.</p> <p><i>j)</i> SRA payments to leaders of the opposition groups should move to a flat SRA rather than being based on the number within the group.</p> <p><i>k)</i> The SRA for the Leader of the main opposition group should be calculated by a way of a multiplier of x0.4</p> <p><i>l)</i> The SRA for the Leader of the smaller opposition group should be calculated by means of a multiplier of x0.15</p> <p><i>m)</i> The SRA for the Chairman of the Council should remain the same and be calculated by means of a multiplier of x0.5, with the Vice-Chairman of the Council remaining on the multiplier of x0.25</p> <p><i>n)</i> Member champion roles should not receive an SRA but should be eligible for travel and subsistence payments</p> <p><i>o)</i> A role description should be produced for member champions and should be published on the Council's website</p> <p><i>p)</i> A new 'family and friends' rate for carer's allowance of up to £10 per hour should be introduced, to support councillors in their role and ensure no-one is disadvantaged by caring responsibilities.</p> <p><i>q)</i> The Democratic Services Manager to have delegation to consider payments for carers' allowance on a case by case basis, allowing a higher rate in exceptional circumstances.</p> <p><i>r)</i> Travel and subsistence rates to remain the same.</p> <p><i>s)</i> <i>Any temporary increases to staff mileage rates will also apply to members.</i></p>
<p>Reasons for recommendations</p>	<p>An independent review of the Councils Scheme of Members' Allowances at least every 4 years, is a statutory requirement. Full Council must consider the recommendations of the IRP before reaching a decision.</p>
<p>Background papers</p>	<p>Previous IRP report February 2020 Comparison data from neighbouring authorities Survey responses from members</p>

Wards affected	All
Cabinet member(s)	Cllr T Adams
Contact Officer	Emma Denny, Democratic Services Manager Emma.denny@north-norfolk.gov.uk

Links to key documents:	
Corporate Plan:	Not applicable. A review of the Members' Allowances Scheme is a statutory requirement.
Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS)	N/A
Council Policies & Strategies	N/A

Corporate Governance:	
Is this a key decision	No
Has the public interest test been applied	This item is not exempt.
Details of any previous decision(s) on this matter	Full Council, February 2020.

10. FAKENHAM LEISURE AND SPORTS HUB

39 - 46

Executive Summary	To advise Council of Government funding for the proposed Fakenham Leisure and Sports Hub facility and outline the steps the Council will now take to deliver this large and exciting project in the coming months
Options considered	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proceed with the development and delivery of this exciting sport and wellbeing project for Fakenham with the Government funding pledged towards the project • Resolve not to proceed with the project
Consultation(s)	The original plans for the Fakenham Leisure and Sports Hub proposal were the subject of extensive consultation with overwhelming public support expressed for the proposed facility. As the project is taken forward there will be further consultation and engagement with key stakeholders and partners and the public details of which are provided in the report.
Recommendations	It is recommended that:- <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Full Council welcomes the Government funding of £9.856million awarded towards the cost of the

	<p>Fakenham Leisure and Sports Hub project. The Council further recognises that confirmation of the Government funding will allow plans for the new facility to be taken forward in the coming months.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. Council approves the establishment of a Capital Budget of £11million for the Fakenham Leisure and Sports Hub project within the Capital Programme. 3. Council approves the funding of this project made up of £9.856million of Levelling Up Fund (central government) monies, £0.408million Section 106 monies, £0.575million from the Football Foundation and the value of the land contributed by Fakenham Town Council. Any shortfall in this funding will need to be funded by the Council, for which borrowing will be taken. 4. Council approves the project management and governance arrangements for the project as outlined in Section 3 of the report. 5. Council agrees that a traditional procurement process would disadvantage the Council due to the timescales involved and supports an exemption under the Contract Procedure rules to appoint the consultants, FMG Consulting, who have previously worked on this project, as principal advisors to the Council in the development and delivery of the Fakenham Leisure and Sports Hub proposal. 6. Subject to recommendation 3 above, delegated authority is given to the Director of Communities to appoint FMG Consulting to advise the Council on the detailed design, construction and tender processes for the project including the submission of a planning application for the development. 7. Council requires that tender prices received are reported to Council for approval before any construction contract is awarded as a key “gate” point in the delivery of the project.
Reasons for recommendations	To establish the necessary project management and governance framework and financial monitoring arrangements for the Fakenham Leisure and Sports Hub project
Background papers	Report to Full Council – 27 th July 2022

Wards affected	Fakenham wards (Lancaster North and South); and wards in the west of the district including Briston, Priory, Stibbard, Stody, The Raynhams, Walsingham; Wells with Holkham.
Cabinet member(s)	Cllr Tim Adams, Leader of the Council
Contact Officer	Steve Blatch, Chief Executive Email:- steve.blatch@north-norfolk.gov.uk Tel:- 01263 516232

Links to key documents:

Corporate Plan:	The 2023-2027 Corporate Plan themes - Developing our Communities and A Strong, Responsible and Accountable Council
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Corporate Governance:	
Is this a key decision	Yes
Has the public interest test been applied	Yes – there is no private or confidential information to be considered by this report
Details of any previous decision(s) on this matter	N/A

11. DRAFT PROGRAMME OF MEETINGS 2024 – 2025

47 - 52

Executive Summary	An annual schedule of meetings is prepared to ensure that the Council's decision-making processes run as effectively as possible.
Options considered	No alternative options were considered. The Council has to agree a programme of meetings to facilitate the effective running of council business.
Consultation(s)	Key officers were consulted regarding proposed dates and any changes.
Recommendations	To adopt the Programme of Meetings for 2024-25.
Reasons for recommendations	An agreed schedule of meetings is necessary for the Council to adequately carry out its business
Background papers	Meeting schedules from previous years.

Wards affected	All
Cabinet member(s)	Cllr T Adams
Contact Officer	Emma Denny, Democratic Services Manager emma.denny@north-norfolk.gov.uk

12. PORTFOLIO REPORTS

53 - 94

To receive reports from Cabinet Members on their portfolios:

Cllr T Adams - Executive Support & Legal Services

Cllr H Blathwayt – Coast

Cllr A Brown – Planning & Enforcement

Cllr W Fredericks – Housing and People Services

Cllr P Heinrich – Sustainable Growth
Cllr C Ringer – IT, Environmental & Waste Services
Cllr L Shires – Finance, Estates & Assets
Cllr A Varley – Climate Change & Net Zero
Cllr L Withington – Community, Leisure & Outreach

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)

13. RECOMMENDATIONS FROM CABINET

Due to the Cabinet meeting on 6th December being cancelled, there were no recommendations to Full Council.

14. RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 13 DECEMBER 2023

To consider any recommendations made by Overview & Scrutiny Committee to Full Council.

15. QUESTIONS RECEIVED FROM MEMBERS

To respond to any questions from Members.

Please note the following section of the Constitution:

Questions by members:

12.1 Members of the Council may ask questions of the Leader and Cabinet during Portfolio Holder reports on the agenda of ordinary meetings of the Council on any matter of Council business or on issues which affect the Council's area.

12.2 Members of the Council may ask questions of the Chairman of a Committee at Ordinary Meetings of the Council on any matter of Council Business or on issues which affect the Council's area.

16. OPPOSITION BUSINESS

None Received.

17. NOTICE(S) OF MOTION

95 - 96

Please note that as set out in Chapter 2, section 14.11 of the Constitution the time limit for debating all motions is limited to 30 minutes.

The following notice of motion has been proposed by Cllr H Blathwayt, seconded by Cllr A Varley:

Motion: Clean Water – Clean up Your Act

North Norfolk District Council is concerned about the water quality and pollution of our beaches and waterways. This Council cares about ensuring the highest levels of water quality and seeks to hold Anglian Water and the Environment Agency (EA) to account.

We therefore propose the following:

That the Leader

- 1) writes to the Chief Executive of Anglia Water requesting:
 - a) Confirmation of when all combined sewage outflows (CSO) in North Norfolk will have working monitoring equipment in place
 - b) The reporting of CSO discharges on a quarterly basis to the Council
 - c) A detailed investment allocation plan for North Norfolk
- 2) writes to the Environment Agency (EA) requesting:
 - a) Greater transparency on their water quality readings
 - b) A guarantee that regular E. Coli testing will be undertaken & increased.
 - c) A guarantee that reactive DNA testing be undertaken
 - d) Information relating to collaborative works with agriculture partners
- 3) That the Council undertakes discussions with Anglian Water and the Environment Agency to ensure that there is a review of the actions taken following the 19th March incident in Mundesley.
- 4) That the Leader writes to the Secretary of State for the Environment requesting that funding to the EA is increased.

Proposed: Cllr. Harry Blathwayt

Seconded: Cllr. Adam Varley

18. 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.”

19. PRIVATE BUSINESS

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COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of the Council held on Wednesday, 22 November 2023 in the Council Chamber - Council Offices at 6.00 pm

Members Present:

Cllr T Adams	Cllr P Bailey
Cllr M Batey	Cllr K Bayes
Cllr D Birch	Cllr H Blathwayt
Cllr J Boyle	Cllr A Brown
Cllr G Bull	Cllr S Bütikofer
Cllr C Cushing	Cllr N Dixon
Cllr P Fisher	Cllr T FitzPatrick
Cllr W Fredericks	Cllr M Hankins
Cllr C Heinink	Cllr P Heinrich
Cllr V Holliday	Cllr R Macdonald
Cllr P Neatherway	Cllr L Paterson
Cllr S Penfold	Cllr P Porter
Cllr C Ringer	Cllr L Shires
Cllr M Taylor	Cllr J Toye
Cllr K Toye	Cllr E Vardy
Cllr A Varley	Cllr L Vickers
Cllr L Withington	

Officers in attendance: The Chief Executive, The Monitoring Officer, The S151 Officer, The Democratic Services Manager & the Democratic Services & Governance Officer (Regulatory)

74 ARMED FORCES COVENANT EMPLOYER RECOGNITION SCHEME

The Chairman invited Cllr J Toye, Armed Forces Member Champion, to receive the Armed Forces Covenant Employer Recognition Scheme silver award on behalf of the Council. Cllr Toye said that this was a great achievement and he thanked the officers for all their hard work and continued support.

75 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Cllrs A Fitch-Tillett, N Housden, G Mancini-Boyle, J Punchard, R Sims and E Spagnola,

76 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 20th September were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

77 TO RECEIVE DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS FROM MEMBERS

Cllr Dr V Holliday declared a pecuniary interest in Agenda item 12 (3) Council Tax Discounts & Premiums Determination 2024/2025

Cllr S Butikofer declared a non-pecuniary interest in Agenda item 15 – Opposition Business.

78 ITEMS OF URGENT BUSINESS

None received.

79 CHAIRMAN'S COMMUNICATIONS

The Chairman and Vice-Chairman spoke about recent civic events that they had attended:

15 October - The High Sheriff of Norfolk Justice Service, Norwich Cathedral

17 October – Reception at Sandringham House in aid of the Purfleet Trust

28 October – opening of Wighton Village Hall

10 November – Commemoration of Remembrance Day, NNDC Council Offices.

80 LEADER'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

Cllr Adams began by congratulating communities across the district for their very moving and poignant services to commemorate Remembrance Day.

He then thanked everyone who had assisted their communities during the recent flooding events. This had affected residents of Hickling and Potter Heigham but also Letheringsett Bodham and Sheringham.

He then informed members of some very good news that had just been announced regarding levelling up funding for Fakenham. He said that he was delighted to say that NNDC had secured £9.9m for the provision of sports, leisure and swimming facilities at Trap Lane. He believed that this would be a real boost for the town and NNDC would work closely with the Town Council and other stakeholders to ensure the facility was in place by March 2026.

In other good news, Cllr Adams said that two of the Council's new public conveniences had been awarded a diamond award for 'Loo of the Year'. The facilities were at Queen's Road in Fakenham and Stearman's Yard in Wells.

Cllr Adams then thanked members for their involvement and engagement with the Corporate Plan workshops.

In conclusion, Cllr Adams said that the LGA Peer Review report had now been published on the Council's website. He said that the Council was very pleased with the report findings and work was underway on producing an action plan to respond to the recommendations.

81 PUBLIC QUESTIONS AND STATEMENTS

There were two members of the public in attendance; Mr B Musson and Cllr F Whymark. Both wished to ask a question relating to the impact of the North Walsham West development on traffic flow in Coltishall. The Chairman thanked them for attending and invited Cllr Whymark to speak first.

Cllr Whymark began by saying that as shown on the photographs of the B1150 there is already a safety issue with the current volumes of traffic in Coltishall. The incidence of HGVs and other traffic mounting the kerb and endangering local people was brought to his attention almost every week. Children and their parents trying to cross the B1150 at Ling Way on their way to school often find the road was almost impossible to cross safely. This would only get worse if the Local Plan was approved and North Walsham gained an additional 1800 homes. He asked whether

the Leader and Members for North Walsham would commit to work with him and the B1150 Special Interest Group, to improve safety on the B1150, particularly through Coltishall and Horstead. Cllr A Brown, Portfolio Holder for Planning thanked him for his question and said that similar questions had been received before. He said that there was a statutory process to follow and a programme of engagement with Broadland District Council had already been agreed and a stakeholder meeting on 27th November in conjunction with Broadland DC. He then explained that a traffic impact assessment (TIA) had been undertaken and the results sent to Broadland DC in advance of the meeting on 27th. There would then be a public consultation event on the TIA on 8th December. Details would be published in the parish magazine. He confirmed that the Council would of course engage with the BB1150 Special Interest Group but not exclusively as there was a requirement to consult and engage widely. Cllr Brown then said he would usually expect these kinds of objections to be received when the planning application came forward to Development Committee for consideration. Before then the Government Inspector must be satisfied that the Council's Local Plan was sound, legal and deliverable. That process was due to start on 22 January 2024. He concluded by saying that the impact of the proposed development on traffic levels must be determined and the impact must be severe for it to reach the required threshold.

The Chairman asked Cllr Whymark if he had a supplementary question. Cllr Whymark said that he understood the Local Plan process, however, the North Walsham extension was a significant part of the plan and local residents and their representatives were just trying to anticipate some of the issues that may arise from this as it was likely to go ahead. He said that he had seen the TIA and it indicated a 25% increase in traffic which, in his view, was significant. He concluded by saying that when planning proposals were presented to members, that they considered all mechanisms possible to mitigate the impact of the development and ensure safety measures in place. Cllr Brown said that the Council would focus on the extent of the additional impact and how that could be mitigated by the measures set out in the TIA report. He assured Cllr Whymark that the Council wanted to ensure that the best mitigation measures were delivered for the residents of Coltishall.

The Chairman invited Mr Musson to speak:

Mr Musson said that safety was his main concern. It was bad now and was likely to get much worse if the North Walsham West development went ahead. He referred members to the photographs on the screen and drew their attention to the lorries that mounted the pavement to pass oncoming traffic. He said this was a common occurrence and already putting pedestrians in danger on a daily basis. He concluded by asking how NNDC would ensure that mitigation measures would make residents feel safer. The Chairman replied that the issues that were occurring now were the responsibility of Broadland District Council rather than NNDC. He suggested that Broadland DC could work in conjunction with Norfolk County Council Highways Department to put measures in place, irrespective of the North Walsham development, to alleviate the traffic issues that Coltishall was facing.

The Chairman invited Mr Musson to respond. He said that he understood that there was a 'duty to cooperate' across neighbouring councils when large development plans were proposed. In his experience, he said that there had been very little co-operation to date and the delay in sharing the results of the TIA reflected this. The Chairman thanked both speakers for coming.

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

The Leader, Cllr Adams informed members of the following changes to appointments:

Cllr A Brown was stepping down as Chairman of the Planning Policy & Built Heritage Working Party and Cllr G Bull would replace him. Cllr A Varley would become Vice-Chairman.

Cllr J Toye was appointed as a substitute on the Norfolk Joint Museums Committee. Cllr Withington would remain as the main representative.

83 PORTFOLIO REPORTS

The Chairman reminded members that this item had a time limit of 30 minutes. She invited members to ask questions:

Cllr C Cushing said that he welcomed the news that Fakenham was to receive 'Levelling Up' funding of £9.875m to build new facilities at Fakenham Sports Centre, including a 25 metre public swimming pool and improved outdoor sports facilities. He asked the Leader whether he would extend thanks to the two local MPs, Duncan Baker and Jerome Mayhew as they had both worked very hard to get the funding in place. The Leader, Cllr T Adams, replied that he was looking forward to working with local members as the project progressed and he would, of course, thank Jerome Mayhew MP, for all of his hard work and support for the bid. He added that it was likely that the recent successful completion of the Reef Leisure centre in Sheringham had been a factor in the funding being awarded. He thanked local members and town councillors for their ongoing support.

Cllr P Fisher asked Cllr C Ringer, Portfolio Holder for Environment & Waste, about the mandatory collection of food waste and when that would come into effect. Cllr Ringer replied that the Government had mandated that local authorities had to introduce a food waste collection service by the end of March 2026, however, it was possible that NNDC may have it up and running earlier than that. At present, more information on government funding was awaited. He added that he had recently visited an anaerobic digester in Attleborough, a facility where the district's food waste could well go to be processed. It was important to remember that it would also include trade food waste collection too.

Cllr E Vardy asked Cllr P Heinrich, Portfolio Holder for Sustainable Growth whether it would be possible to know which businesses and community groups are benefiting from the Rural England Prosperity Fund. Cllr Heinrich replied that he did not have this information to hand but would provide a written response.

Cllr S Penfold asked Cllr H Blathwayt, Portfolio Holder for Coast, about recent heavy rainfall which had caused flooding in the east of the district. He requested an update on the current situation. Cllr Blathwayt replied that the water was slowly receding in most parts but was still holding where the flood plain was closest to homes, despite and thanks to the Broads IDB, who had been pumping strenuously where water was closest to habitats. He warned about a coming high tide and the water table was extremely high and with the fields currently so saturated, it would not take a major rain event for those fields to flood across to the flood plains. It was a very precarious position. He acknowledged that there had been support from many agencies in managing the problems but would not include Anglian Water in this. He concluded

by saying that the flood wardens had been working extremely hard to protect homes, particularly in Potter Heigham but in Hickling there still some homes that were unable to use their toilets and were having to use the public toilets.

Cllr M Hankins asked Cllr Adams for an update on the two schemes that had been held up by nutrient neutrality and had now been enabled. Cllr Adams replied that the two schemes were in Sustead and Skeyton and although they were individual properties, mitigation had been implemented and he was pleased to confirm that they were now progressing. He thanked the Planning team and Eastlaw for their support with this.

Cllr J Boyle asked Cllr C Ringer about the reference in his report to reduced capacity within the Council's Environmental Protection team. She was concerned about the considerable amount of pressure that this placed on officers and asked when the situation was likely to improve. Cllr Ringer replied that capacity was currently reduced but new starters were joining the team shortly and the situation was definitely improving.

Cllr D Birch asked the Leader about the recent LGA Corporate Peer Review and whether there was a date for publication of an action plan, setting out how the Council intended to respond to the recommendations. Cllr Adams replied that an action plan would be drafted before Christmas and it would then be presented to members in the New Year.

Cllr K Bayes asked Cllr P Heinrich to provide an update on how the Stalham High Street Task Force scheme was progressing. Cllr Heinrich replied that the High Street Task Force Working Party had met the previous week and the onus was now on Stalham Town Council, residents and businesses to come back with proposals. There was currently no budget in place to support this and this would be reviewed in the coming months.

Cllr G Bull asked Cllr W Fredericks, Portfolio Holder for Housing, about the steps that the Council was taking to reduce the number of empty homes in the district. Cllr Fredericks replied that there was an Empty Homes Officer who was working hard to reduce the number of empty homes. In addition, Cllr Fredericks was intending to work with the Communications Team to put out some information for the public with clear guidance on how to report an empty home. This would also be included in the next issue of the Council's in-house magazine, Outlook.

Cllr R Macdonald asked the Portfolio Holder for Planning, Cllr Brown, about the Planning Roadshows that the Council had been running. He asked whether anything more could be done to maximise parish council attendance at these events. Cllr Brown replied that a series of planning roadshows were being held across the district. Two events had already taken place at Stalham and Wells and attendance at both had been very high. The next one would be in Holt and there would be promotion via email, print media and social media. He thanked officers for their commitment to these sessions.

Cllr P Neatherway asked Cllr Fredericks about the success in bringing 92 long-term empty homes back into use. He asked how many of these properties were now available for private rent or for sale. Cllr Fredericks replied that she would provide a written response.

Cllr T FitzPatrick asked Cllr Fredericks about local housing associations selling off some of their properties and then not replacing them. He was particularly concerned

about the loss of two and three bedroom homes, especially in rural areas. He asked whether this was in issue that she was discussing with them. Cllr Fredericks replied that she met regularly with housing associations to discuss their stock and the financial viability of any of the homes that were proposed for sale was considered. She said that she was pleased to report that the number of such homes being sold was much lower now. She said that the Council was also looking at all options for making such homes viable in the short-term where possible.

Cllr J Toye referred to the Council's Social Prescribing team and said that they had the Forces Connect and the Veterans' Gateway App on their phones so that it was easily accessible. He suggested that all members downloaded this too. He then said that a request had been made for the North Norfolk Help Hub to ask anyone referred to them if there was a connection to the Armed Forces. He asked Cllr Fredericks if she could provide information on how many referrals had recorded such a connection. Cllr Fredericks said that she would provide a written response.

84 RECOMMENDATIONS FROM CABINET 06 NOVEMBER 2023

1. Cabinet Agenda Item 10: Budget Monitoring P6

The Chairman invited the Portfolio Holder for Finance, Cllr L Shires, to introduce this item.

Cllr Shires began by referring members to page 65, section 2.3 of the report which included additional wording (not included in previous reports) regarding the recent staff pay award.

Cllr Shires thanked officers for all their hard work in managing their budgets so carefully. She then outlined the recommendations in turn, before asking Cllr Fredericks to speak about the impact of the cost of homelessness and temporary accommodation provision on the Council's budget.

Cllr Fredericks informed members that the Council's temporary accommodation bill had risen sharply. The budget for the provision of temporary accommodation was usually spent on nightly accommodation for homeless households and this was generally between £350-450K a year. This year it was approaching £1.3m and whilst the Council did not begrudge spending money on families in need, it was struggling to afford such a steep rise in costs. She said that significant financial help was needed to help with these costs. North Norfolk did not have hotels and bed and breakfasts available to accommodate homeless families in. In conclusion, Cllr Fredericks said it was important to remember that although the Council was facing rising costs, there were homeless families behind these figures that were struggling and increasingly desperate. She concluded by thanking all of the housing officers involved in dealing with such a challenging situation.

The Chairman invited members to speak:

Cllr L Withington said that she welcomed the recommendation to provide a new play area at the Lees in Sheringham. It had suffered in the past due to its location but it was an important asset for the town and would be welcomed by residents and visitors alike.

Cllr N Dixon then spoke on behalf of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee and said that they had supported the recommendations at their meeting on 15 November. It was proposed by Cllr L Shires, seconded by Cllr W Fredericks and

RESOLVED to

- 1) Approve an additional capital budget of £58k so that the work for the refurbishment of the Red Lion roof (Cromer), the Art Deco Block roof and handrails (Cromer) and the Chalet Block at Sheringham can be awarded as one contract. And that approval be given to fund the additional expenditure from the Asset Management Reserve.
- 2) Approve an increase to the DFG capital budget of £118k and approves that it is funded by the additional grant received for this purpose from the Government.
- 3) Approve the provision of a new play area at the Lees in Sheringham and approves a capital project budget for this of £65k and that funding for this should come from the Delivery Plan Reserve.
- 4) Approve the capital spending of £11k on the Morris Street Car Park Boundary Wall and that it be funded from the Asset Management Reserve.
- 5) Approve that the £85k of the Car Park refurbishment capital budget is reallocated to the Public Conveniences so that the outstanding works can be carried out and complete the scheme.

2. Cabinet Agenda Item 11: Treasury Management Mid-Year Report 2023-2024

Cllr Shires introduced this item. She referred members to page 107 which provided further information about the current economic situation and interest rates.

Cllr N Dixon then spoke on behalf of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee and said that they had supported the recommendations at their meeting on 15 November. It was proposed by Cllr L Shires, seconded by Cllr P Heinrich and

RESOLVED

To approve the Treasury Management Mid Year Report 2023/2024

3. Cabinet Agenda Item 12: Council Tax Discounts and Premiums Determination 2024-2025

Cllr Shires introduced this item. She referred members to recommendation 4 and paragraph 4.4 of the report which explained that care leavers were eligible for a 100% discount on their council tax and this was fully compensated by Norfolk County Council. Cllr Shires then spoke about recommendation 9, which proposed the introduction of a new second homes premium of 100% from 1 April 2025. She said that this would see an additional £550k income to the Council and that there were ongoing discussion with the County Council about having a fairer share of council tax income.

Cllr N Dixon spoke on behalf of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee and said that they had supported the recommendations at their meeting on 15 November.

Cllr L Withington commented on the second homes council tax issue and said she wanted to acknowledge the hard work of the North Norfolk Town and Parish Forum

over several years in bringing this to a successful conclusion.

It was proposed by Cllr L Shires, seconded by Cllr T Adams 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 that:

- 1) The discounts for the year 2024-25 and beyond are set at the levels indicated in the table at paragraph 3.1.
- 2) To continue to award a local discount of 100% in 2024-25 for eligible cases of hardship under Section 13A of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 (as amended). See the associated policy in Appendix B.
- 3) That an exception to the levy charges may continue to be made by the Revenues Manager in the circumstances laid out in section 3.2 of this report.
- 4) The premiums for the year 2024-25 and beyond are set at the levels indicated in the table at paragraph 4.2.
- 5) To continue to award a local discount of 100% in 2024-25 for eligible cases of care leavers under Section 13A of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 (as amended).
- 6) 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 as set out in paragraph 2.1 of this report.
- 7) Those dwellings described or geographically defined at Appendix A which in the reasonable opinion of the Revenues Manager 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.
- 8) The long-term empty-property premium of 100% is brought forward to increase from 12 months rather than 24 months from 1 April 2024.
- 9) A new second homes premium of 100% as detailed in paragraph 4.3 is applied from 1 April 2025.

85 RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 15 NOVEMBER 2023

The Chairman of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee, Cllr Dixon, informed Full Council that there were no further recommendations to report.

86 QUESTIONS RECEIVED FROM MEMBERS

None received.

87 OPPOSITION BUSINESS

The Chairman invited Cllr C Cushing to introduce this item. He set out the motion, as follows:

'The Department for Levelling Up, Housing, and Communities (DLUHC) has issued guidance for local authorities in England who are considering adopting a 4-day working week – where staff have their working hours reduced by 20% but retain 100% of their pay (or equivalent/similar). This states that:

- The government does not support a 4-day working week in local authorities, as it does not believe that it delivers local taxpayers' value for money.
- The government does not expect councils to adopt this arrangement.
- Should councils disregard this advice and there is evidence of service decline or failure, DLUHC or another government department may raise concerns directly with the authority, monitor performance more closely and consider options to correct declining performance.

The government supports an individual's right to request flexible working, which allows employees to apply for changes to the hours, timing, or location of work. This is clearly different as it relates to the right of an individual employee to request a different working pattern or place of work. This guidance does not seek to relate to the latter.

Local authorities must be mindful of the Duty of Best Value when it considers provision. This is a statutory requirement for councils 'to secure continuous improvement in the way in which its functions are exercised, having regard to a combination of economy, efficiency and effectiveness.' In practice this extends to securing value for money in all spending decisions. It is the government's view that the implementation of the 4-day week is unlikely to demonstrate adherence to the Best Value Duty. Neither, for clarity, does the government support trials, experimentation, or pilots (or equivalent) of the 4-day working week concept within the local government sector.

The 4-day working week is an organisation-wide approach to pay and working hours. NNDC staff have a well-deserved reputation for striving hard to deliver the services that the council provides to the public. We are regularly told that these services are stretched. The adoption would exacerbate staff stress levels by having to cram into 4 days the work that it would normally take them 5 days to do.

Given that the narrative around council services is that they are already hard-pressed, it is unlikely that reducing the working hours by 20% will be popular with North Norfolk Council Tax taxpayers, especially at a time when Council Tax is raised by the maximum each year.

Full Council was therefore requested to resolve to:

- Recognise and respect the Government's Guidance of a 4-day working week.
- Prior to any consideration of any form of trial or pilot exercise of a 4-day working week it collects and assesses the evidence of such trials conducted by other Councils, elsewhere, to inform an outline business case to justify it.
- Commits not to introduce a 4-day working week at North Norfolk District Council without an overwhelming detailed business case showing substantial benefits to North Norfolk residents and businesses and a concession from central Government supporting the case.'

Cllr Cushing said that the introduction of a 4-day working week was a topical issue in

local government, following South Cambridgeshire District Council's (SCDC) trial which commenced in January 2023. Norwich City Council had also recently indicated that it was considering introducing a 4-day week for its staff. Cllr Cushing said that he appreciated this was not something that the Administration had raised at all or that they had indicated that they were considering, however, he felt that it was beneficial to have a debate on the Council's approach to this matter. He went on to say that the introduction of a 4-day working week could raise several corporate-level risks, such as the Council's duty to provide best value and being fair to council taxpayers and to its staff.

Cllr Dixon seconded the motion and reserved his right to speak.

The Chairman then asked the Leader to respond to the motion.

The Leader, Cllr Adams, said that the Administration would not be supporting the motion. There were no plans to introduce a 4-day working week. It wasn't in the Council's Corporate Plan and no proposals had been discussed. However, he said that it was important to learn from the experience at SCDC and review the outcomes from such a model. He then said that a growing number of businesses had been driving this approach successfully but that when local government attempted the same, it was being pulled apart before the trial period had even ended. It was still in its infancy and he said it was not the Government's place or that of any local authority to interfere whilst the trial was still ongoing. The Government should not be attempting to interfere on this scale with local government decisions. Cllr Adams concluded by saying that in his view, it was a simplistic attempt at populism to bring forward a debate on an issue that had not even been considered by the Council. Many of the lines used in the motion had been lifted directly from correspondence circulated by the Taxpayers' Alliance and it was no secret that they were no supporters of Local Government. He added that he had not seen a similar motion being put forward by other Conservative groups elsewhere and he was sure that Conservative run councils would also be keen to learn about the trial at SCDC.

The Chairman invited other members to speak:

Cllr L Shires said that in the recent 2023 elections, across the country Conservative councillors 'rebranded' themselves as local conservatives who campaigned for local priorities. However, motions such as this brought these claims into question. She said that this particular issue highlighted a key conflict at government level as they consistently championed the transfer of powers to local authorities and promoted devolution, yet in this instance they were imposing their views and attempting to centralise decision-making. Cllr Shires went on to say that it was entirely appropriate for a council to test the ground for effective ways of working and seek more innovative ways of delivering their services to local residents. She said that a 4-day working week had been linked to numerous benefits such as increased productivity, employee wellbeing and environmental sustainability. By not allowing local authorities to explore such a model, the Government was hindering councils from aligning workforce management with local economic and social aspirations. Local Government should be empowered to take such decisions not hindered by Central Government.

Cllr J Toye said that the motion asked members to recognise the guidance issued by the Government on a 4-day working week and should base any business case on evidence collated. However, the guidance set out the Government view which clearly stated that it was not supportive, regardless of any evidence. He said that he was supportive of basing a decision on the evidence but this was clearly not the

approach that the Government was taking and which was reflected in its guidance. He would therefore not be supporting the motion.

Cllr P Heinrich referred members to a new report from the Autonomy Think Tank which said that Artificial Intelligence (AI) would improve efficiency in the workplace and allow millions of workers to move to a 4-day week. A reduced working week could improve working practice as well as work/life balance. Local authorities had to be able to take a flexible approach that enabled harnessing the use of rapidly changing technology. He said he would not support the motion.

Cllr W Fredericks said it was important to remember that a 4-day working week did not mean that the Council offices were only open 4 days a week. A rota system was used to ensure that all services were covered and operated as usual.

Cllr L Withington said that it was very disappointing to see that the focus for Opposition business was to agree with an out of touch Government response to a 4-day week trial. She said that they had failed to take an opportunity to really represent residents and their concerns and try to improve their lives. She said that a 4-day week was not part of the Council's Corporate Plan and not even been raised by staff. She said that it was also disappointing to see the Opposition requesting a business case. This implied that they considered this not to be normal practice. A business case was always undertaken for key projects and good practice was at the heart of the way the Administration worked.

The Chairman, Cllr S Butikofer, said that the Government talked about devolution of powers, yet when a council leader stepped up and took a decision to take their council forward, the Government jumped in and attacked them at the first opportunity. All council leaders faced a range of challenges unique to their own authorities and if the Opposition had taken time to investigate why SCDC were trialling a 4-day working week they may take a different view.

Cllr Butikofer said that most local authorities were currently facing a recruitment and retention crisis and leaders needed to try new and innovative solutions. SCDC was based at the heart of a high-tech community with a wealth of opportunities and many private companies offering a 4-day week. Those working in the public sector should be able to expect the same rights as those working in the private sector. She said it was absolutely right that residents should be able to expect that service levels were maintained and that their local council was always striving for better. In conclusion, she said that thanks to the 4-day working week trial at SCDC, the council had saved £100k on agency staff fees and recruited to over 50% of hard-to-fill posts. SCDC's performance was consistently amongst the best in the country. In conclusion, Cllr Butikofer said that local government was local and central government should focus on keeping their own house in order. She said that she was disappointed but not surprised that only a month after talking about working as a collaborative council, the Opposition sought to bring forward a debate on a divisive matter.

The Chairman then invited Cllr Dixon, seconder of the motion, to speak.

Cllr Dixon said that a lot of disappointment had been expressed during the debate. It was just an opportunity to have a discussion on what an approach to a certain topic might be. He said that the motion did not seek to restrict how local government responded to the issue. Cllr Dixon said that Full Council was the forum for debate and for members to explain what their thoughts might be on certain matters. He said that it was important that all members should keep an open mind on important topics and it was disappointing that there had not been a more constructive and positive

debate.

The Chairman then invited the proposer of the motion, Cllr Cushing, to close the debate. Cllr Cushing said that the Administration seemed to be debating an entirely different topic. He said it was about discussing what the Council would put in place if it opted to go down this route. He said that it was interesting to hear the voracious response from the Administration to this issue. Although it may not be top of their current agenda, it clearly indicated that it was something that they supported for the future.

The motion was put to the vote, with 11 members voting in favour and 22 against. It was therefore not supported.

88 NOTICE(S) OF MOTION

The Chairman invited the proposer, Cllr W Fredericks, to introduce the motion. Cllr Fredericks set out the motion as follows:

‘Homelessness has increased by 40% in North Norfolk over the course of the last 3 years, reflecting similar pressures in District and Borough Councils throughout England

This number continued to increase and between 01 April and 31 October 2023, 228 households had been assessed as threatened with or were already homeless.

The primary reasons for Homelessness were:

- Private landlord Eviction: **78**
- Friends and Family no longer able to accommodate: **54**
- Domestic Abuse:**38**

As at the 31 October 2023 there were 75 households in temporary accommodation. This was an overall increase of 33% from the same date in 2022. The number of children living in temporary accommodation had also increased by 44% compared to October 2022. This meant that 85 children were living in unstable accommodation and the majority of cases were living without space to play, away from schools, work and support network and sometimes out of District entirely. It was overwhelmingly disruptive, challenging and mentally harmful.

There was not just a human cost to using Temporary Accommodation, there was also a major financial cost. The Council was only able to reclaim a small proportion of the amount it spent on nightly, bed & breakfast type accommodation. If the Council placed a household in bed & breakfast type accommodation costing £700 per week it was only able to claim £98 of that cost back. The Council’s net costs for purchased TA have risen from £371k in 2021/22 to a forecast figure of £910k for this year.

The Council was constantly exploring options to increase its provision of decent Temporary Accommodation, it was also important that it focussed on longer-term solutions to ensure that a household’s stay in temporary accommodation was as brief as possible and they could secure a more permanent housing solution. In addition to homeless demand pressures, the Council had also seen a significant reduction in the supply of permanent accommodation with a 38% reduction in available properties across Housing Register partners. The reasons for this reduction were complex but were primarily associated with reduced levels of new-

build completions and tenants not wanting to move due to cost-of-living pressures and generally unfavourable economic conditions.

There were currently over 2,500 households on the Housing List and the severe shortage of social rented homes, meant, on average, there were 150 bids for each property advertised through Your Choice Your Home, with additional pressures for family homes with some properties receiving over 300 bids. The private rental sector was out of reach for most applicants as Local Housing Allowance levels for all of North Norfolk residents, had been frozen by Central Government since 2020, based on rent levels in the 2018-19 financial year. Monitoring of private rented homes to let had found only seven homes available with rents within Local Housing Allowance levels so far this year. Real-term spending power for Councils remained substantially below 2010 levels.

The Council was committed to tackling the Homelessness Crisis through all available means. Local Authorities (LAs), regardless of political administration, had been let down by Central Government's lack of investment in building affordable rented homes and enabling affordable homes for sale to local people. This had left Councils ill-equipped to tackle the current Housing Crisis or develop long-term strategies to mitigate future housing pressures and sustainable market resilience. Affordable new homes construction performed a pivotal role in addressing the Temporary Accommodation crisis and would be a key contributor to the reduction of supply and demand driven private rental revenue costs for LAs. In conclusion, Cllr Fredericks said that she also wanted to highlight the extreme stress placed on the Council's housing teams who were listening to the most vulnerable and desperate members of our communities, with limited resources to help them.

Cllr T Adams seconded the motion and reserved his right to speak.

The Chairman opened the debate.

Cllr Cushing said that he wished to propose the following amendments:

1. Delete "**begin**" and replace with "**re-energise**". This now reads as:
 - "The Leader of the Council, and leaders of the opposition groups, to write to the Secretary of State to **re-energise** the process of readdressing the challenges to the Housing Crisis."
2. Amend to added with the addition of: "**and the removal of the private rental market disincentives applied over the past 25 years**". This now reads as:
 - "Local Housing Allowance to be urgently increased to realistic levels for Norfolk in line with private rental amounts, **and the removal of the private rental market disincentives applied over the past 25 years.**"
3. Replace entire wording with:
 - "**A government cross party working group to explore how land could quickly be released for sustainable low cost and affordable housing and how house construction, and building conversions to residential, could be ramped up.**"

4. Replace entire wording with:

- **“A government cross party working group to explore national planning policy changes to take stricter control of land banks so that land can be quickly built on using innovative housing schemes which transform viability assessments and encourage builders to work alongside Local Authorities to create new, more effective, delivery models. NNDC to task the Planning Policy and Built Heritage Working Party to consider and draft the changes it wants to see to the National Planning Policy Framework to address the affordability, land release and build incentive issues and submit these to central government for action.”**

Cllr N Dixon seconded the amendments.

The Chairman advised members that due to the 30 minute time limit for the debating of motions, she proposed that 10 minutes was allowed to debate the amendment.

She invited the proposer of the substantive motion, Cllr Fredericks, to respond to the amendments.

Cllr Fredericks said that she had only had sight of the amendments a few minutes before the start of the meeting and had not had sufficient time to consider them fully and it was not entirely clear what they meant. She briefly addressed them in turn and said that she would not accept any of them. She reiterated that vulnerable refugees were not in any way contributing to the homelessness crisis in North Norfolk. Fleeing domestic abuse and evictions from rental properties were the main causes.

Cllr A Varley said that this was a very important topic and he thanked the Opposition for engaging and bringing forward amendments for debate. However, he would not be supporting them on this occasion as he did not think that they were sufficient.

Cllr T FitzPatrick said that given the importance of the topic, members must not turn it into a political spat. It was imperative to reach a consensus as this would add strength to the views expressed.

Cllr A Brown commented that it was disappointing to have had such short notice of the amendment as this meant it was hard to have a meaningful debate on it. He said that having a roof over your head was not a ‘nice to have’ and that government policy had played ‘fast and loose’ with people’s rights and proposals to introduce a ban on ‘no fault evictions’ had been deferred due to the courts being too busy to cope with the number of breaches of tenancy agreements that landlords would resort to. He added that the Planning Policy & Built Heritage Working Party was already working on the issue highlighted in the 4th amendment. He therefore would not be supporting the amendments.

Cllr Dixon then spoke as seconder of the amendment. He said that there were no councillors in the Chamber who would not support the aspirations of the substantive motion and all of them would love to be able to ‘wave a magic wand’ and resolve all of the problems. It was important to come from a common perspective even if a common approach was not shared. He said that this was not a short-term problem and it was important to address the causes not just the symptoms. If the Council continued to focus on the symptoms then it would not succeed and everyone wanted to see success. In conclusion, Cllr Dixon said that the purpose of the amendments

was to seek to influence others in higher places to address the causes and increase resources. It also required the Council to explore what more it could do to 'think outside the box' and although he accepted Cllr Brown's point about the Planning Policy & Built Heritage Working Party, he felt there was more to do and he offered to work with the Chairman of the Working Party to look at all options.

Having been duly proposed and seconded, the amendment was put to the vote, with 11 members voting in favour and 22 against. The amendment was therefore not supported.

The Chairman advised members that she would now open the debate on the substantive motion.

Cllr J Toye said that the motion asked for clear actions and he fully supported it.

Cllr C Cushing said that there were wider pressures that were causing problems with housing across the nation. In response to the points raised regarding the amendments coming forward at a late stage, he said that he was also disappointed that the Administration had put forward a motion without consulting with the Opposition at all. If there had been a discussion at an earlier stage it was very likely that a consensus would have been reached. He said that there was a lot of talk about working together but no attempts to reach out at all. He concluded by saying that there were no easy answers to the serious problem of homelessness and the main opposition would be willing to work with the Administration to address the issue.

Cllr L Withington said that she supported the motion and that the statistics quoted within it demonstrated how serious an issue it was, adding that people categorised as a high priority need no longer got a look in. She then gave an example of a local family that she had been supporting and spoke about their experience and the challenges they faced in acquiring a home. It was hard to just support the desperate people in her own ward of Sheringham, let alone everyone across the district. She thanked the Council's housing officers for their continued hard work in extremely difficult circumstance. Cllr Withington concluded by saying that the Government must acknowledge the severity of the problem and take action.

Cllr L Shires said that every member was there because of North Norfolk residents. She spoke about the many resilient people she had met in the last few years who fought tirelessly for their families and for basic rights. She said that she wanted them to know that the Council heard them and was listening and that members would try and make the situation better.

Cllr M Hankins said that as a newcomer to North Norfolk and the Council, he was shocked by the level of deprivation and homelessness. To call it a crisis was definitely appropriate. He was fully supportive of the motion.

Cllr N Dixon said that he was supportive of the aspirations but was disappointed that that the Administration had not taken the opportunity to make it more heavyweight on actions. Even once the vote was taken and whatever the outcome, there was an opportunity to work across the benches to find a solution. He said that the Opposition wanted to support the motion and they wanted to do even more.

Cllr C Ringer reminded the Opposition that at the last meeting of Full Council on 20 September, they had put forward a motion on Blakeney surgery which was supported unanimously. Like that, this motion also required cross-party support to show the strength of feeling about the issue of homelessness in the district. He said

that nothing in the motion was politically motivated and he urged all members to support it.

Cllr T Adams spoke as seconder of the motion. He addressed Cllr Cushing's point regarding consultation with the opposition and said that there had been plenty of opportunity for all members to fully engage on policy matters during the development of the Corporate Plan. He then said that it was heartening to see so many councils coming together to discuss big issues such as homelessness and agree on a shared position. He concluded that by saying that the situation could not continue. The Autumn statement had not included any substantive proposals that would effect real change. A re-alignment was needed to deal with homelessness as a national priority and the local housing allowance needed to be raised to keep in line with costs and with temporary accommodation costs escalating at a shocking pace, many more councils would be issuing Section 114 notices as they simply would not be able to cope with the financial impact. Cllr Adams concluded by saying that a national approach was needed to deal with extremely challenging circumstances. A credible national housing plan was urgently needed. He asked all members to support the motion.

Having been duly proposed and seconded, the motion was put to the vote and it was

RESOLVED unanimously to call for

1. The Leader of the Council, and the leaders of opposition groups, to write to the relevant Secretary of State to begin the process of readdressing the challenges to the Housing Crisis.
2. Local Housing Allowance to be urgently increased to realistic levels for North Norfolk. In line with private rental amounts
3. Central Government policy to support Councils to buy land for affordable housing developments based on current use, as per established Local Plans, rather than on "hope value", by reforming the Land Compensation Act 1961.
4. National Planning policy amendments, so that house-builders are pro-actively encouraged to incorporate the provision of 'truly affordable' homes in their development projects, supporting Local Authorities to challenge the renegeing of these duties on 'viability assessment' grounds.

89 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

90 PRIVATE BUSINESS

The meeting ended at 8.02 pm.

Chairman

Registering interests

Within 28 days of becoming a member or your re-election or re-appointment to office you must register with the Monitoring Officer the interests which fall within the categories set out in **Table 1 (Disclosable Pecuniary Interests)** which are as described in "The Relevant Authorities (Disclosable Pecuniary Interests) Regulations 2012". You should also register details of your other personal interests which fall within the categories set out in **Table 2 (Other Registerable Interests)**.

"Disclosable Pecuniary Interest" means an interest of yourself, or of your partner if you are aware of your partner's interest, within the descriptions set out in Table 1 below.

"Partner" means a spouse or civil partner, or a person with whom you are living as husband or wife, or a person with whom you are living as if you are civil partners.

1. You must ensure that your register of interests is kept up-to-date and within 28 days of becoming aware of any new interest, or of any change to a registered interest, notify the Monitoring Officer.
2. A 'sensitive interest' is as an interest which, if disclosed, could lead to the councillor, or a person connected with the councillor, being subject to violence or intimidation.
3. Where you have a 'sensitive interest' you must notify the Monitoring Officer with the reasons why you believe it is a sensitive interest. If the Monitoring Officer agrees they will withhold the interest from the public register.

Non participation in case of disclosable pecuniary interest

4. Where a matter arises at a meeting which directly relates to one of your Disclosable Pecuniary Interests as set out in **Table 1**, you must disclose the interest, not participate in any discussion or vote on the matter and must not remain in the room unless you have been granted a dispensation. If it is a 'sensitive interest', you do not have to disclose the nature of the interest, just that you have an interest. Dispensation may be granted in limited circumstances, to enable you to participate and vote on a matter in which you have a disclosable pecuniary interest.
5. Where you have a disclosable pecuniary interest on a matter to be considered or is being considered by you as a Cabinet member in exercise of your executive function, you must notify the Monitoring Officer of the interest and must not take any steps or further steps in the matter apart from arranging for someone else to deal with it

Disclosure of Other Registerable Interests

6. Where a matter arises at a meeting which **directly relates** to one of your Other Registerable Interests (as set out in **Table 2**), you must disclose the interest. You may speak on the matter only if members of the public are also allowed to speak at the meeting but otherwise must not take part in any discussion or vote on the matter and must not remain in the room unless you have been granted a dispensation. If it is a 'sensitive interest', you do not have to disclose the nature of the interest.

Disclosure of Non-Registerable Interests

7. Where a matter arises at a meeting which **directly relates** to your financial interest or well-being (and is not a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest set out in Table 1) or a financial interest or well-being of a relative or close associate, you must disclose the interest. You may speak on the matter only if members of the public are also allowed to speak at the meeting. Otherwise you must not take part in any discussion or vote on the matter and must not remain in the room unless you have been granted a dispensation. If it is a 'sensitive interest', you do not have to disclose the nature of the interest.
8. Where a matter arises at a meeting which **affects** –
 - a. your own financial interest or well-being;
 - b. a financial interest or well-being of a relative, close associate; or
 - c. a body included in those you need to disclose under Other Registrable Interests as set out in **Table 2**

you must disclose the interest. In order to determine whether you can remain in the meeting after disclosing your interest the following test should be applied

9. Where a matter **affects** your financial interest or well-being:
 - a. to a greater extent than it affects the financial interests of the majority of inhabitants of the ward affected by the decision and;
 - b. a reasonable member of the public knowing all the facts would believe that it would affect your view of the wider public interest

You may speak on the matter only if members of the public are also allowed to speak at the meeting. Otherwise you must not take part in any discussion or vote on the matter and must not remain in the room unless you have been granted a dispensation.

If it is a 'sensitive interest', you do not have to disclose the nature of the interest.

10. Where you have a personal interest in any business of your authority and you have made an executive decision in relation to that business, you must make sure that any written statement of that decision records the existence and nature of your interest.

Table 1: Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

This table sets out the explanation of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests as set out in the [Relevant Authorities \(Disclosable Pecuniary Interests\) Regulations 2012](#).

Subject	Description
Employment, office, trade, profession or vocation	Any employment, office, trade, profession or vocation carried on for profit or gain. [Any unpaid directorship.]
Sponsorship	Any payment or provision of any other financial benefit (other than from the council) made to the councillor during the previous 12-month period for expenses incurred by him/her in carrying out his/her duties as a councillor, or towards his/her election expenses. This includes any payment or financial benefit from a trade union within the meaning of the Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992.
Contracts	Any contract made between the councillor or his/her spouse or civil partner or the person with whom the

	<p>councillor is living as if they were spouses/civil partners (or a firm in which such person is a partner, or an incorporated body of which such person is a director* or a body that such person has a beneficial interest in the securities of*) and the council —</p> <p>(a) under which goods or services are to be provided or works are to be executed; and</p> <p>(b) which has not been fully discharged.</p>
Land and Property	<p>Any beneficial interest in land which is within the area of the council.</p> <p>'Land' excludes an easement, servitude, interest or right in or over land which does not give the councillor or his/her spouse or civil partner or the person with whom the councillor is living as if they were spouses/civil partners (alone or jointly with another) a right to occupy or to receive income.</p>
Licenses	<p>Any licence (alone or jointly with others) to occupy land in the area of the council for a month or longer</p>
Corporate tenancies	<p>Any tenancy where (to the councillor's knowledge)—</p> <p>(a) the landlord is the council; and</p> <p>(b) the tenant is a body that the councillor, or his/her spouse or civil partner or the person with whom the councillor is living as if they were spouses/civil partners is a partner of or a director* of or has a beneficial interest in the securities* of.</p>
Securities	<p>Any beneficial interest in securities* of a body where—</p> <p>(a) that body (to the councillor's knowledge) has a place of business or land in the area of the council; and</p> <p>(b) either—</p> <p>(i) the total nominal value of the securities* exceeds £25,000 or one hundredth of the total issued share capital of that body; or</p> <p>(ii) if the share capital of that body is of more than one class, the total nominal value of the shares of any one class in which the councillor, or his/her spouse or civil partner or the person with whom the councillor is living as if they were</p>

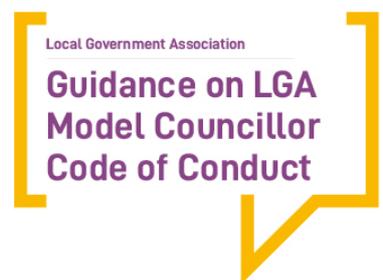
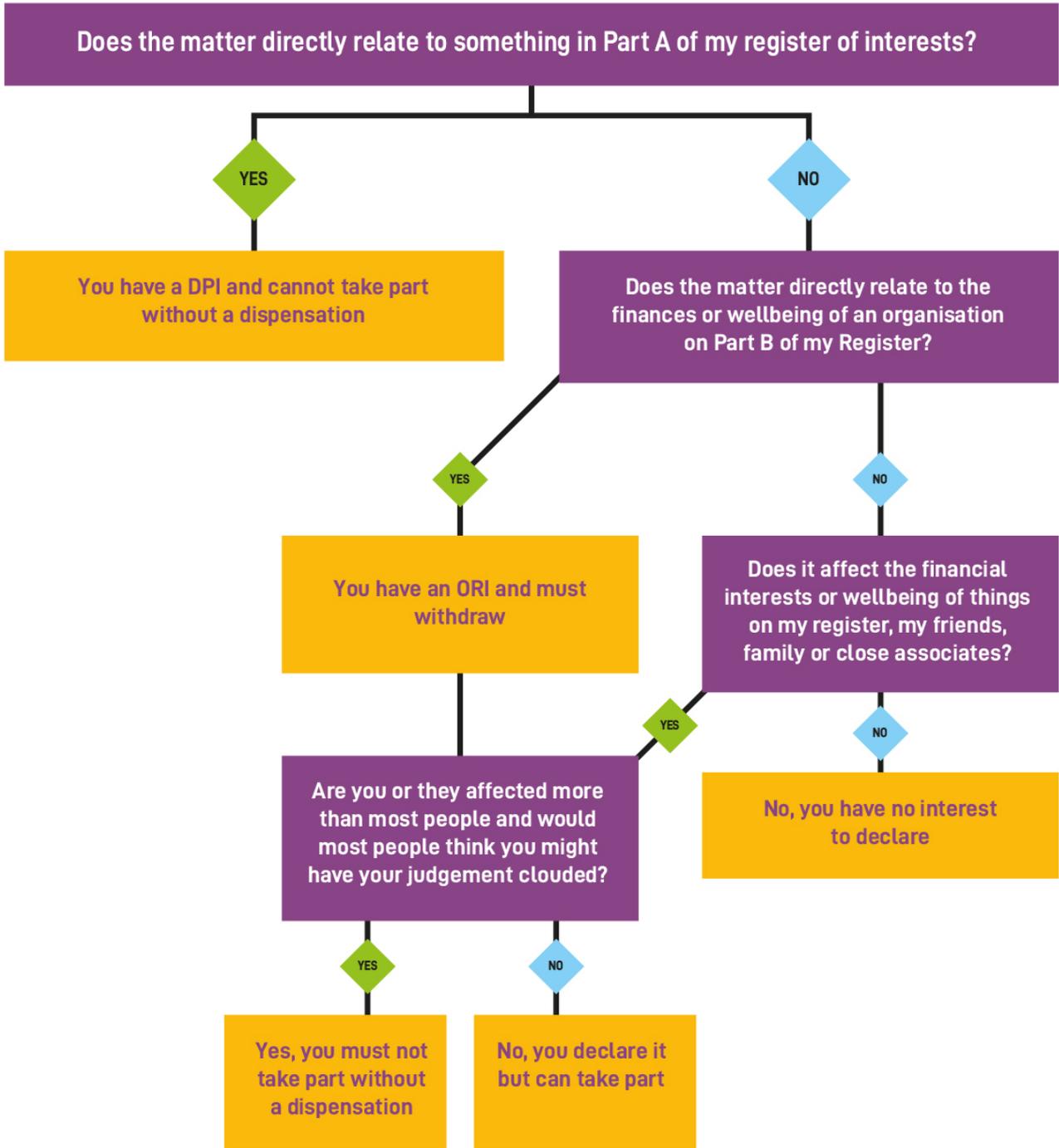
	spouses/civil partners has a beneficial interest exceeds one hundredth of the total issued share capital of that class.
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* 'director' includes a member of the committee of management of an industrial and provident society.

* 'securities' means shares, debentures, debenture stock, loan stock, bonds, units of a collective investment scheme within the meaning of the Financial Services and Markets Act 2000 and other securities of any description, other than money deposited with a building society.

Table 2: Other Registrable Interests

<p>You have a personal interest in any business of your authority where it relates to or is likely to affect:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) any body of which you are in general control or management and to which you are nominated or appointed by your authority b) any body <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) exercising functions of a public nature (ii) any body directed to charitable purposes or (iii) one of whose principal purposes includes the influence of public opinion or policy (including any political party or trade union)
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Report of the Independent Remuneration Panel on the Review of the Scheme of Members' Allowances 2024	
Executive Summary	<p>This report makes recommendations to Full Council on the allowances and expenses to be paid to Members to take effect from 01 May 2024. In accordance with the requirements of the Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003, the Council established an Independent Remuneration Panel at the meeting of Full Council held on 20 September 2023. The terms of reference for the Panel were also agreed at the September meeting of Full Council.</p> <p>Although members can choose not to support the recommendations of the Panel, the legislation requires the following: 'Before an authority makes or amends a scheme, it shall have regard to the recommendations made in relation to it by an independent remuneration panel'. The findings and recommendations of the Panel are detailed in this report.</p>
Options considered	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To support all of the recommendations made by the Independent Remuneration Panel (IRP) 2. To support some of the recommendations made by the Independent Remuneration Panel (IRP), whilst rejecting some. 3. To reject all of the recommendations made by the Independent Remuneration Panel (IRP)
Consultation(s)	<p>Members were consulted throughout the process. They were invited to submit comments for the IRP to consider and a survey was circulated for completion. Two group leaders met with the panel to share their views.</p>
Recommendations	<p>That Members consider the recommendations of the Independent Remuneration Panel, adopt a scheme of allowances and amend the Constitution accordingly.</p> <p>Specifically, it is recommended that:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) the Basic Allowance should increase to £6,491 pa (to include £180 Broadband Allowance); b) the Scheme should remain index linked to officers' pay awards c) the Special Responsibility Allowance (SRA) for the Leader of the Council should remain calculated by way of a multiplier of x2 the basic allowance; d) A new SRA for the Deputy Leader should be introduced, calculated by way of a multiplier of x1.6 the basic allowance e) the SRA for Cabinet Members with Portfolio should remain calculated by way of a multiplier of x1.33 the

	<p>basic allowance;</p> <p>f) the SRA for Chairmen of Committees of the Council (except Development Committee, Licensing Committee and Standards Committee) should remain calculated by way of a multiplier of x0.67 the basic allowance;</p> <p>g) the SRA for the Chairman of Development Committee to remain at x0.75 of the basic allowance, with the SRA for the Vice-chairman of Development Committee remaining at x0.25 of the basic allowance.</p> <p>h) Payments for the Chairmen of Standards Committee and Licensing Committee should be based on a per meeting payment of 2% of the Basic Allowance</p> <p>i) A new payment for Chairmen of Planning Policy & Built Heritage Working Party to be introduced based on a per meeting payment of 2% of the basic Allowance or £129.82.</p> <p>j) SRA payments to leaders of the opposition groups should move to a flat SRA rather than being based on the number within the group.</p> <p>k) The SRA for the Leader of the main opposition group should be calculated by a way of a multiplier of x0.4</p> <p>l) The SRA for the Leader of the smaller opposition group should be calculated by means of a multiplier of x0.15</p> <p>m) The SRA for the Chairman of the Council should remain the same and be calculated by means of a multiplier of x0.5, with the Vice-Chairman of the Council remaining on the multiplier of x0.25</p> <p>n) Member champion roles should not receive an SRA but should be eligible for travel and subsistence payments</p> <p>o) A role description should be produced for member champions and should be published on the Council's website</p> <p>p) A new 'family and friends' rate for carer's allowance of up to £10 per hour should be introduced, to support councillors in their role and ensure no-one is disadvantaged by caring responsibilities.</p> <p>q) The Democratic Services Manager to have delegation to consider payments for carers' allowance on a case by case basis, allowing a higher rate in exceptional circumstances.</p> <p>r) Travel and subsistence rates to remain the same.</p> <p>s) <i>Any temporary increases to staff mileage rates will also apply to members.</i></p>
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Reasons for recommendations	An independent review of the Councils Scheme of Members' Allowances at least every 4 years, is a statutory requirement. Full Council must consider the recommendations of the IRP before reaching a decision.
Background papers	Previous IRP report February 2020 Comparison data from neighbouring authorities Survey responses from members

Wards affected	All
Cabinet member(s)	Cllr T Adams
Contact Officer	Emma Denny, Democratic Services Manager Emma.denny@north-norfolk.gov.uk

Links to key documents:	
Corporate Plan:	Not applicable. A review of the Members' Allowances Scheme is a statutory requirement.
Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS)	N/A
Council Policies & Strategies	N/A

Corporate Governance:	
Is this a key decision	No
Has the public interest test been applied	This item is not exempt.
Details of any previous decision(s) on this matter	Full Council, February 2020.

1. Purpose of the report

The purpose of this report is to recommend to Full Council the allowances and expenses to be paid to Members to take effect from 01 May 2024. In accordance with the requirements of the Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003, the Council set up an Independent Remuneration Panel at the meeting of Full Council held on 20 September 2023. The terms of reference for the Panel were also agreed at the September meeting of Full Council.

The Council is required to observe, as part of the legislation, the following; 'before an authority makes or amends a scheme, it shall have regard to the recommendations made in relation to it by an independent remuneration panel'. The findings and recommendations of the Panel are detailed in this report.

1.1 Independent Remuneration Panel (IRP)

The Independent Remuneration Panel (IRP), was appointed for a 4-year term with effect from 20 September 2023 and consists of 3 members;

Ivor Holden, Sandra Cox and Derek Blake MBE

The Chair of the Panel was selected by its members at the start of the first meeting where it was agreed that Ivor Holden would be the Chairman.

- 1.2 The IRP met on 12th October, 8th, 21st, 28th November and 6th December 2023 to consider the available evidence before making the recommendations being put to the Council. A survey was issued to members and 21 responses were received. The Panel was assisted throughout the process by the Democratic Services Manager.
- 1.3 The Panel agreed the terms of reference as outlined below in section 2 of this report and were appraised of the full range of roles covered by members in carrying out their duties as District Councillors in relation to the current Scheme of Members' Allowances.
- 1.4 Consideration was given to the terms of reference of the Council's committees and the frequency they meet as per the published programme of meetings.
- 1.5 Comparative data on Members' allowances schemes throughout Suffolk and Norfolk were also studied to help set a contextual benchmark for the North Norfolk scheme.
- 1.6 Consideration was given to the views of the Group Leaders regarding the workload, ward duties, meeting attendance and any additional duties of their members.
- 1.7 A survey of members was undertaken at the Panel's request. This covered casework, committee commitments, parish council engagements and contact with constituents.

2. Terms of Reference

The Regulations provide that the IRP can make recommendations to the Council on the following matters:

- i. The amount of basic allowance which should be payable equally to each elected Member.
- ii. The roles and responsibilities for which a special responsibility allowance should be payable and the amount of each such allowance.
- iii. Travelling and subsistence.
- iv. Co-optees' allowance.
- v. The amount in respect of expenses of arranging for the care of children and dependents and the means by which it is determined.
- vi. Backdating of allowances to the beginning of a financial year in which the scheme is amended.
- vii. Annual adjustments of allowances.

3. Proposals and Options

The issues under consideration and the Panel's recommendations were as follows:-

3.1 Basic Allowance

- 3.1.1 The current scheme provides for a payment of a basic allowance. This was set at £5,000 pa in 2016, following a period of several years when it had not been increased and which resulted in a significant increase to bring North Norfolk into line with other authorities. It had then risen to £5,254 (in line with officer annual pay awards) by December 2020. The previous panel proposed that it was increased to £5,750 (incorporating £180 broadband allowance into this) in December 2020 but this was **not** supported by members. The basic allowance is currently at £6,134 (as at November 2023) following increases in line with staff pay awards.
- 3.1.2 The Basic Allowance is intended to reflect time commitment for all councillors for their ward work, meetings with officers and attendance at committee meetings, outside bodies and parish and town councils.
- 3.1.3 Members were asked to submit comments and evidence for consideration by the Panel. Two of the Group Leaders met with the Panel.
- 3.1.4 At the request of the Panel, a survey was sent out to all members. Twenty one members responded and several submitted additional comments. The Panel noted that for many members the workload was quite heavy, often over 20 hours a week. It was also noted that the increased use of social media meant that constituents interacted with their councillors in a different way, often contacting them out of hours and expecting a quick response.
- 3.1.5 After receiving evidence in respect of both committee and ward roles and reviewing comparative schemes across Norfolk and Suffolk, the Panel felt that it was appropriate to suggest a further small increase. This would reflect the additional work that many councillors were undertaking as well as ensuring that North Norfolk was placed at a similar level to neighbouring local authorities.
- 3.1.6 It was noted that following the rejection of the proposed increase in 2020, North Norfolk had fallen behind neighbouring councils. The Panel therefore agreed to apply the increase that was proposed in 2020 for the basic allowance to this year's review. The following calculation was used:

The current basic allowance of £6134 divided by £5434 (the allowance in 2020) multiplied by the proposed increase (as recommended in 2020) of £5750. This resulted in an allowance of £6491 or £357 which was an increase of 5.8%.

If agreed, this would mean an annual overall increase in the budget for the basic allowance from £245,360 to £259,640.

Recommendation

- a) To recommend that the broadband allowance of £180 pa should continue to be incorporated into the basic allowance.

- b) To recommend that the basic allowance be increased to a total of £6491.00 pa
- c) To recommend that the Scheme should remain index linked to officers' pay awards

3.2 Special Responsibility Allowances

Please note that all of the figures set out below are based on the proposed increased basic allowance of £6,491

3.2.1 Special responsibility allowances (SRAs) are calculated as a multiplier of the basic allowance. The Panel considered this to be an appropriate way to calculate SRAs and concluded that it should continue.

3.2.2 SRAs can be paid to those members of the Council who have significant additional responsibilities over and above the generally accepted duties of a councillor.

3.2.3 The Panel considered the full range of responsibilities that could attract the payment of an SRA under executive arrangements.

3.2.4 Leader of the Council

The Panel noted the role of the Leader and the importance of the role. The Panel considered that due to the proposed increase in the basic allowance the SRA would increase accordingly and agreed to maintain the current SRA of x2 the basic allowance.

Recommendation:

To recommend that the SRA for the Leader of the Council should remain calculated by way of a multiplier of x2 the basic allowance, resulting in a special responsibility allowance of £12,982 (total allowance - £19,473)

3.2.5 Deputy Leader of the Council

The Panel noted that North Norfolk was unusual in that it did not pay a separate SRA to the Deputy Leader of the Council, they received the same as other Cabinet members. The Panel felt that the additional responsibility of covering for the Leader in their absence should be recompensed. They proposed that a multiplier of x1.6 of the basic allowance was applied, resulting in a special responsibility allowance of £10,385 (total allowance - £16,876.60)

Recommendation:

To recommend that a new SRA should be introduced for the Deputy Leader at a multiplier of x1.6 of the basic allowance, resulting in a special responsibility allowance of £10,385 (total allowance - £16,876.60)

3.2.6 Cabinet Members with Portfolio

Cabinet members currently receive a special responsibility allowance of £8,158.22 – based on a multiplier of x1.33 of the basic allowance. The Panel had regard to the roles and responsibilities of Cabinet Members and was satisfied that the multiplier should remain unchanged, as the SRA would rise due to an increase in the basic allowance. If the basic allowance increased, as proposed, Cabinet members would receive an SRA of £8,633.03 (total £14,929.30)

Recommendation:

To recommend that the SRA for Cabinet Members with Portfolio and the Deputy Leader should remain calculated by way of a multiplier of x1.33 the basic allowance, resulting in a special responsibility allowance of SRA of £8,633.03 (total £14,929.30)

3.2.7 Chairmanship of Committees and Working Parties

Currently, these Members receive a special responsibility allowance of £4,109 which is calculated on a multiplier of x0.67. The Panel considered that the commitment required to chair the Council's main committees was considerable. They acknowledged that although the Governance, Risk and Audit Committee met less frequently than other committees, the time commitment required by the Chairman for meeting preparation and undergoing development and training was high. The Panel acknowledged that the Chairman of Development Committee continued to have a heavier workload than other chairmen due to the meeting schedule which included pre-meetings and as well additional committee meetings. The length of the meetings together with the amount of time that the Chairman spent on reading documents and liaising with planning officers also contributed. It was therefore agreed that the multiplier for this committee should remain slightly higher than that of other Chairmen at x0.75, with the Vice-Chairman of Development Committee continuing to receive a multiplier of x0.25. The Panel felt that although the multipliers remained the same as before, those involved would receive a slight increase due to the rise in the Basic Allowance.

3.2.8 The Panel considered the SRA payment for the Chairman of Licensing Committee. It was noted that the main committee had met very infrequently in the past two years and they felt that the Chairman of this committee should receive a per meeting payment rather than an SRA. This would bring it in line with Standards Committee which also met infrequently. If the number of meetings increased, then payments to the Chairman would also rise as they were paid according to the number of meetings.

Recommendations:

- a) That the SRA for the Chairmanship of the Committees of the Council (with the exception of Standards Committee and Licensing Committee – see below) should remain calculated by way of a multiplier of x0.67 the basic allowance, resulting in a special responsibility allowance of £4,348.97 (total allowance - £10,839.97)
- b) That the Chairman of Development Committee should continue to receive x0.75 of the basic allowance, resulting in a special responsibility allowance of £4,868.25 (total allowance - £11,359.25)

- c) That the Vice-chairman of Development Committee should continue to receive x0.25 of the basic allowance, resulting in a special responsibility allowance of £1,622.75 (total allowance - £8,113.75)

3.2.9 Standards Committee & Licensing Committee

These committees have met infrequently over recent years and the Panel felt that the special responsibility allowance should be removed. It was considered that it would be more appropriate for the Chairmen to receive a payment per meeting. The Panel did note that was unusual for the main Licensing Committee(s) to meet so infrequently and commented that this was not the case at other local authorities. It was suggested that the reasons for the lack of meetings should be reviewed and the committee's workload should be monitored going forward.

Recommendation

To remove the SRA for the Chairmanship of the Standards Committee and Licensing Committee and instead make a payment on a per meeting basis at 2% of the basic allowance (£129.82 per meeting)

3.2.10 Planning Policy & Built Heritage Working Party

The Panel agreed that Working Parties could require considerable commitment from the Chairman. However, it was acknowledged that they were not decision-making bodies and the meeting schedules could be erratic. The Panel also noted that members did not support an SRA for chairmen of working parties when it was proposed in 2020. However, in response to the survey, several comments were made that the Planning Policy & Built Heritage Working Party had a particularly heavy workload and meeting schedule and that the chairman of this working party should be considered for an SRA. The Democratic Services Manager had also advised the Panel that this particular working party operated more like a committee. Its meetings were held in person and the public could attend.

That said, the workload for this Working Party was linked to the Local Plan, which was nearing completion and it was likely that the frequency of meetings would reduce in the coming months.

Taking all of the above into consideration, the Panel recommended that the Chairman of the Planning Policy & Built Heritage Working Party should receive a payment per meeting of £129.82

Recommendation:

- a) That the chairman of the Planning Policy & Built Heritage Working Party should receive a payment per meeting of £129.82

3.2.11 Chairman and Vice-chairman of the Council

The Chairman of the Council currently receives an SRA payment of £3,067 pa, which is calculated by way of a multiplier of x0.5. The Panel considered that this reflected the significance of the ambassadorial role of the Chairman

in the North Norfolk Community and the requirement to chair meetings of Full Council on a regular basis. It was agreed that the SRA should be retained at x0.5 the basic allowance.

3.2.12 The Panel then considered the role of the Vice-Chairman and agreed that because the Vice-Chairman may be required to stand in for the Chairman at civic events and support them in their role, the current SRA payment of x0.25 should continue, resulting in a payment of £1,533.50 pa.

Recommendations:

- a) To recommend that the SRA for the Chairman of the Council should continue to be calculated by way of a multiplier of x0.5 the basic allowance, resulting in a special responsibility allowance of £2,875 (total allowance - £8,625)
- b) That the Vice-Chairman of the Council should receive an SRA payment of x0.25 the basic allowance resulting in a special responsibility allowance of £1,437.50 (total allowance - £7,187.50)

3.2.13 Leaders of the Opposition groups

The Panel considered the role of the leaders of the opposition groups. At the last review, it was proposed and agreed that SRAs should be paid to these group leaders based on the number of members within their group. In 2020, the opposition groups had been of similar size and this seemed a fairer approach. The situation had since changed and the main opposition group was now considerably larger than the smaller opposition group. The Panel felt that it would be therefore be appropriate to propose a set SRA for each group leader, reflecting the varying workloads accordingly.

Recommendations

- a) To recommend that the SRA for the leader of the main opposition group should be calculated by way of a multiplier of x0.4 of the basic allowance, resulting in an SRA payment of £2,596.40 (total payment of £9,087.40)
- b) To recommend that the SRA for leader of the smaller opposition group should be calculated by way of a multiplier of x0.15 of the basic allowance, resulting in an SRA payment of £973.65 (total payment of £7464.65)

3.2.14 Co-opted members

The Council does not currently have any co-opted members on its committees. However, the Overview & Scrutiny Committee has previously co-opted people onto a Task & Finish Group. At present, co-opted members can claim for reasonable travelling and subsistence expenses and receive a payment per meeting. It was agreed that this payment should be continued.

Recommendation

That a payment of 2% of the basic allowance per meeting attended should be made to co-opted members of committees (£129.82 per meeting attended).

3.1.15 Member Champions

This was a new role and the Panel considered whether an SRA should be payable. As it was not clear what the role entailed and how much time was required to fulfil it, the Panel did not feel that they could recommend an SRA at this time. They did agree that travel expenses and subsistence should be claimed for any duties linked to the role and to support this, a role description should be produced and made available in the Council's constitution and on the website.

Recommendations

- a) Travel and subsistence can be claimed for duties linked to the role of member champion.
- b) A role description should be produced and be included in the Council's constitution and published on the website.

3.3 Other Payments

3.3.1 Carers' Allowance

The Panel considered the different caring roles and the comments made in response to the survey. They agreed that there should be flexibility regarding payments to ensure that no-one was disadvantaged. As in the previous review in 2020, it was acknowledged that sometimes specialist care required two carers to be in attendance and as proposed in 2020, the Panel agreed that in such instances a payment of £20 per hour, per carer should continue to be made, noting that there was no evidence to suggest an increase was justified, with rates at neighbouring authorities being on a similar level.

3.3.2 In addition, the Panel felt that members would benefit from having access to family members or neighbours to provide care, particularly for cases where children may have special needs or an elderly relative was suffering from dementia or Alzheimer's. It was acknowledged that being able to access the support of someone known to the family could be beneficial in these circumstances.

3.3.3 The Panel agreed that when utilising a friend or neighbour to provide the care, the rate should be limited to £10 or less and should be supported by a personal invoice with the carer's details and signed by the Councillor. The Panel also noted that it may be necessary to have care in place when attending virtual meetings and to ensure that members can concentrate and perform their duties to the best of their abilities. The Panel recommended that the Carer's Allowance is paid for babysitters and carers during all council meetings, including virtual meetings.

Recommendations

- a) To recommend that the carers' allowance should be maintained at the current rates:
£10 per hour for child-care
£20 per hour, per carer for specialist care (up to two carers per session)

- b) To recommend that the payment of a childcare or Carer's Allowance should only be paid on provision of a receipt;
- c) To allow a simple invoice system to allow friends/relatives and similar to provide care and babysitting.
- d) That childcare or Carer's Allowance be paid for a Councillor either physically attending a Council meeting or a virtual meeting to allow Councillors to concentrate only on the duties they had been elected to do.
- e) To recommend that in unusual or extenuating circumstances, the Democratic Services Manager will consider payments for care on a case by case basis.

3.4 Travelling

The current mileage scheme is based upon nationally set rates (HMRC) and supported by guidance from the AA. This sets out that mileage is payable in respect of meetings and attendance in relation to rightful responsibilities or representation of views, for example, meetings of the Council, site visits, outside organisations etc. The Panel could see no justification for moving away from these arrangements. However, it was brought to the Panel's attention that during a period of very high fuel costs, the Council had agreed to raise mileage rates for staff on a temporary basis. This meant that members were out of sync with payments to officers. It was agreed that in future, any such temporary increases should also apply to members.

The current scheme states that members are encouraged to use public transport where practicable and that costs associated with public transport are reclaimable at standard rates wherever possible. The Panel acknowledged that public transport was not always an option in rural areas but that it should be used where possible.

The Panel reiterated their support for members claiming for travel to attend parish and town council meetings. They suggested that this should be actively promoted so that members were aware that this was something that they could claim for, particularly those members representing rural wards with several parishes.

Recommendations

- a) To recommend that the existing travelling expenses scheme should be maintained, and that it should be subject to amendment in accordance with prevailing national agreements:

Mileage

Car (regardless of engine size)	45 pence per mile
Motorcycle	24 pence per mile
Cycle	20 pence per mile
Car Share	5 pence per mile

- b) That if staff mileage rates are increased on a temporary basis, for any reason, the same rates should also be applied to members.

3.5 Subsistence payments

The Panel agreed that the current payments for subsistence were reasonable and should be retained. They highlighted that payments for breakfast should only be payable if the Member was staying away overnight. They compared the subsistence rates paid at neighbouring councils and noted that North Norfolk's were at the higher end. For this reason, it was agreed that they should not be increased at the current time.

The Panel reiterated that all claims should be accompanied by receipts and that they should be submitted within 3 months. All bookings for hotels should be done through the Council except in exceptional circumstances.

Recommendation:

To retain the payments for subsistence at the following levels:

- £6.88 for breakfast (only where an overnight stay is required)
- £8.00 for lunch
- £20.00 for dinner

3.6 Additional requests

The Panel had received a request from a member to consider allowing members access to some staff schemes' such as the Cycle to Work scheme. HR provided the following advice on this:

'The scheme allows employees to benefit from the long term loan of a bike and associated commuting equipment tax free. In order to qualify for the scheme, the main purpose of hiring the bike and equipment must be for commuting between your home and workplace in connection with your employment. As it is processed as a monthly payroll deduction from a staff member's salary, and they do need a minimum salary to be eligible, this is why it isn't open to Members. Effectively, we pay the whole amount up front to Cyclescheme and then claim it back in monthly instalments over 12 months through the payroll.'

The Panel therefore felt that they could not support this request.

3.7 Backdating of Allowances

The Panel could see no justification for suggesting that allowances should be backdated to the beginning of the financial year in which the scheme is to be amended. It was noted that members' allowances had recently been backdated to April 2023, to reflect the staff pay award.

Recommendation

To recommend that the changes proposed by the Panel are not backdated but should take effect from the beginning of the municipal year, in May 2024.

3.8 Renunciation of Allowances

The Panel strongly agreed that all Members should receive their allowance and that renunciation should be discouraged as it was felt that this could discriminate between those who could afford to forgo their allowance and those who could not.

Recommendation

To recommend that all Members should receive their allowance in recognition of the commitment required and that the forgoing of allowances should be discouraged.

3.9 Future Reviews

The Panel had received a request from a Town Council to consider setting allowances for town and parish councillors. The responsibility for this sits with the second-tier authority's IRP. This was a substantial piece of work and would commence in the new year.

4 Financial and Resource Implications

There are financial implications relating to this report. An increase in the basic allowance will have an impact on the overall budget, however, failure to implement incremental increases on a four-year basis can lead to a much larger increase at a later date to bring the Council in line with neighbouring authorities - as happened in 2016.

If the increase in the basic allowance is agreed, the annual budget for Members' allowances will increase from £351,820 to £369,411 in 2024/2025. The members' allowances budget for 2023/24 is forecast to be underspent.

Comments from the S151 Officer:

The S151 Officer (or member of the Finance team on their behalf) will complete this section.

Members should continue to accept an annual increase to cover costs of inflation and this can be incorporated into the Members' Allowances Budget.

5 Legal Implications

Comments from the Monitoring Officer

The Monitoring Officer (or member of the Legal team on behalf of the MO) will complete this section. They will outline any legal advice provided.

The Council has complied with the statutory requirements to have an independent review within the relevant timeframe of members allowances, enabling it to take such information into account before making or amending members' allowances.

6 Risks

The main risk associated with the review of the Members' Scheme of Allowances is reputational in nature. When considering the findings and recommendations of the Independent Remuneration Panel, Members should evaluate them in the spirit intended and the context of the prevailing circumstances. When making their decision however, the Panel would like to draw the Council's attention to the payments made to members in neighbouring authorities and the increased workload (as highlighted in the survey results).

There is a risk that if the allowances are not increased then people will be deterred from standing as candidates. The survey results indicated that some members already feel that the allowance is too low and for those with no additional income, the cost of living crisis has impacted significantly

There is a risk that if the basic allowance is not increased on a 4-year basis that NNDC will start to lag behind other authorities and a much larger increase will have to occur at some point.

However, while Members are required to have due regard to the report of the Independent Remuneration Panel, it is still a matter for the Council to decide whether it adopts the associated recommendations in full or part.

7 Net ZeroTarget

N/A

8 Equality, Diversity & Inclusion

A low basic allowance can deter people from standing as a councillor. The Panel feels that an increase in the allowance may encourage more people to stand. They also believe that the additional option of care from a family member provides more flexibility and support to assist in fulfilling the role.

9 Community Safety issues

N/A

10 Conclusion and Recommendations

The Independent Remuneration Panel have met on several occasions. The following were all part of the review process:

- Consideration of comparative data from neighbouring authorities
- Survey of members undertaken – looking at ward work, committee workload, contact from constituents, parish & town council commitments etc
- Meetings with two of the group leaders
- Consideration of comments from members submitted to the Panel.
- The impact on candidates considering standing for election and ensuring that the basic allowance reflected the workload. The Panel did not want the allowance to slip behind neighbouring authorities and deter people from putting themselves forward. Proposed changes to the carer's allowance also supported this approach by providing more flexibility around the use of family and friends.

After taking all of the above into consideration, the Panel felt that a small increase in the basic allowance should be recommended. This would bring NNDC in line with neighbouring authorities and would also reflect the increase in workload for many councillors. It was acknowledged that councillors were impacted by the cost of living crisis, particularly those on limited incomes.

The Independent Remuneration Panel therefore makes the following recommendations to Full Council:

Recommendations:

That Members consider the recommendations of the Independent Remuneration Panel, adopt a scheme of allowances and amend the Constitution accordingly. Specifically, it is recommended that:

- a) the Basic Allowance should increase to £6,491 pa (to include £180 Broadband Allowance).
- b) the Scheme should remain index linked to officers' pay awards.
- c) the Special Responsibility Allowance (SRA) for the Leader of the Council should remain calculated by way of a multiplier of x2 the basic allowance.
- d) A new SRA for the Deputy Leader should be introduced, calculated by way of a multiplier of x1.6 the basic allowance.
- e) the SRA for Cabinet Members with Portfolio should remain calculated by way of a multiplier of x1.33 the basic allowance.
- f) the SRA for Chairmen of Committees of the Council (except Development Committee, Licensing Committee and Standards Committee) should remain calculated by way of a multiplier of x0.67 the basic allowance.
- g) the SRA for the Chairman of Development Committee to remain at x0.75 of the basic allowance, with the SRA for the Vice-chairman of Development Committee remaining at x0.25 of the basic allowance.
- h) Payments for the Chairmen of Standards Committee and Licensing Committee should be based on a per meeting payment of 2% of the Basic Allowance or £129.82.
- i) A new payment for Chairmen of Planning Policy & Built Heritage Working Party to be introduced on a per meeting basis of 2% of the basic allowance, or £129.82.
- j) SRA payments to leaders of the opposition groups should move to a flat SRA rather than being based on the number within the group.
- k) The SRA for the Leader of the main opposition group should be calculated by a way of a multiplier of x0.4.
- l) The SRA for the Leader of the smaller opposition group should be calculated by means of a multiplier of x0.15.
- m) The SRA for the Chairman of the Council should remain the same and be calculated by means of a multiplier of x0.5, with the Vice-Chairman of the Council remaining on the multiplier of x0.25.
- n) Member champion roles should not receive an SRA but should be eligible for travel and subsistence payments.

- o) A role description should be produced for member champions and should be published on the Council's website.
- p) A new 'family and friends' rate for carer's allowance of up to £10 per hour should be introduced, to support councillors in their role and ensure no-one is disadvantaged by caring responsibilities.
- q) The Democratic Services Manager to have delegation to consider payments for carers' allowance on a case by case basis, allowing a higher rate in exceptional circumstances.
- r) Travel and subsistence rates to remain the same and will continue to include travel to attend parish and town council meetings.
- s) Any temporary increases to staff mileage rates will also apply to members.

Fakenham Leisure and Sports Hub	
Executive Summary	To advise Council of Government funding for the proposed Fakenham Leisure and Sports Hub facility and outline the steps the Council will now take to deliver this large and exciting project in the coming months
Options considered	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proceed with the development and delivery of this exciting sport and wellbeing project for Fakenham with the Government funding pledged towards the project • Resolve not to proceed with the project
Consultation(s)	The original plans for the Fakenham Leisure and Sports Hub proposal were the subject of extensive consultation with overwhelming public support expressed for the proposed facility. As the project is taken forward there will be further consultation and engagement with key stakeholders and partners and the public details of which are provided in the report.
Recommendations	<p>It is recommended that:-</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Full Council welcomes the Government funding of £9.856million awarded towards the cost of the Fakenham Leisure and Sports Hub project. The Council further recognises that confirmation of the Government funding will allow plans for the new facility to be taken forward in the coming months. 2. Council approves the establishment of a Capital Budget of £11million for the Fakenham Leisure and Sports Hub project within the Capital Programme. 3. Council approves the funding of this project made up of £9.856million of Levelling Up Fund (central government) monies, £0.408million Section 106 monies, £0.575million from the Football Foundation and the value of the land contributed by Fakenham Town Council. Any shortfall in this funding will need to be funded by the Council, for which borrowing will be taken. 4. Council approves the project management and governance arrangements for the project as outlined in Section 3 of the report. 5. Council agrees that a traditional procurement process would disadvantage the Council due to the timescales involved and supports an exemption under the Contract Procedure rules to appoint the consultants, FMG Consulting, who have previously worked on this project, as principal advisors to the Council in the development and delivery of the Fakenham Leisure and Sports Hub proposal. 6. Subject to recommendation 3 above, delegated authority is given to the Director of Communities to appoint FMG Consulting to advise the Council on the detailed design, construction and tender

	<p>processes for the project including the submission of a planning application for the development.</p> <p>7. Council requires that tender prices received are reported to Council for approval before any construction contract is awarded as a key “gate” point in the delivery of the project.</p>
Reasons for recommendations	To establish the necessary project management and governance framework and financial monitoring arrangements for the Fakenham Leisure and Sports Hub project
Background papers	Report to Full Council – 27 th July 2022

Wards affected	Fakenham wards (Lancaster North and South); and wards in the west of the district including Briston, Priory, Stibbard, Stody, The Raynhams, Walsingham; Wells with Holkham.
Cabinet member(s)	Cllr Tim Adams, Leader of the Council
Contact Officer	Steve Blatch, Chief Executive Email:- steve.blatch@north-norfolk.gov.uk Tel:- 01263 516232

Links to key documents:	
Corporate Plan:	The 2023-2027 Corporate Plan themes - Developing our Communities and A Strong, Responsible and Accountable Council

Corporate Governance:	
Is this a key decision	Yes
Has the public interest test been applied	Yes – there is no private or confidential information to be considered by this report
Details of any previous decision(s) on this matter	N/A

1. Purpose of the report

- 1.1 To advise Council of Government funding, as awarded in the Chancellor’s Autumn Statement, for the proposed Fakenham Leisure and Sports Hub facility and outline the steps the Council will now take to deliver this significant project in the coming months.

2. Introduction & Background

- 2.1 In response to a call for applications under Round 2 of the Levelling Up Fund programme in March 2022, North Norfolk District Council developed a proposal for the Fakenham Leisure and Sports Hub facility in partnership with Fakenham Town Council and the District Council’s leisure contractor, Everyone Active.

This proposal envisaged an £11million project to extend the existing Fakenham Sports Centre facility at Trap Lane in the town to include a 25-metre four-lane swimming pool with moveable floor, extended gym and fitness studio facilities, 3G all-weather pitch and environmental improvements to the existing sports hall building.

- 2.2 Details of the project to be the subject of the Levelling Up Fund Round 2 application were approved by Full Council at its meeting of the 27th July 2022, when it was resolved:-

The Broadland Constituency proposal – Fakenham Sports and Leisure Hub (FLASH) project:-

1. **Council signs off the submission of the Levelling Up Fund bid for the Fakenham Leisure and Sports Hub for a total cost of £10,951,419.00 with grant amount of £9,856,277.00 being applied for.**
 2. **In the event that the Levelling Up fund bid in respect of the Fakenham Leisure and Sports Hub is successful:**
 - **Agree to the release of the equivalent value of the Section 106 monies for off-site indoor sports provision for the Fakenham Urban Extension to the value of £408,337.00**
 - **Agree to underwrite the provision of match funding for the 3G pitch to a maximum value of £575,000.00 in the event that Football Foundation funding is not forthcoming, or the funding does not meet the full contribution level.**
 - **Recognise the ongoing revenue cost implications associated with the enhanced facility and impact that will have on future revenue or contract payments.**
- 2.3 The project was submitted to Government on 2nd August 2022 and an announcement of successful projects was expected to be made during autumn 2022. However, Round 2 of the Levelling Up fund programme was four times overbid and in January 2023 the District Council was advised that the Fakenham project had not been successful in being awarded Levelling Up Fund monies. As the project proposal was heavily reliant on Government support, the District Council has not committed further resources to developing the project in the period since January 2023.
- 2.4 The Government subsequently announced that a number of projects would be supported through a Levelling Up Round 3 announcement on 20th November 2023 and that five further projects, including the Fakenham Leisure and Sports Hub project, would receive funding support in the Chancellor's Autumn Statement on 22nd November 2023. The funding support offered reflects the application for Levelling Up Fund Round 2 funding made by the District Council ie with Government funding of £9,856,277 towards total project costs of £10,951,419, meaning that the project can now be taken forward.
- 2.5 The District Council now needs to develop a strong project management and governance framework to oversee the development and delivery of the project

over the next 30 months, with the Government having suggested a project completion / delivery date of Spring 2026.

3. Project Governance

- 3.1 Given the Government announcement of funding support for the Fakenham Leisure and Sports Hub project, the District Council now needs to put in place a strong project governance framework for the project and the rest of this report outlines these arrangements.
- 3.2 It would be proposed that the project is lead on behalf of the District Council by the Council's Director of Communities, supported by the Corporate Programme and Project Manager.
- 3.3 These officers would work with two newly established groups to oversee the delivery of the project – a Project Steering Group of key stakeholders to oversee key delivery elements of the project; and an internal officer Project Team to progress the detailed actions, supported as appropriate by an appointed lead consultant.
- 3.4 It would be proposed that the Project Steering Group would include the following:-
- a member of Cabinet,
 - Cllr Cushing as local ward member (and Leader of the Conservative Group);
 - a member of the Independent Group;
 - Cllr Angela Glynn, Fakenham Town Council
 - representative of Everyone Active (contract management);
 - representative of Fakenham Academy;
 - representative of Sport England;
 - representative of the Football Association
 - representative of Jerome Mayhew MP
- 3.5 The internal officer Project Team would include, as a minimum, the following:-
- Director of Communities
 - Corporate Programme and Project Manager.
 - Director of Resources (or their nominated representative);
 - Assistant Director – Environment and Leisure;
 - Leisure and Locality Services Manager;
 - officers from the Assets, Comms, Corporate Health and Safety, Legal, Net Zero, Planning, Procurement, and Property Teams;
 - a member of the Council's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion corporate group; plus
 - a representative of Everyone Active (operational Fakenham Sports Centre)
- 3.6 It would also be proposed that an Engagement Group be established of key user groups of the existing and proposed facilities supported by the Leisure and Locality Services Manager, District Council Comms Team and the Everyone Active Fakenham Sports Centre Manager.
- 3.7 In terms of internal reporting, it would be proposed that regular progress reports be presented to Cabinet and quarterly reports would be included on the

agendas of meetings of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee – at January, April, July and October.

4.0 Organisational Capacity

- 4.1 The Council's ability and capacity to take forward a project of this scale will be stretched and, given the specialist nature of the project in terms of procurement and project management, it is recommended that the Council engages experienced consultants to advise the authority in delivery of the project.
- 4.2 Based on the successful delivery of The Reef project at Sheringham and their involvement in the preparation of the Levelling Up Fund application for the Fakenham Leisure and Sports Hub, it would be recommended that the authority appoints consultants FMG Consulting to assist in the further development of detailed proposals for and delivery of the project. However, direct appointment of the company will require the Council to suspend Financial Standing Orders and a recommendation seeking authority for such an appointment is made within this report.
- 4.3 Subject to FMG's appointment being confirmed, it would be suggested that they prepare detailed design and construction plans and tender documents for the project and assist in the appraisal of the tenders received, with those prices being the subject of presentation to the Council for a decision to be made as to whether the project is affordable and can proceed through the award of a construction contract. This would be a key "gate" point for the project, which would remain in the control of the District Council.
- 4.4 The contract management relationship between the Council and the consultants would be managed by the Director of Communities through the arrangements detailed at paragraphs 3.2 – 3.5 above.

5.0 Project Timeline

- 5.1 The Government offer letter advising of funding support for the project has suggested that ideally the project will be delivered by March 2026. This would be ambitious from a standing start and the detailed programme will need agreement with the Government in the coming weeks. However, it would be hoped that detailed project construction designs and technical reports, surveys etc can be prepared and agreed by April 2024 at which time a planning application for the proposed facilities would be submitted. It would be hoped that this could be determined by September 2024, with the summer months being used concurrently to develop detailed tender documentation and the running of a detailed procurement process allowing appointment of a construction partner by October 2024; with construction commencing thereafter with an anticipated 18-month contract period. These timescales are provisional at this time and need to be agreed.

6.0 Corporate Priorities

- 6.1 Delivery of the Fakenham Leisure and Sports Hub project supports the Council's Corporate Plan themes – Developing our Communities and A Strong, Responsible and Accountable Council.

- 6.2 Under the recently agreed Annual Action Plan there was a proposed action to re-submit the Fakenham Leisure and Sports Hub project in any Round 3 of the Levelling Up Fund programme, and with Government funding for the project now agreed the wording of this action should now be revised to state “Development and Delivery of the Fakenham Leisure and Sports Hub proposal”.

7.0 Financial and Resource Implications

- 7.1 Development of this new facility – swimming pool and 3G pitch will have an impact on local rates of participation in sport and wellbeing activities in the Fakenham area, based on the experience of participation rates at The Reef, Sheringham. Additional users of the new facilities at Fakenham would be expected to have a positive impact on the contract arrangements between the Council and its leisure contract partner, Everyone Active and work will be undertaken to assess such returns as the project is developed up until the tender approval stage of the project and reported to members at that time.

- 7.2 The Director of Resources (Section 151 Officer) has provided the following comments in advising on the preparation of this report:-

The original bid to Government was for a project value of £11million and Government funds have recently been awarded to the project totalling £9.856 million. This requires the Council to match-fund the project with potentially up to £736,000. This would have to be funded through borrowing. This does not allow for any inflationary increases in scheme costs, since the bid was originally submitted in August 2022. There is therefore a risk that costs could have increased since then and it would be necessary for the Council to cover such costs. Any changes of this nature will need to be reported back to members and are covered by recommendation 7 below, which requires that the tenders received for the project will need to be received and considered by elected members as a key “gate” point within the project programme.

8.0 Legal Implications

- 8.1 The Monitoring Officer has provided the following comments in advising on the preparation of this report:-

If members agree to recommendation 5, the Project Lead Officer will be required within the Council’s project governance framework, to submit an exemption form as per the Contract Procedure Rules, as soon as possible for consideration of the Section 151 Officer and Monitoring Officer.

9.0 Risks

- 9.1 There are a number of potentially significant risks associated with this project, which will need to be considered in the coming weeks when a Project risk Register will need to be developed for the project, and as appropriate an entry made in the Corporate Risk Register. It would be expected that any risks

associated with the project will be discussed and managed through the project governance arrangements detailed at Section 3 of this report above.

10.0 Net Zero Target

- 10.1 A significant element of the £11million project budget (£1million) was for the incorporation of environmental / Net Zero features within the design and operation of the new facility, including retro-fitting measures to the existing Sports Centre through additional thermal efficiency measures, incorporation of solar photovoltaic roof panels etc. These measures will be given detailed consideration in the development of the detailed project design.
- 10.2 The proposed project design will be taken through the Council's new De-carbonisation Strategic Group such that due consideration can be given to the Council's stated Net Zero objectives alongside issues of value for money, carbon-pricing and offsetting etc.

11.0 Equality, Diversity & Inclusion

- 11.1 The new Fakenham Leisure and Sports Hub facility will be developed with detailed consideration of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion issues, building on the learning gained through the delivery and operation of The Reef leisure centre at Sheringham and the sharing of plans with our leisure contract operator, Everyone Active and the proposed Engagement Group.

12.0 Community Safety issues

- 12.1 The detailed plans for the new facility will be designed to minimise opportunities for crime and anti-social behaviour, including engagement with the Norfolk Constabulary Architectural Liaison Officer as appropriate.

13.0 Conclusion and Recommendations

- 13.1 **It is recommended that:-**

It is recommended that:-

- 1. Full Council welcomes the Government funding of £9.856million awarded towards the cost of the Fakenham Leisure and Sports Hub project. The Council further recognises that confirmation of the Government funding will allow plans for the new facility to be taken forward in the coming months.**
- 2. Council approves the establishment of a Capital Budget of £11million for the Fakenham Leisure and Sports Hub project within the Capital Programme.**
- 3. Council approves the funding of this project made up of £9.856million of Levelling Up Fund (central government) monies, £0.408million Section 106 monies, £0.575million from the Football Foundation and the value of**

the land contributed by Fakenham Town Council. Any shortfall in this funding will need to be funded by the Council, for which borrowing will be taken.

4. Council approves the project management and governance arrangements for the project as outlined in Section 3 of the report.
5. Council agrees that a traditional procurement process would disadvantage the Council due to the timescales involved and supports an exemption under the Contract Procedure rules to appoint the consultants, FMG Consulting, who have previously worked on this project, as principal advisors to the Council in the development and delivery of the Fakenham Leisure and Sports Hub proposal.
6. Subject to recommendation 5 above, delegated authority is given to the Director of Communities to appoint FMG Consulting to advise the Council on the detailed design, construction and tender processes for the project including the submission of a planning application for the development.
7. Council requires that tender prices received are reported to Council for approval before any construction contract is awarded as a key “gate” point in the delivery of the project.

Draft Programme of Meetings 2024 - 2025	
Executive Summary	An annual schedule of meetings is prepared to ensure that the Council's decision-making processes run as effectively as possible.
Options considered	No alternative options were considered. The Council has to agree a programme of meetings to facilitate the effective running of council business.
Consultation(s)	Key officers were consulted regarding proposed dates and any changes.
Recommendations	To adopt the Programme of Meetings for 2024-25.
Reasons for recommendations	An agreed schedule of meetings is necessary for the Council to adequately carry out its business
Background papers	Meeting schedules from previous years.

Wards affected	All
Cabinet member(s)	Cllr T Adams
Contact Officer	Emma Denny, Democratic Services Manager emma.denny@north-norfolk.gov.uk

1. Purpose of the report

An annual schedule of meetings is prepared to ensure that the Council's decision-making processes run as effectively as possible. For 2024 – 2025 the following key issues have been taken into consideration whilst drafting the programme:

- 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) School holidays have been avoided as far as possible especially for meetings of Full Council, Cabinet and Overview and Scrutiny Committee. Please note that Full Council in February 2024 will take place during half-term to allow sufficient time for the processing of Council Tax bills.

- d) The Development Committee meeting which was scheduled to take place on 2 May 2024 has been moved to 9 May 2024 to avoid elections taking place in 2024, including the Police and Crime Commissioner election and a possible General Election. It means that there will be only three weeks between this and the following Development Committee meeting on 30 May 2024.
- e) The Full Council for April 2025 has been moved to the end of March to avoid the run-up to the County Council elections.
- f) Site meetings for Development Committee have not been scheduled as they are very rarely needed. They can be convened on Development Committee Reserve dates, if required.
- g) Planning Policy & Built Heritage Working Party meetings have been moved to Thursdays and are now bi-monthly.
- h) Joint Staff Consultative Committee meetings (JSCC) are now scheduled on a quarterly rather than bi-monthly basis.
- e) The Norfolk Rivers Internal Drainage Board (IDB) and the Broads Internal Drainage Board have forwarded dates of their meetings for 2024 so that we can highlight where there will be meeting clashes in our 2024/25 programme, as there is very little flexibility to change these dates:

Meeting date clashes	IDB meeting	NNDC meeting
22 May 2024	Norfolk Rivers IDB	Overview & Scrutiny Committee
6 June 2024	Broads IDB	Coastal Forum
23 October 2024	Norfolk Rivers IDB	Joint Staff Consultative Committee

2. Background

The Calendar of Meetings is agreed on an annual basis at the December meeting of Full Council. Preparation of a draft programme begins in September and is circulated to key officers for input.

The meetings schedule for Norfolk County Council is reviewed to ensure that there are no clashes with any of the main committee meetings.

This year we have tried to ensure that members are not having to travel into the office as frequently to attend meetings. This reduces travel and ensures that members are able to plan their time more effectively.

All planning and development related meetings now take place on a Thursday.

Committees and Working Parties that have not met frequently in the last year have moved to a lighter schedule. This includes the main Licensing Committee (now quarterly) and JSCC (quarterly)

3. Financial and Resource Implications

- 3.1 If the Council did not have an agreed schedule of meetings, it 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.
- 3.2 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.

4. Legal Implications

To comply with statutory requirements, the Council is required to publish a calendar of meetings for the forthcoming municipal year.

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

An agreed schedule of meetings is necessary for the Council to adequately carry out its business.

Recommendation:

To adopt the programme of Meetings for 2024 - 2025

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DRAFT PROGRAMME OF MEETINGS 2024/2025 DRAFT

			2024								2025			
MEETING	DAY	TIME	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEPT	OCT	NOV	DEC	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR
FULL COUNCIL	Wed	18.00	8	25 (Tu)	24	-	25	-	20	18	-	19	19	-
CABINET	Mon	10.00	13	10	8	-	9	7	4	2	6	3	3/31	-
OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE	Wed	9.30	22	19	17	-	18	16	13	11	15	12	12	9
DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE	Thurs	9.30	9/30	28 (Fri)	25	22	19	17	14	12	9	6	6	3
DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE (RESERVE)	Thurs	9.30	16	13	11	8	5	3/31	28	-	23	20	20	17
PLANNING POLICY AND BUILT HERITAGE WORKING PARTY	Thurs	10.00	23	-	18	-	26	-	21	-	16	-	13	-
LICENSING AND APPEALS COMMITTEE (PREMISES & GAMBLING / REGULATORY)	Weds	10.00	-	5	-	-	11	-	-	4	-	-	26	-
LICENSING SUB-COMMITTEES (PREMISES & GAMBLING / REGULATORY)	Tues	10.00	21	18	16	-	24	22	12	17	21	11	4	1
GOVERNANCE, RISK AND AUDIT COMMITTEE ^SP MTG- ANNUAL ACCOUNTS	Tues	14.00	-	11	9^	-	10	-	-	3	-	-	25	-
CONSTITUTION WORKING PARTY**	Tues	10.00	-	4	-	-	17	-	-	10	-	-	18	-
STANDARDS COMMITTEE	Tues	14.00	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	29
JOINT STAFF CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE*	Wed	14.00	-	-	10	-	-	23	-	-	22	-	-	2
MEMBER DEVELOPMENT GROUP**	Wed	10.00	-	12	-	-	4	-	-	5 (Thurs)	-	-	5	-
COASTAL FORUM** ^FIELD TRIP	Tues	10.00	-	6^	-	-	-	-	5	-	-	-	11	-
NORTH NORFOLK SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES FUND PANEL**	Mon	14.00	-	17	-	-	16	-	-	9	-	-	10	-
GENERAL RESERVE DAYS (FOR POSSIBLE EXTRA MEETINGS)			17/24	7/21	12/19	-	12/27	10/24	6/22	6/19	14/28	5/25	21/27	4/24

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.

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CABINET MEMBERS REPORT TO COUNCIL

DECEMBER 2023

COUNCILLOR ADAMS - CABINET MEMBER FOR STRATEGY, COUNTYWIDE WORKING AND EXTERNAL PARTNERSHIPS, PERFORMANCE, COMMUNICATIONS, HR AND LEGAL SERVICES

For the period November to December 2023

1 Progress on Portfolio Matters

Electoral Services

- Published the Revised Register of Electors on 1st December following a successful Annual Canvass where once again the team achieved a return of over 90%.
- Recently delivered successful elections for Salthouse Parish Council where 5 councillors were elected to restore the parish council to an operational state after a period of being un-quorate, and also the District by-election for Briston Ward which saw Andrew Fletcher (Liberal Democrat) elected to the District Council.

Human Resources

- Training opportunities delivered during November and December - Communication Skills Workshop, EDI Workshop, Safeguarding for District Councils, Conflict Training and Neurodiversity
- One Officer has begun a degree apprenticeship in Town and Country Planning in order to qualify as a planner.
- The final quarter of the year has been very busy with recruitment which has resulted in being able to fill a number of difficult to recruit to posts.

Communications

- Continued to prep for confirmation of work start date for Cromer and Mundesley defence schemes, including finalising innovative interactive video maps for the website which will showcase the individual components of each project to the public in a concise and engaging way.
- Met with Net Zero colleagues to agree regular new content offering public green/carbon reduction tips to be presented weekly for at least the next calendar year (launched 8.12.23).
- Met with Coastwise to discuss strategies for next phase of comms around the scheme, including promotion of climate change design competition and work around the pending planning discussion on the car park at Happisburgh.
- Discussed appropriate legacy content and closedown content for HAZ

- project with the Economic Development team
- Worked with Serco and internal colleagues on print/digital comms to cover festive refuse collection times.
- Promoted Sheringham Christmas Market.

Legal Services

- **Information Requests -**
 - FOI request figures show that the Council's current performance to responding to requests within the statutory 20 working days is at 92%. The national target is set at 90%.
 - The legal service continues to provide advice and assistance to the wider Council in order to assist in this area and support the corporate responsibilities.
 - In addition to this ongoing advice and assistance, the legal service has provided training sessions on FOI and general information governance to all staff members who have a key role to play such as Information Asset Owners and Assistants.
- **Internal Audit**
 - An audit has been undertaken of the Council's FOI processes and procedures and the Council has received Substantial assurance.

Democratic Services

- The vacant post in the Democratic Services team has been successfully recruited to and the new team member starts in early January.
- Development Committee in particular has a heavy workload and the reserve dates are being used to ensure that agendas are not overloaded.
- The review of Members' allowances has been undertaken by an independent panel and the report is being presented to Full Council in December.
- The Youth Council visited Parliament on 29th November, at the invitation of Duncan Baker MP. They had an extensive tour of the Parliamentary estate followed by a Q&A session with Duncan. Thank you to Cllr M Taylor for his help in organising this visit.
- The Youth Council is now focussed on supporting the Christmas toy collection for Norfolk & Norwich University Hospital.

2 Forthcoming Activities and Developments

Electoral Services

- Planning is underway for the Police and Crime Commissioner Election being held on 2nd May 2024 with Polling Stations booked and staff allocation commencing.
- Preparation and training is also being undertaken for further changes in legislation surrounding Overseas Electors which is being introduced as part of the 2022 Elections Act from 16th January 2024.

Democratic Services

- The next meeting of the Town & Parish Council Engagement Forum will be an

in-person session at the Council Offices in early February 2024. It will be an opportunity for key services areas to promote their work and highlight opportunities for engagement with local communities.

3 Meetings attended

Meetings attended:

- ICB Board - Benjamin Court and Community Connectors.
- Lord Callanan - future of Bacton.
- Council Tax Support Working Party.
- Stalham Town Council
- Shell
- LINK
- General Council business, including Cabinet meetings and meetings with officers of the Council.

To occur before Full Council:

- Kings Lynn BC
- Norfolk Parking Partnership
- Transport East Forum
- North Norfolk & Broadland MPs
- Fakenham Town Council.
- National Grid

Events attended:

- Cromer Pier Show
- UK100 Reception
- Thursford Christmas Spectacular

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CABINET MEMBERS REPORT TO COUNCIL

20 December 2023

COUNCILLOR HARRY BLATHWAYT - CABINET MEMBER FOR COAST

For the period November to December 2023

1 Progress on Portfolio Matters

Cromer and Mundesley Schemes

The coast protection scheme for Cromer and Mundesley is in an advanced state of preparation, with the application for the uplift funding from Mundesley having been received and the uplift funding for Cromer expected soon. The start date will be able to be confirmed once the outstanding consent matters are finalised, these include:

- Consent from Marine Management Organisation (MMO) - Responded to MMO comments and are awaiting final approval
- Discharge of planning conditions
- Agreement to the Construction Environment Management Plan (CEMP)

The Project Board and internal officer working group meet regularly to consider progress and issues arising from the schemes.

Coastwise

- Coastwise and East Riding Coastal Transition are co-sponsoring the fourth Climate Creative Challenge #CoastalChange [www.climatecreativeschallenge.com] which will showcase creative methods to present the coastal climate challenge
- Shared Funding and Finance post hosted by EA has been filled
- Coastwise presented to Parish Partnership Forum and was well received
- Plans underway for engagement strategy and community workshops
- Contract initiation meetings have been held for work on developing transition plans and coastal adaptation archive.

Repairs and Maintenance

- Remedial works following storms along whole frontage: steps, handrails, concrete etc.
- Overstrand block revetment repair works
- Overstrand timber revetment repairs
- West Runton sheet piling works complete
- Happisburgh ramp re-cut
- Cromer Melbourne cliff slip repairs
- Floodgate clearance

2 Forthcoming Activities and Developments.

Cromer and Mundesley Schemes

- Once the final consents have been issued and the start date is known, further liaison with local stakeholders will be undertaken, prior to the commencement of the substantive works.

Coastwise

- Conversations with Norwich Diocese being planned regarding graveyards in erosion risk areas
- Short films to assist with coastal and climate literacy are underway
- Coastwise information panels intended to be located along the coast are being developed and will include QR codes to link to updatable information
- Development of survey to inform Coastwise plans
- Completing ideas for UEA Environment consultancy module projects with Climate.

3 Meetings attended

17/11/23 LGA Coastal Water Quality SIG
20/11/23 Cabinet Pre Agenda
22/11/23 Broads Authority TPO site visit
22/11/23 Cromer Site Visit and technical briefing
23/11/23 Norfolk strategic Flooding Alliance
24/11/23 Coastal erosion Site Visit with CEO of Environment Agency
04/12/23 Business Planning
05/12/23 Project Board Mundesley and Cromer
06/12/23 LGA IDB SIG
07/12/23 Joint Coastal Management Group (Norfolk)
08/12/23 Broads Authority Planning Committee

CABINET MEMBERS REPORT TO COUNCIL

20th December 2023

COUNCILLOR A BROWN - CABINET MEMBER FOR PLANNING & ENFORCEMENT

For the period 22nd November 2023 to 11th December 2023

1 Progress on Portfolio Matters

The new National Planning Policy Framework due to be revised shortly will vindicate the Council's decision to publish the new district **Local Plan** last April with cross-party approval. Councils who paused and suspended their draft Local Plans because of delayed planning reforms or similar concerns will be criticised by the Planning Inspectorate. Our Local Plan Examination is due to start on 23rd January 2024. Further details of the timetable of the Examination Programme can be found at: [North Norfolk Local Plan Examination Programme](#).

The final **Development Committee** meeting of the year took place on 7th December – and lasted more than 6 hours and considered applications in Cromer, West Beckham, Thursford, Weybourne, Salthouse, Trunch and Sheringham. The reports are all available at: [Development Committee Thursday 7th December 2023](#).

At the end of November the Government published further information related to '**Biodiversity Net Gain**'. This information made it clear that the new system will only affect developments where applications are received after given dates. The exact dates haven't been announced but are likely to be some time in January 2024 for major developments and some time in April 2024 for other types of development. Further information can be found at: [Biodiversity Net Gain - Government Documents](#).

A public drop in event on the proposed development known as '**North Walsham West Sustainable Urban Extension**' was held on Wednesday 6 December 2023. It was aimed at residents of Coltishall and Horstead and was held at Coltishall Village Hall. The purpose of the event was to present details of off-site highway mitigation proposals and to enable discussion with staff from the developers and the Council on this and other aspects of the proposed development. Further information on the development is available at: [North Walsham West Sustainable Urban Extension \(NNDG\)](#) and [North Walsham West \(stand-alone web-site\)](#).

New legislation via the **Levelling Up and Regeneration Act** introduces several changes to planning processes. Planning application fees – which are set by Government - will increase by 25% for household applications and 35% for developers. Some applicants (for non-major applications) will also be entitled to a refund if councils do not decide their applications within 16 weeks - instead of within 26 weeks as used to be the case. Further information is available at: [Government Press Release LURA](#).

The government has changed permitted development rights for some **solar panel** installations to allow homeowners so no planning application will be necessary

providing prior approval is obtained from councils. Panels can also now be placed in front of properties in conservation areas between the house and the highway if placed well away from a dwelling. Previously there was a ban on panels for domestic properties fronting a highway in a conservation area. Now properties with flat roofs can install solar panels in conservation areas and in car parks. Until now panels could not protrude more than 0.2 metres beyond the plane of the wall or roof slope and no higher than the highest part of a roof so previously these rights did not extend to flat roofs. But note, that they cannot protrude more than 0.6 of a metre above the highest roofline height excluding the chimney. Further information is available at: [Government Press Release Solar Panels](#).

Having chaired this since 2019, I have decided to resign as Chair of the **Planning Policy and Built Heritage Working Party** having completed delivery of the new Local Plan (subject to the Independent Examination outcome) and both Glaven Valley CA appraisals for our villages and the wider valleys. I will remain as an active member of the PPBHWP in future. I will continue as Planning and Enforcement portfolio holder in the cabinet and will use the freedom afforded to concentrate my efforts on navigating the Local Plan through the government inspection next year. The policy management document for the rural Glaven Valley Conservation Area approved by the PPBHWP last month is due to be ratified and finally adopted by the Council at the cabinet meeting on 8 January. The guidance it provides will be considered in deciding future planning applications across our conservation areas.

Government has announced that the revised **National Planning Policy Framework** will be published this month and that it will include a clearer basis on which a local authority can argue for a divergence from objectively assessed housing need in specific circumstances. It is expected to support Councils in protecting land of environmental importance or aesthetic significance (like green belt land) without having to build new homes on it just to satisfy housing need calculations. It was announced that there will be further consultation on the development of Government's proposed National Development Management Policies - which will attempt to standardize development management rules across a series of policy areas to avoid replication in council local plans. However, it is expected that when a council has submitted a Local Plan for inspection, as in our case, this will give significant protection from national policies challenging local plan policies in the process of being approved. The current version of the Framework is available at: [National Planning Policy Framework](#)

May I take this opportunity to wish you and your families a very merry Christmas and a peaceful New Year.

2 Forthcoming Activities and Developments

The next (and third) Town and Parish Council road-show will be held in Holt on 1st February 2023.

The next Development Committee is due to be held on 11th January 2023.

Local Plan Examination dates are scheduled to be:

- 23rd to 25th January 2024;
- 13th to 15th February 2024; and
- 5th to 7th March 2024.

3 Meetings attended

November

- 23 Portfolio Holder Meeting
- 23 Brinton Parish Council
- 30 Development Committee site visit in Weybourne

December

- 4 Business Progress Meeting
- 7 Development Committee
- 11 North Walsham Development Brief
- 11 Stody Parish Council
- 13 Overview & Scrutiny Committee
- 18 Pre-Cabinet & Business Planning
- 20 Full Council

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CABINET MEMBERS REPORT TO COUNCIL

December 2023

COUNCILLOR WENDY FREDERICKS – PORTFOLIO HOLDER FOR HOUSING & PEOPLE SERVICES

For the Period up to 30 November 2023

1 Progress on Portfolio Matters.

Benefits

Universal Credit (UC) managed migration

The Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) have now approved their migration plans for 2024/25. They will be notifying the remaining applicable households of the need to move to UC during this period, which includes residual tax credits cases (including those on both Employment Support Allowance and tax credits and Housing Benefit), all cases on Income Support and Jobseeker's Allowance (Income Based) and those combined with Housing Benefit and Housing Benefit only cases (except those Housing Benefit only customers living in Supported or Temporary Accommodation).

They plan to undertake the issuing of Migration Notices to Working Age benefit claimants sequentially starting with Income Support (April–June), Employment Support Allowance with Child tax credits (July – September) and Jobseekers Allowance (September). If a Housing Benefit customer is receiving one of these benefits, they will receive a Migration Notice from the DWP. From April the DWP will also invite tax credits with Housing Benefit and then Housing Benefit (only) customers to move onto UC.

To support Housing Benefit (HB) customers with the transition from HB to UC, we have set up a webpage providing important information on the process, where to get support, and how to calculate entitlement to UC.

We are also working closely with local job centres, and we will be identifying affected households to ensure they transition to UC smoothly.

Discretionary Housing Payments

We continue to administer Discretionary Housing Payments (DHP) to support tenancy sustainment, homelessness, and to support people to stay within the community. Cases are worked on as a panel which includes officers from the Benefits Team and Housing Options.

For 2023/24, North Norfolk has been allocated funding of £103,037, and up to 30th November 2023 we have spent 73.62% of our allocation across 84 households. A further total of 153 applications (141 households) have been refused as the circumstances of the household are outside the scope of the scheme. Where we have not been able to provide support through the DHP scheme, the team will consider other funding options and signpost the customer accordingly.

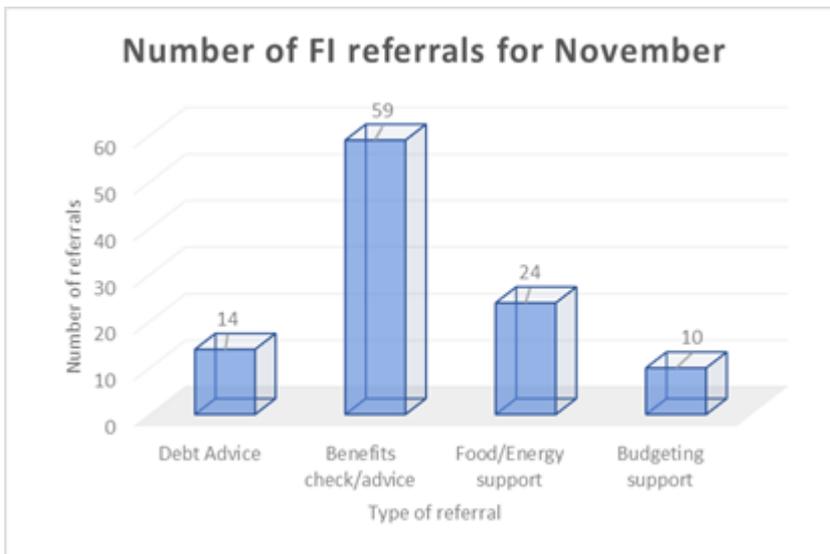
A breakdown of how the expenditure has been allocated across the 82 households can be seen below

Single Working Age Households		Couple Pension Age Households	
Number of successful applications	51	Number of successful applications	1
Rent Arrears	£3,033.11	Rent Arrears	£700.00
Rent Deposit/Moving Costs	£210.00	Rent Deposit/Moving Costs	£0.00
Ongoing Rent Shortfall	£45,971.77	Ongoing Rent Shortfall	£0.00
Sub Total Expenditure	£49,214.88	Sub Total Expenditure	£700.00
Single Pension Age Households		Family Working Age Households	
Number of successful applications	7	Number of successful applications	22
Rent Arrears	£0.00	Rent Arrears	£800.00
Rent Deposit/Moving Costs	£0.00	Rent Deposit/Moving Costs	£1,095.00
Ongoing Rent Shortfall	£2,559.76	Ongoing Rent Shortfall	£19,899.19
Sub Total Expenditure	£2,559.76	Sub Total Expenditure	£21,794.19
Couple Working Age Households		Family Pension Age Households	
Number of successful applications	3	Number of successful applications	0
Rent Arrears	£0.00	Rent Arrears	£0.00
Rent Deposit/Moving Costs	£0.00	Rent Deposit/Moving Costs	£0.00
Ongoing Rent Shortfall	£1,583.90	Ongoing Rent Shortfall	£0.00
Sub Total Expenditure	£1,583.90	Sub Total Expenditure	£0.00
		Total Expenditure	£75,852.73

We are continuing to use data insights to proactively target low-income households who have rent arrears, rent shortfalls, or who are at risk of homelessness.

Financial Inclusion

During November the Financial Inclusion Team received 107 referrals. Most referrals (55%) were received from residents requiring support with income maximisation through welfare benefits, grants, and other income support related schemes. A further 22% of referrals were from residents requiring support with food and energy.



From 1st November, we are working with Citizens Advice (CA) who are handling referrals into the Financial Inclusion Team around debt advice. The CA will be supporting the client on face-to-face basis where possible at the council offices.

Housing Benefit Speed of Processing

Our unpublished data for Housing Benefit Speed of Processing for November is 12 days for New Claims (local target 20 days) and 14 days for changes in circumstances (local target 14 days). We are continuing to review our processing times by reviewing best practice and procedures.

Housing Options and Homelessness Prevention

Your Choice Your Home

As at the 30 November there were **2475** households on the housing list with **562** (23%) being on the Housing Register – this register contains those qualifying applicants who have the most urgent housing needs.

	Housing List by Bedroom Need				Homes Let by Property Size 01 April to 31 October 2023			
	Housing Register	Housing Options	Transfer	Total	Housing Register	Housing Options	Transfer	Total
1 Bed	254	966	189	1409	62	3	4	69
2 Bed	126	371	97	594	68	2	3	73
3 Bed	87	103	39	229	11	0	1	12
4 Bed	88	87	43	218	1	0	0	1
5 Bed +	7	12	6	25	0	0	0	0
Total	562	1539	374	2475	142	5	8	155

Lettings in the last month slightly increased due to the completion/handover of 7 new Victory homes in Southrepps, these new homes attracted over 1,248 bids.

The overall number of lettings has decreased by 33% when compared to the same period in 2022 and we continue to see an increased need for family homes. Over 30% of the total homes had a minimum age requirement.

Households Assessed and Duty Owed

Our Housing Options Service offers advice to anyone who has a housing problem, and offers support and assistance if someone is homeless, or threatened with homelessness, within the next 56 days.

Approaches to the service remain high and between 01 April to 31 October 2023 we have opened 736 new cases. Each case represents a household who has contacted us as they have some sort of housing need, and we are still seeing an increase in homeless households (Relief cases) presenting to the Local Authority.

As at the 30 November 2023, there were 195 open cases. 141 households were initially assessed as threatened with or were homeless, of these 63 were households with children.

The three most common triggers of homelessness during the period were:

- The loss of a private tenancy
- Households no longer being able to stay with families and friends
- Domestic abuse

Temporary Accommodation

As at the 30 November 2023 there were 66 households in Temporary Accommodation.

- 30(45%) Family Households have dependent Children

- 34 (52%) Single Adult Households
- 2 (3%) Other Households (includes couples and households with older children)

These figures show a snapshot figure of the number of households in Temporary Accommodation as at 30 November 2023 and represent an overall increase of 16% from the same date in 2022.

The number of Households with dependent children has also increased by **13%** compared to November 2022. Included in the 30 family households, there are 66 dependent children.

Rough Sleeping

The nationwide annual rough sleeper count compiled by government take places every year with the most recent one being undertaken by North Norfolk District Council on the 29 November 2023. People sleeping rough were defined as those sleeping or about to bed down in open air locations and other places including tents and makeshift shelters. The snapshot can take place on a single date chosen by the local authority between 1 October to 30 November. The snapshot recorded only those people seen or thought to be sleeping rough on a single night and highlights that the number of rough sleepers in North Norfolk has consistently reduced since 2018, when there were 9 people sleeping rough. In 2021 this was more than halved down to 3, and in 2023 there was just 1-person rough sleeping.

2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
9	10	7	3	3	1

Annual Snapshot figures

During the month we have activated our Severe Weather Emergency Protocol (SWEP) and helped 9 people who were sleeping rough access emergency accommodation.

Housing Strategy

Local Authority Housing Fund

In the first round of funding government offered the Council up to £1,245,210 to provide 11 additional affordable homes in the district by December 2023 – initially to house Ukrainian and Afghan refugee households. Cabinet (on 6/3/23) agreed to accept the money and work with the Flagship Housing Group to deliver the 11 homes. We have identified 11 suitable properties and offers have been made and accepted on all 11. The Council will own one (purchase now complete) and Flagship will own the remaining 10.

The Council has accepted a further £560,000 of funding to provide four further homes. Three will initially house Afghan refugee households. The fourth will provide a home to house a homeless household. The Council has offers accepted on four properties and we expect all sales to complete by January 2024.

Long-term all 15 homes would be available to households on the Council's housing list, either as temporary accommodation for homeless households or as a long-term affordable home.

New Affordable Homes

We have a healthy affordable housing schemes pipeline, many of which are Rural Exception Housing Sites at various points in the development process. There are 20+ developments which will, subject to approvals, yield 350+ new Affordable Homes in the next few years. Nutrient Neutrality is a delaying factor for many sites. Officers have worked with Broadland Housing Association to get in-principle support from Homes England (the government's funding agency for affordable housing) to fund a package of five Exception sites in North Norfolk to be delivered over the next 2-3 years.

We anticipate completion of 27 affordable homes in 2023/24.

Grant for Energy Efficiency Improvement Works

North Norfolk District Council (NNDC) is part of the Norfolk Warm Homes Consortium of five Norfolk districts.

The consortium has been successful in a bid for £3,933,000 to improve the energy efficiency of 'off-gas' homes. Eligibility criteria for future grants has been simplified and will include any home within the most deprived areas in the UK (measured by the Government's Index of Multiple Deprivation income deciles 1-3) if privately owned or privately rented, provided the Energy Performance Certificate is rated D-G and the households has no more than £100k in savings. This will open up the grant to many more eligible households – across Norfolk there are 603 postcode areas covering 2,600 properties we believe meet the criteria and 23% of these are in North Norfolk.

The Council's Energy Officer working with Norfolk Warm Homes has been promoting the scheme in the Stalham area. The local community; Town Council, shop-keepers, schools, etc. have been very supportive and as a result Norfolk Warm Homes has had over 80 applications (as at 06/12/23). We plan to replicate this approach in other parts of the district in the New Year.

Integrated Housing Adaptations Team (IHAT)

Work has begun to roll out discretionary grants – the team have received a significant number of enquiries and referrals since October, and are now processing these, with work already underway on some projects.

The Disabled Facilities Grant webpage, how this is accessed and the information that is available to customers is being reviewed with an aim to improve the level of information available to customers who would like to 'self-serve' and simplify the ways in which customers can self-refer directly into IHAT for both DFG and a select few discretionary grants.

Disabled Facilities Grant

New contacts	46
YTD total Contacts	410
Total approved grants	13

Total approved grants value	£115,187.39
YTD Approval value	£815,529.27
Completed adaptations	5
Total spend for period	£38,340.76
YTD Completed cases	95
YTD Spend	£870,615.45

Discretionary Grants

New referrals	16
Completed grants	0
Completed grant value	0
YTD Spend	0

Community Connectors

On November 10th, the Government Chief Medical Officer released his annual report, 'Health in an ageing Society'. Both the North Norfolk Health and Wellbeing Partnership Older peoples group, and the Community Connector team received mentions.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/chief-medical-officers-annual-report-2023-health-in-an-ageing-society>

The Community Connectors, alongside their regular presence at community groups, warm spaces and other events, attended two sessions with the WOW bus, Recovery College's 10th anniversary event, Healthier North Walsham's Dementia Fair, a Town Council drop in session, markets and a Christmas light up event.

<https://www.poppylandradio.co.uk/shows/community-connectors> shows recorded covering the following topics:

- The Vault, Stalham
- Community Gyms

Social Prescribing

For November 2023, the statistical highlights are as follows:

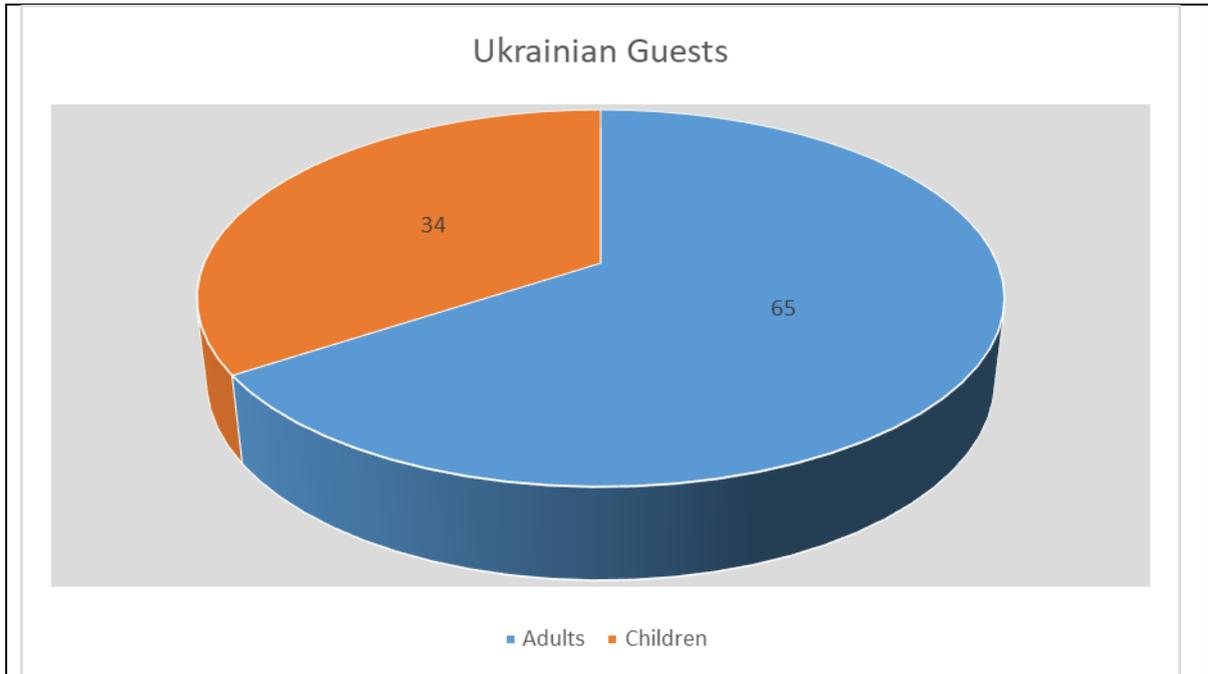
- **63** Referrals into Social Prescribing identifying **111** concerns
- **97** Active cases within the team
- **968** Referrals dealt with since Jan 2023
- **1655** concerns by residents supported since Jan 2023

The most prolific issues raised at the Early Help Hub have been financial abuse of vulnerable residents and hoarding cases with housing association tenants.

In addition to the regular Hub meetings, two professional meetings have been held in the last month to address complex cases.

Homes for Ukraine (H4U)

There are currently ninety-nine Ukrainian guests being supported in the North Norfolk, of which sixty-five are adults and thirty-four are under the age of eighteen.



There are thirty-five hosts, of which two are hosting two separate families/un-related single guests.

Two families are currently in NNDC temporary accommodation.

Grants

Sustainable Communities Fund: The panel met on the 4th of December 2023. Seven Applications were presented, of which three (totalling £10,579.00) were approved, and the remaining four were deferred pending further information (totalling £42,020.71).

Arts and Culture Fund: The panel met on the 27th of November 2023. Three applications were approved (totalling £7,700.00) and one was deferred pending further information (totalling £3435.00).

Community Transport Fund: The panel met on the 27th of November. Two applications were approved, totalling £40,000.00.

2 Forthcoming Activities and Developments.

3 Meetings attended

- Mundesley Parish Council Full Council
- “ “ “ Parking Meeting
- Community Lead Housing RSN
- Integrated Care Board Meeting at NNDC
- Seminar Rural Health and Care RSN
- North Walsham High School Awards Presentation Evening

- Dementia Awareness Fayre
- Shell Liaison Meeting
- Cabinet
- Business Planning
- Cabinet Pre-Agenda
- Portfolio holder catchup Housing
- Portfolio holder catchup Peoples' Services
- Bidwells Consultation Briefing
- North Walsham Development Briefing
- North Norfolk Health and Wellbeing Partnership – Chair
- North Norfolk Headway Collaboration Meeting
- Leeds Building Society Meeting

CABINET MEMBERS REPORT TO COUNCIL

20 December 2023

COUNCILLOR PAUL HEINRICH - CABINET MEMBER FOR SUSTAINABLE GROWTH

For the period November to December 2023

1 Progress on Portfolio Matters.

Funding and Programmes

Rural England Prosperity Fund

On 3 July NNDC launched the Rural Business and Communities Grant. This capital-only grant, funded by the Rural England Prosperity Fund, is intended to support the following activities (selected from the scheme developed by Government for this programme):

Businesses

- Small scale investment in micro and small enterprises in rural areas. Including capital funding for net zero infrastructure for rural businesses, and diversification of farm businesses, outside of agriculture, to encourage start up, expansion or scale-up of these businesses (where this involves converting farm buildings into other commercial or business uses).

Community groups

- Funding (capital grants) for investment in capacity building and infrastructure support for local civil society and community groups
- Funding (capital grants) for existing cultural, historic and heritage institutions that make up the local cultural heritage offer
- Funding (capital grants) for impactful volunteering and social action projects to develop social and human capital in local places.

The allocation for 2023/24 is £364,462.75 of which £335,975 of grants have been offered to-date, yielding a total project value of £742,661, with £405,563 of private investment generated in match funding. A strong pipeline of investments has been developed through to the next financial year.

UK Shared Prosperity Fund

The intention of the fund is to invest in local priorities, targeted towards a number of areas: building pride in place, supporting high quality skills training, supporting pay, employment and productivity growth and increasing life chances.

The following activities have now commenced:

- Support funding for new, or improvements to existing, community and neighbourhood infrastructure projects through the North Norfolk Sustainable Communities Fund;
- Work with Visit North Norfolk to develop a programme of support for local visitor economy businesses, including an additional staff resource to support this;
- Deliver the Go Digital programme to support business digitalisation (working with Norfolk County Council), and;
- Work with New Anglia Local Enterprise Partnership to deliver a business support and advice programme.

There has been a high take up from beneficiaries across the programmes and the budget for this financial year (£310,867) is fully committed.

Progress is also being made towards developing programmes for the next financial year, including:

- A package to support business decarbonisation, through audits, advice and funding;
- A programme to support skills development, and;
- A programme to support energy efficiency retrofit works for households in need in North Norfolk

North Walsham High Street Heritage Action Zone (HSHAZ)

Key updates:

- Safety audit remedial works have been completed in North Walsham Market Place and the street furniture items are finally in their permanent positions.
- With the Market Place and Shambles/Church approach work completed, the main focus is now on the Black Swan Loke area and Bank Loke.
- Led by a local artist and created by the local community, a mosaic has been completed and is ready for installation as part of the Black Swan Loke works.
- Ten Building Improvement Grants have been offered, with the works now largely completed on the majority.
- Signage and interpretation works have commenced with elements in Black Swan Loke, Bank Loke and Church Approach.

2 Forthcoming Activities and Developments.

- Holding a business engagement event in January in order to consult on the proposed budget, publicise the emerging Growth Strategies of NNDC and NCC and elicit responses from local businesses about the how they wish to engage with the Council
- Development and delivery of the UKSPF and REPF funds
- Finalisation and adoption of the first draft of the Economic Strategy
- Working with local stakeholders in Stalham to act on the recommendations of Stalham High Street Task Force team
- Final stages of the North Walsham HSHAZ place making, and settling the final account
- Undertaking the monitoring and evaluation (in accordance with the guidance from Historic England) of the HSHAZ and North Walsham Cultural Programme and closing down the programme of activities.

3 Meetings attended

Relevant meetings include:

Cabinet – including pre-agenda and business planning
Bacton H₂ project update
Rocket House technical briefing
Planning PFH meeting
HAZ Board
Council

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CABINET MEMBERS REPORT TO COUNCIL

20 December 2023

COUNCILLOR RINGER - CABINET MEMBER FOR IT, ENVIRONMENTAL AND WASTE SERVICES.

For the period November to December 2023

1 Progress on Portfolio Matters.

Environmental and Safety Services

The team working closely with Serco to drive improvements in waste and recycling collection performance. November has seen lowest missed collection figures of the year – 55% below the monthly average for 2023. Missed assisted collections are all down 60% on the 2023 monthly average. Leaflets delivered to every household advising of Christmas and New Year bin collection changes and promoting Christmas recycling message. North Norfolk District Council has now commissioned consultants to assess options for the introduction of food waste collections in North Norfolk and how we may achieve the highest performance and recycling rates. This work will be ongoing until around March/April 2024.

Nine more NNDC staff IOSH Managing Safely trained and passed both the theory and practical elements of the course. More departments can now introduce up to date risk assessments and manage staff safety for their own individual areas, with support from Corporate H&S.

A number of staff across the organisation have had PASMA Managers training which enables them to inspect mobile scaffolding towers, recognise issues and stop contractors and staff if necessary. This gives more individuals the ability to manage site safety.

Corporate H&S are playing an active part in advising Cromer Town Council on visitor, contractor and staff safety for the upcoming New Years Firework display off Cromer Pier.

Civil Contingencies

The winter weather has meant that the team have been busy over the past month in the co-ordination and preparation and response to Spring tides and matters arising along the coast, Overtopping at Potter Heigham, persistent flooding on the Broads and severe cold weather.

There is ongoing liaison with the Environment Agency and the Lead Local Flood Authority re flooding incidents which happened earlier in the autumn.

Public Protection

Both the licensing and food safety teams, are continuing to undertake

business as usual services, but response times are being impacted on by resourcing issues and a high work load. However, the team are still receiving compliments from businesses, especially new businesses where the early advice and guidance from a qualified Environmental Health Officer is invaluable.

Licensing have undertaken visits with the Police to licensed premises across the district, checking that licensing conditions are being met and random drug swabs have been taken too.

The team have been working to design a knowledge test for North Norfolk Taxi drivers and it is hoped that this will be completed before the end of December.

Environmental Protection

The team are currently preparing the annual air quality status report. This will be shared with members and placed on the website once complete. Earlier calculations and analysis provide a positive picture in terms of an overall improvement of air quality at some monitoring locations.

The team have acted as independent chair to a ASB case review for South Norfolk Broadland, this is the first one of the new process of using independent chairs across the county.

Team members attended the Maritime and Coastguard Agency training on the response to Oil spills and emergency planning.

The teams case load remains high but the improvement in staffing levels is starting to have an impact on reducing response times.

IT Infrastructure Team

- Networking equipment at both ends of the Council offices has been upgraded and tidied up.

- All servers have been moved from end-of-life operating systems to the latest version receiving security updates.

- Kaspersky virus software finally removed from all user devices and servers.

- Configuration of large screen & PC so Property Services can access key information on a wallboard in the office. This is so they can monitor outstanding jobs at a glance.

- Cyber Awareness
 - o Cyber simulation exercise – We sent a ‘fake’ phishing email to staff and members. 28 people entered their credentials which had it been real could have opened us up to a Cyber-attack.

 - o Second Cyber Awareness course pushed out for staff and Members – Phishing 101.

2 Forthcoming Activities and Developments.

IT Infrastructure Team

- Over the Xmas break the core network will be upgraded. There may be some down time but hopefully the work that is being put into the various DR scenarios will mean there is only a momentary break in service.

3 Meetings attended

Norfolk Waste Partnership

Joint Waste Contract Review and Development Board

Overview and Scrutiny

Regular meetings with officers with regard to portfolio matters

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CABINET MEMBERS REPORT TO COUNCIL

DECEMBER 2023

COUNCILLOR SHIRES - CABINET MEMBER FOR FINANCE, ASSETS AND PROPERTY SERVICES

For the period November to December 2023

1 Progress on Portfolio Matters.

Finance

- Budgets -
 - The first draft of the base budget 2024-25 and forecast to 2027-28 has been produced, this currently forecasts a deficit of £1.8m in 2024-25 rising to £5m in 2027-28.
 - Discussions have taken place with CLT and MT to discuss the position, savings bid forms have been sent to budget holders for completion by the 15th December.
- Audits -
 - In line with the Internal Audit Plan, several audits are taking place within the section this quarter, Accounts Payable, Accounts Receivable, Income and Accountancy.
- Statement of Accounts -
 - Work continues to be undertaken on the production of the outstanding Statements of Accounts, however we are still waiting the decision from government as to the approach to be taken by external auditors.

Revenues

- Collection as of 30 November 2023 -
 - The monthly Council Tax collection was 73.18% against target of 73.00%. An excess in collection to target of £167k.
 - The monthly NDR collection was 75.25% against target of 73.80%. An excess in collection to target of £356k.
- Energy Schemes Update
 - The Energy Bills Support Scheme Alternative Funding (EBSS AF)
 - This scheme is aimed at providing support to households not eligible for the automatic [Energy Bills Support Scheme GB](#) (£400 payment paid by energy suppliers).
- Alternative Fuel Payment (AFP)
 - This scheme is where payments are made of £200 to support households that use fuels other than gas to heat their homes.
- The above two schemes have been reconciled and sent to government to

verify.

- Government Consultations
 - We have submitted a government consultation regarding the 'Taking control of goods regulations'.
- Storm Babet
 - We have received information from the Senior Flood Risk Officer, working for Community and Environmental Services at Norfolk County Council that we have nine properties flooded in North Norfolk between 20 – 25 October 2023.
- Year-End/Annual Billing
 - The 2024/25 year-end/annual billing kick off meeting has been held including Revenues, Benefits, System Admin, IT and Customer Services/Print Room. This meeting discussed the changes expected going forward and initial timings of test and live dates.

Estates

- Vacant properties –
 - Planning consent for the Seaview premises and the Former Tennis Courts leases have gained planning consent.
 - Existing and new concession opportunities have been assessed and are being marketed through the Autumn/Winter for new licences from April 2024.
- Leases -
 - Desk space for Flagship at the Cromer office has completed.
 - Rent review increase and lease renewals for approx. 300 chalet and beach huts is in progress. The recent weather conditions has caused some damage to beach huts at Sheringham.
 - Negotiations continue regarding a lease renewal to North Walsham Football Club.
 - Discussions are ongoing with Marrams bowls club, Cromer regarding repair works to the building.
- Disposals –
 - Enabling land at Sheringham, continues to progress through the option agreement process.
 - Sale of a small parcel of land at Wells-next-the-Sea is nearing completion.
- Acquisitions –
 - 1 residential property for the Housing Team has completed in North Walsham and further 3 are nearing completion.
- Rocket House, technical briefing and site meeting for Members took place in November.

Property Services

- The public conveniences and bridge at the Leas Sheringham has been closed due to structural failure. Works to refurbish the right-hand side of the public conveniences have been stopped until repairs are undertaken.

- The tender returns for the Art Deco building, Red Lion tenanted units at Cromer and chalet roof repairs at Sheringham were not conclusive so works are to be instructed to the incumbent MTC using the change variation instruction.
- Replacement fire alarm system at Holt Road offices is on time and within budget.
- Collaborative working with Estates to undertake remedial works at the Reef, Sheringham is ongoing.
- Works to upgrade / replace fire doors at Holt Road offices will commence after Christmas.
- Evaluating and scoping repairs to the Marrams footpath
- Capital bids submitted for financial year 2024 – 2025.
- Cromer Pier substructure works are on time and within budget.

2 Forthcoming Activities and Developments.

Finance

- Training -
 - Mandatory finance training will take place on the 14th December, with all managers with budget responsibility required to attend.
- Recruitment -
 - An interim Head of Finance has been appointed and will start in December to assist the S151 fulfil her statutory duties.
 - The team were successful in recruiting into two vacant posts, Accountancy assistant and Finance officer, this will start to build much needed resource and resilience within the team and help us address outstanding internal audit recommendations.

Revenues

- Training/Development -
 - Ongoing internal training of three Level 3 Business Admin Certificated apprentices
 - External training for an officer studying towards the Diploma in Institute of Revenues, Rating & Valuation (IRRV)
 - Team leader studying towards the level 5 CMI management qualification.
- Service Improvements -
 - Online forms - reviewing and improving the most used customer paper forms including the Long-term empty property review forms as part of our Business Process Review of the current process.

- Reviewing and implementing service improvements suggested by staff including a direct debit online form to save NNDC paying capita for the current form provided on our webpages.
- Business Improvement Districts (BIDs) -
 - Working with Love Holt on their request to be the first Business Improvement Districts (BID) in North Norfolk. The start date is likely to be 1 April 2025.
 - The council tax discount paper for 2024/25 has been passed by Full Council on 22 November 2023 which includes reducing the 24-month empty property period to 12 months to charge an empty property premium from 1 April 2024. It also allows for a Second Home premium of 100% to be charged from 1 April 2025.

Estates

- Rent reviews and lease renewals for industrial units are to commence.
- Update of Asset Management Plan

Property Services

- Recruitment for a shared apprentice to cover PS, Housing Options, IHAT has been agreed and will start shortly.
- Cromer LED lighting tender phase 2 / 3 is due out early 2024.
- Working with NWHAZ to deliver Black Swan Loke, North Walsham. Hoping to commence works early 2024.
- Working with the Procurement Officer to issue a consultant contract early next year.

3 Meetings attended

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CABINET MEMBERS REPORT TO COUNCIL

20 December 2023

COUNCILLOR ADAM VARLEY CABINET MEMBER FOR CLIMATE CHANGE AND NET ZERO

For the period November to December 2023

1 Progress on Portfolio Matters.

Tree Give-away

The tree give-away event for residents was held at Sheringham Christmas Market on Saturday 9th December. These trees were provided from Norfolk County Council's one million tree project. There was also an opportunity to promote the Norfolk Warm Home grants.

Trees for Connectivity

Promotion is being done for Norfolk County Council's 'trees for connectivity' project which is targeting North Norfolk for further free and reduced-price tree packages. Residents can go onto the website and use the interactive map to see areas which are eligible for this scheme.

NCCP Net Zero Communities project

The Norfolk Climate Change Partnership Net Zero Communities project has been launched, with one community in each Norfolk local authority becoming the focus of activity. Our chosen community for North Norfolk is Stalham. The initiative seeks to explore the barriers communities and individuals face to reducing their carbon footprint, responding to climate challenges and identifying potential ways of overcoming them. Plans to develop the programme are currently being discussed with Stalham Town Council and other stakeholders.

Carbon Literacy training

A programme of carbon literacy training is being developed in-house and our commitment to delivering this course was repledged on international Climate Literacy Action Day. Training for all staff and elected members will commence in the New Year.

2 Forthcoming Activities and Developments.

Schemes are being established for the use UK Shared Prosperity Funding for energy efficiency and decarbonisation measures (including grants) for households and businesses

Works to better insulate the walls at the Cromer Council office are commencing.

A programme of consolidation of waste and recycling facilities at Cromer offices is being developed, with an associated information campaign, with the aim of reducing the waste generated and ensuring it is more efficiently collected.

Environmental tips of the week have been recorded for use on social media channels.

3 Meetings attended

Let's go electric event –“charging ahead” at Great Yarmouth

UK100 Parliamentary reception

UK100 Countryside Climate network

UK100 Climate Leaders final session

NCCP portfolio holders meeting

CABINET MEMBERS REPORT TO COUNCIL

20 December 2023

COUNCILLOR WITHINGTON - CABINET MEMBER FOR COMMUNITY OUTREACH AND LEISURE

For the period November to December 2023

1 Progress on Portfolio Matters.

Leisure Contract

Participation remains strong across the six facilities the most recent figures indicated that there were 43212 visits in October.

The final details are being finalised for the handing over of Stalham Sports Centre to the Synergy Trust to operate. The locality officer is working with Trust exploring the options and opportunities for community use and support.

Nearly £10 million pounds of funding for the Fakenham Sport and Leisure Hub has been announced in round 3 of the Governments the Levelling Up fund. The benefits to health and wellbeing of this improved facility at Fakenham including improvement gym provision, a swimming pool and 3G pitch will be far reaching across our communities in the west of the District.

Countryside

Team are working through their planned practical management work at all sites in line with our felling licences. These are issued by Forestry England and allow the team to manage the woodlands in line with our service objectives.

5 Christmas events are taking place at Holt Country Park this December – 2x wreath making workshops, a first ever Santa Paws event, which has sold out in advance and 2 days of traditional Santa Trails for families.

Beaches/RNLI

Water quality classifications were released on 1st December, and we are pleased to announce that East Runton has been upgraded back to 'Excellent'. This means that NNDC will be able to apply for four Blue Flag Awards and two Seaside Awards for 2024. Applications are due in by 22nd January. In order to apply for a seaside award the water quality at the location must be deemed to be of good quality, in order to apply for a blue flag the water quality must be deemed excellent. Both the seaside awards and blue flag are judged on a range of criteria which we must satisfy in

addition to the water quality, all sitting under the headings of Environmental Education and Information, Environmental Management, and Safety & Services

Markets

A Christmas market was held as an addition to the traditional Saturday market in Sheringham on December 9th. Designed to support all year-round traders by bringing new people to the site this 'bolt on' market. Publicity for this event was seen as very positive for the town. Traders despite the difficult weather conditions were also positive and looking to attend future themed markets. Stallholders also expressed an interest in becoming part of the regular market. Following the positive response to this event the Markets team will now look to the feasibility of developing a number of similar themed markets throughout 2024.

Foreshores

Recent storms and high tides have seen some of our promenades damaged. Steps and railings were damaged in Cromer and Sheringham, and some surface damage also occurred. The team have worked closely with Property Services to review and repair this damage.

Physical Activity Development

As part of Open Schools Fund all 9 schools are now delivering their programmes. These target Special Educational Needs and Disabilities, lower socio-economic groups, BAME and culturally diverse groups to enable them to be active.

Christmas Big Norfolk Holiday Fund (BNHF) will run on 21st & 22nd Dec, and 2nd & 3rd Jan, with 14 providers taking part in North Norfolk.

Summer figures for BNHF in relation to North Norfolk are now available and are as follows:

- Capacity (places available) 4342
- Places booked 3005
- Places attended 2465
- Number of BNHF children 867

Cromer 3G pitch project is progressing well with stage 3 of 7 now underway. Target date for application remains as October 2024.

Pier Pavilion Theatre

The Pier's strong year continues and following a successful summer the sales for Christmas are up 32% on the same time last year, and only 5% down on 2019.

This year's Christmas show runs from Nov 25th to Dec 30th, with shows resuming in February 2024.

3 Meetings attended

LSAP Dementia and the elderly
Norfolk Coastal Forum
Portfolio holder meetings : Leisure, Customer Service and ArtsCulture
and heritage
Visit North Norfolk Conference
Sheringham Sports Association
Experience Sheringham
Cromer Arts Space
Sheringham Little Theatre
Sheringham Christmas Market

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CABINET MEMBERS REPORT TO COUNCIL

20 December 2023

COUNCILLOR ELIZABETH WITHINGTON - CABINET MEMBER FOR COMMUNITY, LEISURE & OUTREACH

For the period November to December 2023

1 Progress on Portfolio Matters.

A wide variety of cultural activities continue to be held as part of the North Walsham Cultural Programme.

Britten Sinfonia two-day residency, which will include: concerts, drop in opportunities, an event at NW Library, as well as (non-public) outreach activities at local schools and care homes.

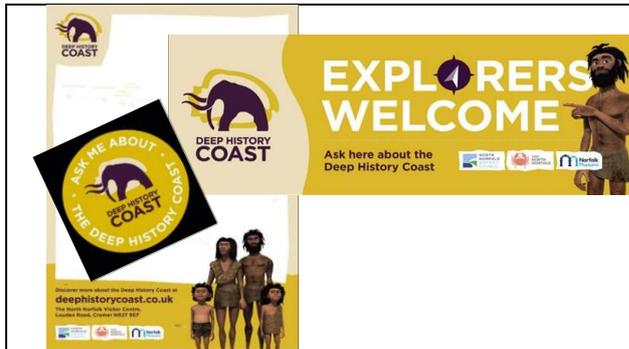
The following pop-up events and workshops have been promoted through the programme.



There will also be subsequent orchestral events throughout the District in early 2024. These include days in Sheringham/Cromer, Fakenham and Holt. These will be delivered in conjunction with community partners identified by the Community Connectors.

Tourism update

Visit North Norfolk (VNN) recently had a very successful networking event at Woodlands Holiday Park in Trimmingham, attended by approximately one hundred representatives of operators involved in the local visitor economy. Event feedback was good, with an excellent key note speaker (Insight 6) giving advice and lessons about the customer experience. It provided a great opportunity to promote the UKSPF amongst local businesses and participating



businesses were also given collateral to help continue the promotion of the Deep History Coast as 'experience makers'.

VNN informed participants of the impending promotion campaign at London Liverpool Street Station and also the developing campaign based on user generated content (UGC) for 2024.

VNN's latest marketing campaign video, Make a Break for the Outdoors, has gone live. It showcases winter in north Norfolk and will run until the end of February 2024. You can see the video on VNN's home page [here](#) (scroll down to the tiles under the Christmas video). All this marketing collateral is available for VNN members to download and use in their own marketing. The Christmas video is also on the VNN home page and being promoted for the increasing number of late bookers.

2 Forthcoming Activities and Developments.

There will be a series of orchestral events throughout the District in early 2024. These include days in Sheringham/Cromer, Fakenham and Holt, delivered in conjunction with community partners identified by the Council's Community Connectors.

The final events and activities in the North Walsham Cultural Programme will take place before the programme winds up in March 2024. Monitoring and evaluation of the effectiveness of the programme will be undertaken, in order to feed back to the funders (Historic England) and identify any lessons and legacy activities.

3 Meetings attended

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CABINET MEMBERS REPORT TO COUNCIL

20 December 2023

COUNCILLOR L WITHINGTON - CABINET MEMBER FOR OUTREACH

For the period November to December 2023

1 Progress on Portfolio Matters.

Customer Services

Like September and October, customer contacts for November reached over 7,000 customer enquiries coming into the Customer Services team. These customer enquiries come into the team via a variety of access channels. Below is a breakdown of the averages via channel for 2023.

Telephony – 59%
Face to face – 12.4%
Web Chats – 1.3%
Online Contact Us From – 3.5%
Email – 23.8%

In November over 200 customers completed our survey which resulted in the team continuing to deliver high levels of customer satisfaction. They achieved the following performance.

Helpfulness of the CSA – 93.42% Quite/Extremely Satisfied.
Advice provided – 92.11% Quite/Extremely Satisfied.
Ability to contact the Council – 91.23% Quite/Extremely Satisfied.
Overall experience – 92.11% Quite/Extremely Satisfied.

We can link all completed surveys to our contact centre, and therefore analyse the customer experience of any enquiry against the feedback received. A key area of this process is reviewing the negative feedback and identifying areas for improvement. Whilst there has been some useful negative feedback, we have found that in general, most negative feedback stems from our customers unhappy with a decision, rather than receiving poor service.

We continue to work with our developers in making improvements to our contact centre. Recent improvements have delivered an improved customer voicemail facility, which has streamlined the process for both customer and the team, resulting in a better customer experience. Future developments will include the use of SMS to provide customers with access to information and services, and the delivery of an improved customer appointment system.

There has been an agreed change in process with People Services, regarding the issuing of food and energy bank vouchers. Whereas previously Customer Services would issue these to customers upon request, the new process sees Customer Services complete a referral form capturing the customers circumstances before escalating this to the Financial Inclusion team. The new process aims to use deliver a more holistic approach of the support provided to residents, alleviate concerns of an increased demand against available funds, and help address the root causes of the financial hardship.

2 Forthcoming Activities and Developments.

As Christmas and the New Year are fast approaching, we are expecting our letters to start going out from Environmental Services to non-direct debit garden bin customers requesting payment for 2023/24 year's subscription. Historically we have seen this result in higher levels of customer contact especially over the telephone.

Work continues in training our chatbot 'Nelly', so it can help our residents answer their enquiries whilst we are closed over the Christmas holidays.

Our new receptionist has now completed her initial induction training and meeting team members from many different departments. Ellie will now be providing a warm welcome to everyone visiting the council.

Motion: Clean Water – Clean up Your Act

North Norfolk District council is concerned about the water quality and pollution of our beaches and waterways. This Council cares about ensuring the highest levels of water quality and seeks to hold Anglian Water and the Environment Agency to account.

- 1) Request the Leader of the Council write to the Chief Executive of Anglia Water and request the following:
 - a) Confirmation of when all combined sewage outflows (CSO) in North Norfolk will have monitoring equipment in place and in operation
 - b) The reporting of CSO discharges on a quarterly basis to the Council.
 - c) A detailed investment allocation plan for North Norfolk

- 2) Request the Leader of the Council write to the Environment Agency and request the following:
 - a) Greater transparency on their water quality readings
 - b) A guarantee that regular E. Coli testing will be undertaken & increased.
 - c) A guarantee that reactive DNA testing be undertaken
 - d) Information relating to collaborative works with agriculture partners

- 3) Request the Council undertake discussions with both Anglian Water and the Environment Agency to ensure that there is a review of the actions undertaken from the 19th March incident

- 4) The Leader of the Council to write to the Secretary of State for the Environment to request that funding to the Environment Agency is increased

Proposed: Cllr. Harry Blathwayt

Seconded: Cllr. Adam Varley

Further background information and detail.

Water quality is at the forefront of public consciousness and there are serious concerns in North Norfolk over the disregard for our beaches and waterways owing to the mismanagement of pumping stations and dumping of effluent by the water companies.

On 19th March 2023, a sewage pipe burst in Mundesley, and parts of the beach needed cordoning off due to fears of public safety. The loss of three of our important Blue Flag beaches also raises concerns for this council and many residents.

The district has 45 miles of coast line and many ecologically important waterways including parts of the Broads and the world-wide renowned chalk streams. We need to ensure that these can be protected to maintain North Norfolk's biodiversity, natural beauty and remain attractive to the visitors that sustain our tourist industry.

This council finds the actions of the water company and Environmental agency unacceptable and resolves to...

Motion: clean water – clean up your act

- 1) Request the Leader of the Council write to the Chief Executive of Anglia Water and request the following:
 - a) Confirmation of when all CSO in North Norfolk will have monitoring equipment in place and in operation
 - b) The reporting of CSO discharges on a quarterly basis to the Council. This will help identify discharges after heavy rainfall and during dry periods
 - c) A detailed investment allocation plan for North Norfolk, which identifies what percentage of Anglian Water's investment allocation has been spent in the last two years and is proposed, guarantying that these funds will go towards improvement works which will lead to a reduction in sewage discharge in North Norfolk waterways and improvements in water quality

- 2) Request the Leader of the Council write to the Environment Agency and request the following:
 - a) Greater transparency on their water quality readings to ensure it is clear where monitoring has not taken place at CSO points and show where discharges have taken place following heavy rainfall and in dry periods
 - b) A guarantee that regular E.coli (both agriculture and human waste) testing will be undertaken and this regime increased.
 - c) A guarantee that reactive DNA testing be undertaken
 - d) Information relating to collaborative works with agriculture partners such as the NFU

- 3) Request the Council undertake discussions with both Anglian Water and Environment Agency to ensure that there is a review of the actions undertaken from the 19th March incident. This review will formulate and shape a multi-faceted action plan for any future issues.

- 4) The Leader of the Council to write to the Secretary of State for the Environment to request that funding to the Environment Agency is increased because of the need to increase the testing regime. This needs to be at a level where the necessary monitoring of the water companies, water flows and CSO and pollution incidents is comprehensive enough to be able to hold water companies to account. This is particularly important due to Climate Change, increased rainfall and issues we've seen with combined sewage outflows.