

# Overview & Scrutiny Committee



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Tuesday, 8 October 2024

A meeting of the **Overview & Scrutiny Committee** of North Norfolk District Council will be held in the **Council Chamber - Council Offices** on **Wednesday, 16 October 2024** at **9.30 am**.

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 notify the committee clerk 24 hours in advance of the meeting and arrive at least 15 minutes before the start of the meeting. 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 516047, Email: [neil.white@north-norfolk.gov.uk](mailto:neil.white@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 must 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 Committee members will be given priority to speak during the debate of agenda items

**Emma Denny**  
**Democratic Services Manager**

**To:** Cllr N Dixon, Cllr S Penfold, Cllr P Bailey, Cllr M Batey, Cllr J Boyle, Cllr C Cushing, Cllr A Fletcher, Cllr M Hankins, Cllr P Heinrich, Cllr V Holliday, Cllr N Housden and Cllr L Vickers

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

**Chief Executive:** Steve Blatch  
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## A G E N D A

- 1. TO RECEIVE APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**
- 2. SUBSTITUTES**
- 3. PUBLIC QUESTIONS & STATEMENTS**

To receive questions / statements from the public, if any.
- 4. MINUTES** 1 - 10

To approve as a correct record the minutes of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 20 September 2024.
- 5. 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.
- 6. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST** 11 - 16

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.
- 7. PETITIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC**

To consider any petitions received from members of the public.
- 8. CONSIDERATION OF ANY MATTER REFERRED TO THE COMMITTEE BY A MEMBER**

To consider any requests made by non-executive Members of the Council, submitted to the Democratic Services Manager with seven clear working days' notice, to include an item on the agenda of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.
- 9. RESPONSES OF THE COUNCIL OR THE CABINET TO THE COMMITTEE'S REPORTS OR RECOMMENDATIONS** 17 - 20

To consider any responses of the Council or the Cabinet to the Committee's reports or recommendations:
- 10. CAR PARK FEES & CHARGES** 21 - 38

To consider a report from the Director of Resources on the Council's current car park fees and charges and on a number of options for new charges in the 2025/26 Financial Year.

Proposed time 45 minutes
- 11. BEACH HUT AND CHALETS SERVICE** 39 - 60

To consider an annual review of the Beach Huts and Chalets service, for a 12-month period between 2023/24 and 2024/25.

Proposed time 45 minutes

**12. PLANNING SERVICE IMPROVEMENT PLAN UPDATE** 61 - 74

To consider a report from the Director for Place and Climate Change that provides an update on the progress towards the completion of the Council's Planning Service Improvement Plan.

Proposed time 30 minutes

**13. OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME AND UPDATE** 75 - 108

To receive an update from the Scrutiny Officer on progress made with topics on its agreed work programme, training updates and to receive any further information which Members may have requested at a previous meeting.

Proposed time 30 minutes

**14. EXCLUSION OF THE 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 items of business on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph \_ of Part I of Schedule 12A (as amended) to the Act.”

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## OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee held on Friday, 20 September 2024 in the Council Chamber - Council Offices at 9.30 am

**Committee** Cllr S Penfold (Vice-Chairman in the Chair)

**Members Present:**

Cllr M Batey  
Cllr P Bailey  
Cllr J Boyle  
Cllr C Cushing  
Cllr A Fletcher  
Cllr M Hankins  
Cllr P Heinrich  
Cllr V Holliday  
Cllr N Housden  
Cllr L Vickers

**Members also attending:** Cllr T Adams, Cllr A Brown, Cllr W Fredericks, Cllr L Shires

**Officers in Attendance:** Chief Executive, Director for Communities and Solicitor

### 182 SUBSTITUTES

There were no substitutes at the meeting.

### 183 APOLOGIES

An apology for absence was submitted by Councillor Nigel Dixon.

### 184 PUBLIC QUESTIONS & STATEMENTS

There were none received.

### 185 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on held on 17 July 2024 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

### 186 ITEMS OF URGENT BUSINESS

None received.

### 187 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None received.

### 188 PETITIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

None received.

**189 CONSIDERATION OF ANY MATTER REFERRED TO THE COMMITTEE BY A MEMBER**

None received.

**190 RESPONSES OF THE COUNCIL OR THE CABINET TO THE COMMITTEE'S REPORTS OR RECOMMENDATIONS**

The Committee noted the current tracker of its recommendations to the Cabinet.

**191 BUDGET MONITORING P4 2024/25**

Councillor Bailey asked what the £350k underspend in employee costs in the Place and Climate Change consisted of. The CEX advised that the underspend was in the current financial year and Appendix A was the officer suggestion for savings as the current position in quarter 4.

Councillor Cushing asked if the Council had been able to manage with these vacancies do the posts still need to exist. Councillor Shires advised that there were service reviews being undertaken and that would be one of the questions that would be asked.

Councillor Holliday asked what is the effect of the outcomes being received on the residents of these vacant posts. The CEX stated that was being worked on at the moment by officers and the Cabinet some of which may not be permanent posts and an appraisal is undertaken on the effect of the removal of a post when it becomes vacant.

Councillor Boyle asked about the ongoing costs of paying agency staff to fill vacant posts. Councillor Shires advised that the agency fees were for the finance department. The CEX stated that the agency arrangements for the deputy Section 151 officer post would end in October.

Councillor Housden asked if the Council was being compromised by the number of vacant posts. Councillor Penfold added where there was a point at which it tipped to affect the delivery of services.

The CEX advised that the recruitment challenges had changed across services over time and some of those were national shortages. Performance in some services were good compared to other authorities but there remained recruitment issues in some services.

Councillor Penfold asked about the progress on getting donations and advertising income for Pier and Car Parks. Councillor Shires stated that the Estates Team were working on this for a more commercially based approach as referenced by the recent Corporate Peer Review recommendations.

Councillor Bailey asked if was possible to have a snapshot of the Council's investments and to look at the Council's best practise. The Democratic Services (Scrutiny) Officer advised that the Treasury Management Strategy ought to go to the Governance, Risk and Audit Committee.

Councillor Hankins commented that the council needed to borrow money to bridge the gap with the Parish and Town Council precept and the income and expenditure

were not synchronised and asked what was the prospect of this changing.

Councillor Shires stated that the council paid the precept up front and would ask the Director of Resources to provide a written response on the level of borrowing the Council needs to cover this.

Councillor Cushing asked if the council borrowed £8m internally to pay for the work on the Reef and Refuse Freighters does this mean the council has to find another £8m to put back into the reserves. The Director of Resources was asked to provide a written response on this.

Councillor Holliday asked whether it was possible to spend the £150,000 earmarked in the capital programme for the Public Conveniences Energy Efficiencies for the provision of temporary accommodation instead. This would create revenue savings that could then be put into public toilets.

Councillor Shires advised that this scheme was to create savings in the council's existing public toilets but would investigate and provide a written response.

Councillor Penfold asked if the Meadow Road Car Park, Cromer extension scheme was an invest to save scheme as it would provide additional revenue when completed. Councillor Shires advised that this would be for car parks across the district rather than just Meadow Road.

Councillor Cushing commented that it would be good as the budget cycle moved forward to understand what elements of the capital programme were externally funded.

Councillor Cushing asked if the Council having to collect kitchen waste in 2026 was factored into the budget. The Director of Communities advised that mandatory food collection was in last year's Environment Act, but the secondary legislation had been delayed due to the general election. The expectation was for this to come into effect for April 2026 and some capital funding has already been received by the Council was that was seen as not been sufficient to match the council's costs. There was also some revenue funding expected as this was a new burden but that had not been announced by the Government yet.

Recommended that –

**(A) The Governance, Risk and Audit Committee be requested to consider the Council's Treasury Management Strategy at its next meeting,**

**(B) the Director of Resources be requested to provide a written response on**

**(1) on whether the Parish and Town Council precept payment could be synchronised so that the income and expenditure did not result in the Council having to borrow money to do this to include how much this currently costs the Council**

**(2) on how the Council will cover the £8m internal borrowing to pay for the work on the Reef and Refuse Freighters, and**

**(3) whether changing the £150,000 earmarked in the capital programme for the Public Conveniences Energy Efficiencies to instead providing for additional new temporary accommodation instead would result in greater revenue**

## **savings that could be spent on the public toilets**

### **192 HOMELESSNESS TASK AND FINISH GROUP**

Councillor Holliday, the Chair of the Task and Finish Group, advised the committee that on 31 August 2024 there were 2,369 households on the council waiting list with 488 having the most urgent housing need with only 136 houses let. There were 53 households in temporary accommodation. The Council received a forecasted net subsidy of £6.5million for 2024/5.

Councillor Holliday stated that the Task and Finish Group (TFG) sought to find the widest possible interventions to prevent and reduce homelessness as well as solutions to relieve homelessness.

Councillor Vickers asked why the recommendation of working with the registered providers to reduce tenancy fraud had not been put forward by the TFG. Councillor Holliday stated that there was some data from Victory Homes and there a question on whether that data that it was the highest in North Norfolk correlated to what the council understood.

Councillor Fletcher asked whether the costs of the vetting of the Cornwall scheme that matched younger residents who need accommodation into a home with an older resident(s) that needed assistance would outweigh its benefits.

Councillor Holliday advised that Cornwall were a higher tier authority so could do the assessments needed more easily but had achieved 50 or 60 supported people through the scheme.

Councillor Shires added that it might be worth talking to Norfolk County Council on their Housing for Carers scheme.

Councillor Penfold referred to the recommendation on the potential of a pilot scheme that moves out the perpetrator in domestic abuse cases rather than the victim and asked whether it was being trailed elsewhere. Councillor Holliday confirmed that it had been.

Councillor Holliday added that the Domestic Abuse Charities had indicated that they would like to work more closely with the Council to provide greater support to victims at an earlier stage.

Councillor Hankins commented in respect of communication with Parish and Town Councils on Domestic Abuse that he felt the Councils knew of the data in their areas but were unsure what to do with it and a checklist from the council of how they could help would be useful and how to raise it with their communities.

Councillor Housden stated that homelessness and housing supply was a wider problem there was a recommendation on empty shop buildings being converted to accommodation. Town and Parish Councils could help with long term empty properties, some landowners would be happy to take pods. Giving a portfolio of options to the Councils was needed.

Councillor Housden added that it was a matter of discussing with people and that the pressures on homelessness were going to grow and the Council needed solutions and to engage with communities to build the right message and address preconceptions that were inaccurate.



Councillor Fredericks asked Councillors to go out and talk to their local communities and spread the message on homelessness and what can be done. It is their residents who are homeless.

Councillor Holliday advised that the Campaign for Rural England had suggested Homes for Local People was a good phrase and all neighbourhood plans should include exception sites were all background to the TFG recommendations.

Councillor Heinrich advised that on planning applications that were objections on rural exception sites and Home for Local People would be better received and may reduce objections. The Council needs to sell idea to Parishes that it is about local people.

Councillor Heinrich added that a number of shop conversions were happening in North Walsham and need to watch the consequences of removing Section 21 notices in the private rental market. He would like to see the recommendations moved into a priority order that showed what was achievable in the short, medium and long term.

Councillor Boyle advised that the TFG and spoken to the Landlords Association and there was deep concern about the dwindling number of landlords and the landlords with one property will find it too challenging.

Councillor Vickers added that the Association had offered to host a forum and the Campaign for Rural England had offered to host a conference about Local Homes for Local People at their own cost, but that recommendation had been changed. It would be a good opportunity to talk to the local communities.

Councillor Holliday commented that a Conference that had a wide range of people to give expert advice on housing would be different to a Town and Parish Council Forum. A Landlords Forum would help those people who were uncertain about what was involved and would be able to get the help they needed.

Councillor Housden stated that the Private Rental Legislation needed changing but there was an opportunity to get the right people in the room to discuss the way forward. The TFG has a basket of recommendations that were operable, and the Council needed to get on with them.

The Democratic Services (Scrutiny) Officer advised that the TFG had considered the Council's draft Housing Strategy and Housing Allocations Policy before making its final recommendations.

Councillor Brown advised Government consultation on changes to the National Planning Policy Framework on the definition of affordability that as the Planning Portfolio Holder, he would in conjunction with the Assistant Director be framing the Council's response which will go in next week.

Councillor Brown stated that the Council now had six neighbourhood Plans with three more in the pipeline. However, staff had been lost in the Planning Policy team who dealt with neighbourhood planning and would need to look at resources if the council is to encourage more of these plans.

Councillor Brown added in respect of how to increase engagement with the Town and Parish Councils on the number of long-term empty properties in their areas that could be achieved either by local Councillors going to Parish Councils.

## **Recommendations that the Council**

### **(A) To prevent homelessness**

expands its homelessness service prevention work to undertake such work at an earlier stage along with multi agency support, on an invest to save basis, to seek to reduce the number of people going into temporary accommodation and the costs of that to the council that should include

- 1. increasing the awareness and risks of homelessness in the local communities, on the value of prevention for homelessness and that early intervention requires people to ask for help before it becomes too late**
- 2. increasing its communication work which should include Parish and Town Councils and should also provide support to Councillors to enable them to help signpost those people who need housing help**
- 3. increasing the range of interventions to help people especially on benefit support and with financial viability assessments**

### **(B) Managing homelessness**

Explores how it uses partner, charity, and voluntary organisations to create a series of outreach hubs and front-line services in North Norfolk for homelessness to create a network of advice and support including appropriate partner organisation(s)

### **(C) Housing allocation**

Considers the viability of a support match scheme to match younger residents who need accommodation into a home with an older resident(s) that needs assistance in a similar way to the scheme in Cornwall [Supportmatch Homeshare - Cornwall Council](#)

### **(D) Increase housing supply**

- 1. Continues to encourage its Councillors to work within their local communities to seek to find additional plots of land that can be used for new affordable housing schemes**
- 2. As a medium-term solution looks at setting up an investment partnership to provide affordable local housing for local people at social, discount and market rent. We would recommend the model used by Cambridge City Council and Gravesham Borough Council who set an investment partnership with the Hill Group on a 50:50 basis**
- 3. Explores the use of Solo Haus one bed housing where additional temporary accommodation for single people is required**

### **(E) Increase affordable house building/supply**

- 1. Undertakes an audit of shop fronts away from primary retail areas and empty units above and behind shops to assess their potential for conversion to residential usage or renting out rooms**

2. An affordable housing conference be set up to encourage Parish and Town councils to create neighbourhood plans that include allocations for community led development for local people and encourages community land trusts to come forward with affordable schemes in rural exception sites
3. Continues to seek from Norfolk County Council a minimum 50% return of the extra Council tax that will be received from the new extra second homes premium and that the money the Council receives is ringfenced for affordable housing
4. Responds to the Government consultation on changes to the National Planning Policy Framework on the definition of affordability
5. Explores the potential to use Better Society Capital/National Homelessness Property fund 2 funding for 3-to-4-bedroom properties  
[National Homelessness Property fund 2 | Better Society Capital](#)

**(F) Increase/sustain Private rental tenancies**

1. Explores the model of using a local estate agency to set up a Council letting agency and also looks at whether homelessness prevention grant could be used to bring empty properties back into use
2. Encourages the new government to continue the previous government's work on introducing an appropriate licencing scheme for all short-term lets
3. Continues to engage proactively with private landlords and considers whether setting up a Landlords Forum would be beneficial with an introductory conference type session including mortgage brokers, lenders, insurance companies as well as landlords and housing associations to explore solutions to the issues Landlords are experiencing

**(G) Reducing Long Term Empty Homes**

1. Continues to have an Empty Homes Officer as a permanent role
2. Considers how to increase engagement with the Town and Parish Councils on the number of long-term empty properties in their areas
3. Continues to investigate whether funding could be found to refurbish empty properties for people in housing need

**(H) Sustain social tenancies**

1. Continues to investigate with registered providers on the reuse of sheltered housing and to seek fewer age designated homes
2. Continues to have a strategic discussion with the registered providers on potential disposals that may occur over the next few years
3. Encourages registered providers to ensure sufficient target hardening is provided in Domestic Abuse cases

**(I) Prevention of/provision for victims of Domestic Abuse**

**1. Explores how partner organisations can be used to help with homelessness prevention especially in domestic abuse cases that would include tenancy support by the Registered Providers and spreading awareness to Parish and Town Councils and Councillors**

**2. Asks the new Norfolk Police and Crime Commissioner whether the offer of scoping out a pilot that moves out the perpetrator in domestic abuse cases rather than the victim is still valid**

**193 REPORTING PROGRESS IMPLEMENTING CORPORATE PLAN 2023-27 DELIVERY AGAINST ACTION PLAN 2023-24 AND ACTION PLAN 2024-25 - TO END OF QUARTER 1 - 30 JUNE 2024**

Councillor Adams, Leader of the Council, updated the Committee on changes between the 2023/4 Action Plan and the Quarter 1 2024/25 Action Plan. Councillor Adams was satisfied with the progress on the 2023/24 Plan.

Councillor Cushing commented that it would be useful to have delivery date targets for each action to assess the progress on each item. The report said that 10 actions in the 2023-24 Action Plan had been completed with 18 carried forward but this was difficult to judge without delivery dates.

Councillor Cushing added that he would expect to see more a mix of Red, Amber and Green actions in the plan and there was lot of green in this plan which might raise questions about how the RAG status is being assessed.

Councillor Adams advised that it was planned to meet and review the assessments, but it was the target to complete actions within the year. He would take away the comments about the delivery dates.

Councillor Penfold asked what methodology was being used to make the assessments and whether it was a common one or was it down to the individual lead officers.

Councillor Adams stated that Cabinet did challenge the RAG assessments. Green was on target or delivered, Amber was not on target but intention to deliver a different way or slightly delayed with Red not on target. White indicated work hasn't started. The commentary was as important as the RAG status.

Councillor Penfold referred to the action Produce and publish a Rural Strategy and Action Plan by June 2024 which had a commentary of Initial scoping discussions held yet was marked as Green and should be an Amber.

Councillor Adams advised that there would be a focussed look at the RAG assessments including that one which would be report back to the committee.

Councillor Holliday asked about how actions were carried forward on achieving external funding and the take up of benefits and how they were assessed when circumstances changed from one year to the next.

Councillor Adams confirmed that there had been £1.2m received of additional benefit payments for residents which was a huge level of achievement but the changes to Winter Fuel Payment would change that focus but it was right that they remain a priority albeit with a bit more of a focussed approach.

The Chief Executive (CEX) advised that the Corporate Plan was aspirational and sought to match the manifesto commitments of the administration with the resources that were available to the council and was not a performance report. Officers had advised that annual action plan would enable accountability about when things might happen. He added that the Council was a very small organisation facing an increased demand for its services.

Councillor Heinrich asked what were the success criteria for the actions and it would be useful to have a couple of bullet points at the end of an action to illustrate how successful it has been.

Councillor Housden queried what the protracted discussions with stakeholders were in relation to the provision of a banking hub.

The CEX advised that the Council had contacted the LINK group about creating a bank hub in Holt and Stalham initially but were only facilitating this rather than directly providing it. Cash Access were seeking a property for a hub but may use the Town Council for a model different to the national one. In Fakenham and North Walsham, the Council was looking at ways to speed up the process.

Councillor Housden asked whether it had a place in the report and if some of it was out of the council's hands and was down to external organisations. Councillor Adams stated that it should as the council was a key partner in assuring it happened and there may be some tangible actions for the council in the upcoming months.

Councillors Cushing asked about the RAG assessment of the Fakenham Leisure and Sports Hub proposal as it was a key priority. Councillor Adams commented that the Council was awaiting the Government's decision.

**Recommended that - more detailed information be provided within the action plan that would include delivery dates where possible and success criteria to give a greater understanding of the progress being made against each of the RAG targets**

## **194 OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME AND UPDATE**

Councillor Holliday advised that she had done a Freedom of Interest request on the number of people who were going to get Dental treatment and there was provision in Fakenham and the figures were significantly less when compared to Norwich and were unacceptable.

Councillor Boyle agreed and highlighted that the practise in Fakenham wasn't in the report considered by the Norfolk Health Overview Scrutiny Committee.

Councillor Brown asked if the loss of the devolution deal meant the dental school proposals would not go ahead. Councillor Boyle commented that there were a number of options being considered and there was strong support for a dental school.

Councillor Penfold asked how the North Norfolk Profile Indicators would fit in with the other reports that came to the committee. The Director of Communities (DoC) stated that they would sit alongside the existing performance reports and would be indicators that would consider North Norfolk as a whole rather than the council's performance for example housing data that could indicate the likely future risk of homelessness.

Councillor Housden asked if the indicators would look at influencing factors in Norfolk that would have wider effects. The DoC advised that this was looking at data sets and trends and you could look at wider indicators and picture including comparative information.

Councillor Holliday asked about how the Performance and Productivity Oversight Board intended to work whether that would be with a contextual approach or a traditional performance management approach. The DoC advised that the Board has only just started and there was a lot of work needed to do. There was still an opportunity to further mould the board's terms of reference.

The DoC added that the aim was to make the indicators that were used to be beneficial to the Council and could give an indication of a potential direction of travel for the Council to recommend to the Cabinet.

The Democratic Services (Scrutiny) Officer advised that there was a workshop planned to consider the indicators on the afternoon of 9 October and as the outstanding recommendation from the committee's workshop in May to undertake some questioning training had yet to be done this would be a chance to undertake that training prior to the workshop.

**Resolved – that a workshop be held on 9 October PM to consider some North Norfolk Profile Indicators and to undertake some questioning training,**

**195 EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC**

None

The meeting ended at 12.25 pm.

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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](#).

<b>Subject</b>	<b>Description</b>
<b>Employment, office, trade, profession or vocation</b>	Any employment, office, trade, profession or vocation carried on for profit or gain. [Any unpaid directorship.]
<b>Sponsorship</b>	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.
<b>Contracts</b>	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>
<b>Land and Property</b>	<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>
<b>Licenses</b>	<p>Any licence (alone or jointly with others) to occupy land in the area of the council for a month or longer</p>
<b>Corporate tenancies</b>	<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>
<b>Securities</b>	<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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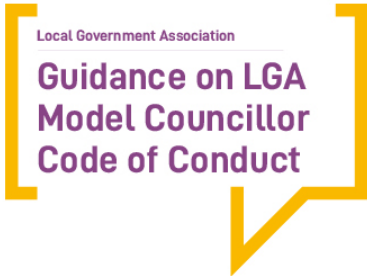
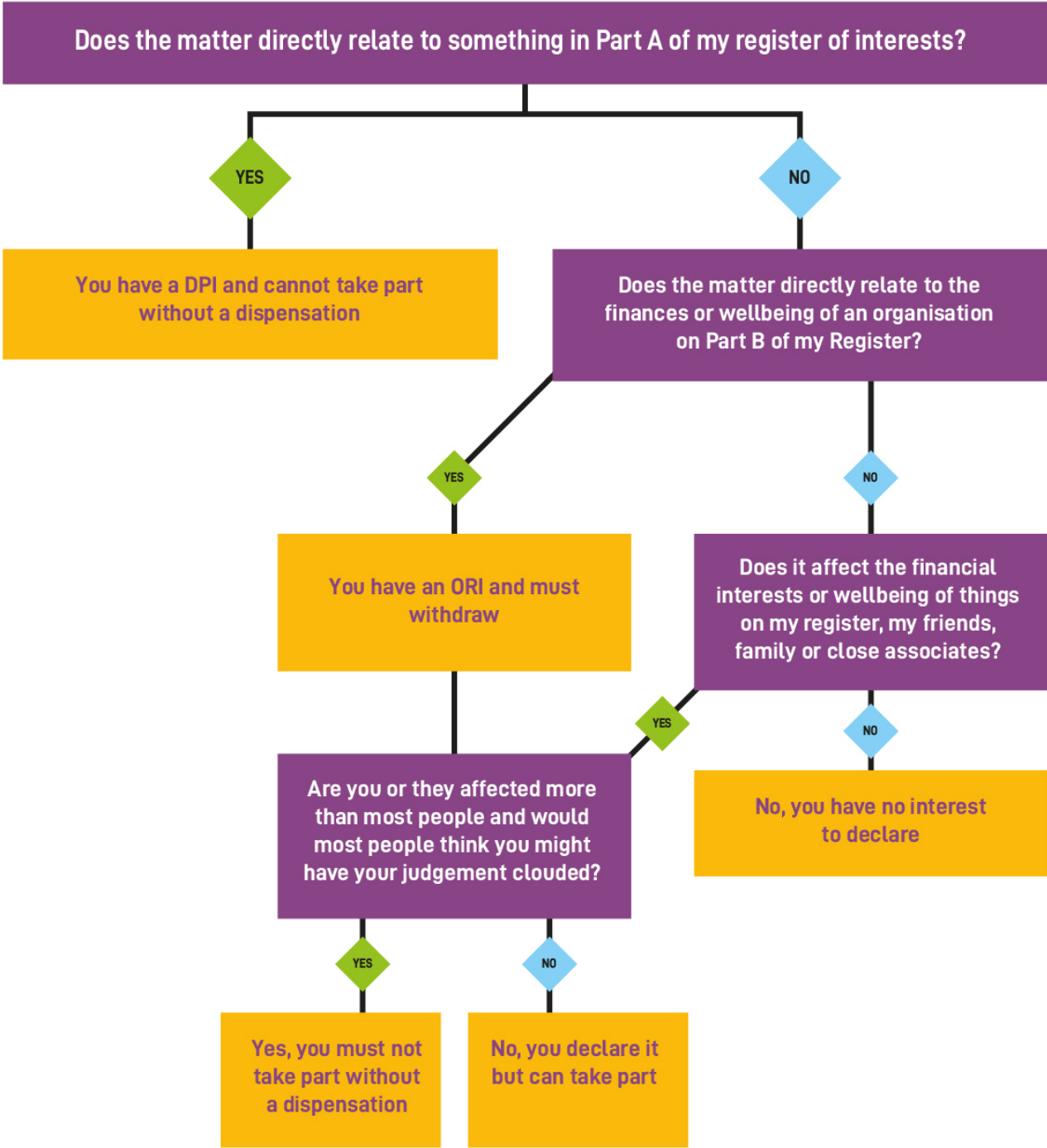
\* 'director' includes a member of the committee of management of an industrial and provident society.

\* '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**

You have a personal interest in any business of your authority where it relates to or is likely to affect:

- 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
  - (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)



**North Norfolk District Council**

**Overview and Scrutiny Committee Recommendations Tracker**

Ref	Scrutiny Recommendation	Decision Maker	Decision	Implemented	Outcomes Achieved
24/01/24 Draft Revenue Budget for 2024/25	(A) council's budget monitoring to include the expected level income streams within the council budget should be reported in future to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, and  (B) the Director of Resources be requested to produce at the start of the new financial year a timetable that sets out the key events as the budget is developed throughout the year such as which committee meetings it will be reported to and periods of public consultation.	Cabinet	Agreed		The timetable is being worked on
24/01/24 Peer Review – Action Plan	(A) the Overview and Scrutiny Committee agrees that the Peer Review Action Plan be presented to Cabinet for agreement and adoption, and  (B) a report be submitted to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee following the Local Government's Association revisit to the Council on the progress that had been on the changes proposed within the Action Plan.	Cabinet	Agreed		Peer review team revisiting end of July
14/02/24 Local Economic Strategy	(A) that an appendix to the full strategy and action plan be produced to show all the different sectors to the economy in North Norfolk and when available information be provided in the document that sets out the value of each sector to the local economy, and	Cabinet	Agreed		Further work being done on the strategy

	(B) the strategy part is extracted from the full document into a shorter summary form that could be more quickly read.				
14/02/24 Food Waste	Full Council be requested to agree to write a letter to Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs setting out the evidence associated with the shortfall in allocation and the anticipated capital costs that the Council will incur in relation to food waste collection.	Full Council	Agreed		
20/03/24 Net Zero	All reports to the Council's decision-making bodies should include a section on net zero impact so that a change in the carbon footprint is highlighted and explained.	Cabinet	Agreed	Yes	Work is ongoing to strengthen and improve this section within committee reports.
19/04/24 Water Summit	The Cabinet provide advice on what it would like the Council to take forward on water issues following the East of England Water Summit	Cabinet	It was not Cabinet's place to set the direction for Overview & Scrutiny Committee but that lots of pointers had been raised regarding the key players that should be involved.		A Water summit is on the committee's work plan
17/07/24 East Of England Ambulance Service NHS Trust	The Council  (A) Request the East of England Ambulance Trust to provide  (1) the mapping of Community First Responders in North Norfolk to establish where any gaps in the numbers of volunteers are	Cabinet 9 Sept	Agreed		

	<p>(2) communication materials for members of the council to use when talking to their respective Parish and Town Councils about the co-responding and the role of Community First Responders</p> <p>(B) the Council</p> <p>(1) works with the Norfolk Ambulance Trust to help promote its Campaign on Community First Responders and co responding by signposting members of the public towards the Ambulance Trust’s Community First Responders <a href="https://www.eastamb.nhs.uk/join-the-team/volunteering-and-volunteers/community-first-responders">https://www.eastamb.nhs.uk/join-the-team/volunteering-and-volunteers/community-first-responders</a></p> <p>(2) encourages the members of the council to talk to their respective Parish and Town Councils on the importance of the work being done by Community First Responders with the aim of increasing the understanding of these roles and seeking to achieve more volunteers to apply for these roles.</p>				
17/07/24 North Walsham High Street Heritage Action Zone initiative	To update the Overview & Scrutiny Committee in 12 months’ time on the impact of the North Walsham High Street Heritage Action Zone initiative and learning from this, to establish a set of evaluation criteria, including baselines, that can then be used for similar projects in other towns in North Norfolk	Cabinet 9 Sept	Agreed		

20/09/2024 Budget Monitoring	The Governance, Risk and Audit Committee be requested to consider the Council's Treasury Management Strategy at its next meeting,	GRAC			
20/09/2024 Homeless ss TFG	TFG Recommendations A to I	Cabinet	Agreed		
20/09/2024 Corporate Plan Reporting	More detailed information be provided within the action plan that would include delivery dates where possible and success criteria to give a greater understanding of the progress being made against each of the RAG targets	Cabinet	Agreed		



<b>Car Park Fees &amp; Charges</b>	
<b>Executive Summary</b>	<p>The hourly Car Park charges were last increased in July 2022. The season tickets prices have not been increased since 2016 when there was only a small increase to the charges. Prior to that they had not been increased since 2009. It is now considered that it is an appropriate time to review the charges for all our car parks and ticket types.</p> <p>The Council operates its car parks with 3 different rates which are dependent on where the car park is located. There is the standard rate for the inland car parks (mainly used by our residents), the resort rate for the car parks located in our resorts but not alongside the beaches and the coastal rate for the car parks that are the nearest the beaches and which are predominantly used by tourists and visitors.</p> <p>The Council also provides the option to purchase season tickets.</p> <p>This report provides details about the current car park fees and charges and surplus and then the options for increases. It recommends an increase for the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to recommend to Cabinet.</p>
<b>Options considered</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Option 1</b> – Increasing fees across all car park by 10p, 20p or 30p an hour with corresponding increases to 24-hour and 7-day charges</li> <li>• <b>Option 2</b> – Seasonal charges at coastal car parks during March to October</li> <li>• <b>Option 3</b> – Re-introducing a flat rate evening charge across all car parks</li> <li>• <b>Option 4 &amp; 5</b> – Increases to Season Ticket prices</li> <li>• <b>Option 6</b> – Increases to Coach Parking charges</li> </ul>
<b>Consultation(s)</b>	<p>Cabinet Member Section 151 officer</p>
<b>Recommendations</b>	<p>It is recommended that Overview and Scrutiny recommend the following to Cabinet:</p> <p>That the following changes to fees and charges are implemented from 1 April 2025</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Option 1 – that fees across all car parks are increased by 20p per hour with corresponding increases to 24-hour and 7-day charges as detailed in paragraph 2.12</li> <li>• Option 2 – that seasonal charges are not introduced at this time</li> <li>• Option 3 – that a flat rate evening charge across all car parks is not re-introduced at this time</li> <li>• Option 4 &amp; 5 – that option 5 i.e. an increase of 50% is applied to all Season Ticket prices</li> <li>• Option 6 – that Coach Parking charges are increased as detailed in paragraph 2.40 at £12, £24 and £96.</li> <li>• Option 7 – that permit holder only parking is introduced at Hornbeam Road car park in North Walsham.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>That car parking charges are reviewed every other year with the next review taking place so that any changes are implemented from 1 April 2027.</li> </ul>
<b>Reasons for recommendations</b>	Car parking income represents a significant income source to the Council and as such has a substantial contribution to make to the Council's long term financial sustainability.
<b>Background papers</b>	MTFS
<b>Wards affected</b>	All
<b>Cabinet member(s)</b>	Cllr Lucy Shires
<b>Contact Officer</b>	Tina Stankley Tina.stankley@north-norfolk.gov.uk

<b>Links to key documents:</b>	
Corporate Plan:	The provision of car parking facilities directly supports a wide variety of economic and social activities within the district.
Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS)	Income raised from car parking is a significant funding stream for the Council and this will continue to be factored in as such when formulating the MTFS.
Council Policies & Strategies	

<b>Corporate Governance:</b>	
Is this a key decision	No
Has the public interest test been applied	N/A
Details of any previous decision(s) on this matter	N/A

## 1. Introduction and Background

1.1 This report presents proposed increases in car park fees and charges for 2025/26, which would come into force on 1 April 2025. The fees and charges have not been increased since July 2022 and so the increase would cover inflationary cost increases since then and bring the level of charges in line with the Council's other fees and charges that have been increased annually. The additional income would positively support the Council's financial position by charging users for the service they are using.

1.2 The Council's Medium Term Financial Plan shows that based on the assumptions e.g. pay and contract price increases, increases in fees and charges income and grant funding levels included in the 2023-2028 there are forecast deficits of £1.8m, £3.0m and £3.3m for the three years 2025/26, 2026/27 and 2027/28 respectively. The additional income will reduce the level of deficit that has been forecast.

1.3 Car park fees and charges were last reviewed in 2021 and subsequently changed in July 2022. Seasonal ticket prices have remained unchanged since

2016 and only saw a small increase at that time on the previous review which was undertaken in 2009.

1.4 North Norfolk District Council (NNDC) owns 33 car parks, 30 of which operate a pay and display scheme. The remaining three facilities are a free car park on Hornbeam Road and Midland Road, North Walsham (operated by North Walsham Town Council) and a 'season ticket only' car park at Hall Staithe, Fakenham.

1.5 Car parks provide parking for different purposes, based on geographical location, from those supporting use of shops and facilities in the four market towns (North Walsham, Fakenham, Stalham and Holt): those in the resort towns supporting both resident and visitor parking and those in coastal locations predominantly supporting visitor access to beaches etc. There are three charging regimes Standard, Coastal and Resort which reflect these different uses.

## 2. Current Charging Regime and Options

2.1 The current charging regime, proposed increases and contextual information are detailed in this section.

### Pay & Display

#### Current Charging Regime

2.2 Excluding coaches and season tickets/permits, the charges levied between 08.00 and 18.00 all year round in the different car parks are as follows:

Table 1: Current Charging Regime

Tariff	30 minutes	First Hour	First 2 hours	Hourly charge thereafter	24 hours	7 Days
Standard Inland towns)	£0.50	N/A	£1.20	£0.80	£6.00	£24.00
Resort (largely town centre car parks in coastal towns)	£0.60	£1.50	N/A	£1.20	£8.50	£34.00
Coastal (largely long-stay associated with beaches & attractions)	£0.60	£1.80	N/A	£1.80	£8.20	£34.00

#### Comparisons with other locations

2.3 Similar Coastal resorts have the following charges as detailed in the following table:

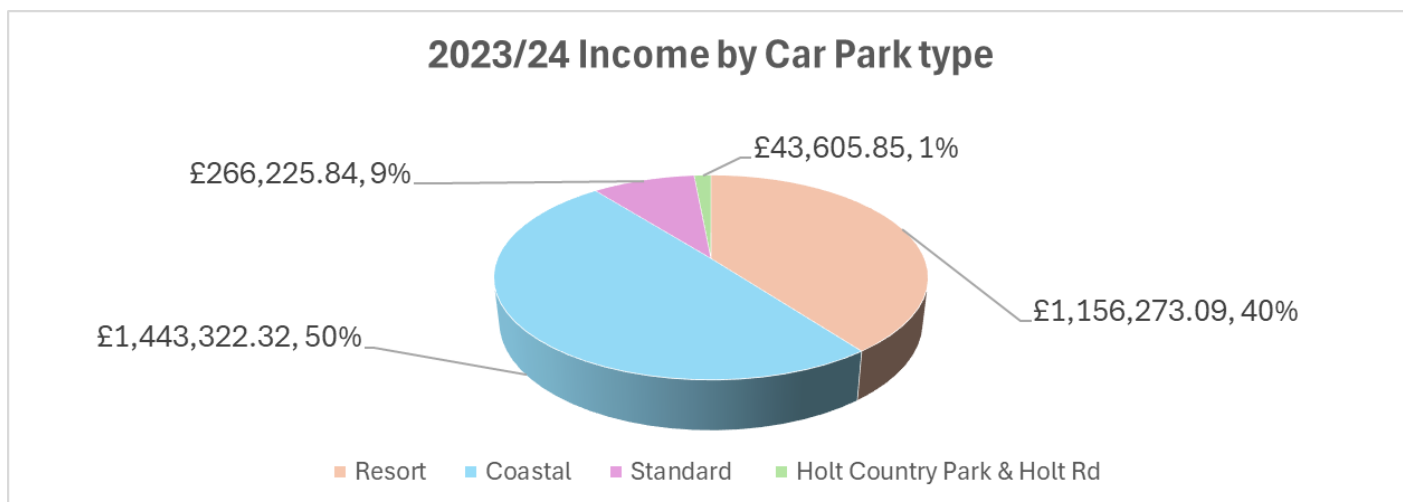
Table 2: Comparative Fees and Charges

Resort	Up to 1 hour	Up to 2 hours	Up to 3 hours	Up to 4 hours	Over 4 hours	Hourly rate	24 hours	Evening Charge	Winter Rates
Hunstanton - Cliff	£2.50	£4.70	£6.70	N/A	N/A	N/A	£10.00	£2.00	All day reduces to £8.90 1 Nov -28 Feb
Great Yarmouth seafront short stay	£3.00	£6.00	N/A	N/A	N/A	£3.80/hr after 2 hrs	N/A	£1.50	N/A
Great Yarmouth seafront long stay	N/A	N/A	N/A	£6.90	£10.60	N/A	N/A	N/A	Winter Closed 1 Nov – 31 March
Wells Beach, Holkham beach (Holkham Estates)	N/A	£3.60	N/A	£7.90	£13.50	N/A	N/A	N/A	All year round charge

- 2.4 In terms of seaside resorts, NNDC charges are generally lower than comparable areas, but the charging regimes vary significantly in each area which will be due to different policies and local circumstances.
- 2.5 A significant element of the car parking income is generated from the seaside resorts during the peak holiday periods and the 6 weeks of the summer when the district sees a huge influx of holiday makers from outside the area. These visitors get to enjoy our Blue Flag beaches and our parks and open spaces without making any contribution to their upkeep and car park charges are a way of obtaining a contribution towards the provision and upkeep of these services which support the visitor experience. A breakdown of the percentage of income by car park type is contained in the following table:

<b>Percentage Split Of income by Car Park Type</b>			
<b>Car Park Type</b>	<b>2022/23</b>	<b>2023/24</b>	<b>2024/25 to end of July</b>
Resort	40%	40%	35%
Coastal	50%	50%	54%
Standard	8%	9%	9%
Holt Country Park & Holt Rd	2%	1%	3%

- 2.6 This split is consistent year on year and the pie chart below shows the value of this split for 2023/24 – the last full year’s data we have for car park income.



- 2.7 This income is very seasonal with 70% of the annual income being derived from the period April to September and this increases to 81% when March and October are added in as these months are getting busier each year. This is shown in the graph at Appendix A.
- 2.8 The gross income for the last three years has exceeded £3.0m however the costs of running the car parks have been £1.2m, £1.5m and £1.4m for the last three full financial years 2021/22, 2022/23 and 2023/24 respectively resulting in net income levels of £1.9m, £1.6m and £2.1m for the three years. These are shown in more detail in the table below:

Line No.	Account Name	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25 (up to July)
1	<b>Income</b>	(£3,064,913)	(£3,098,256)	(£3,462,828)	(£918,589)
2	<b>Premises</b>	£580,986	£779,875	£699,943	£473,958
3	<b>Supplies &amp; Services</b>	£346,733	£420,540	£387,824	£7,028
4	<b>Support Services</b>	£170,712	£188,904	£203,508	£66,980
5	<b>Capital Financing Costs</b>	£58,716	£75,816	£75,792	£18,608
6	<b>Net Income</b>	(£1,907,766)	(£1,633,121)	(£2,095,761)	(£352,014)
7	<b>Total Budget for carpark service</b>	(£1,588,425)	(£1,584,289)	(£1,758,224)	(£597,043)
8	<b>Variance (Favourable/Adverse)</b>	(£319,341)	(£48,832)	(£337,537)	£245,029
9	<b>Variance % (Favourable/Adverse)</b>	20%	3%	19%	-41%

2.9 The car parks generate a significant level of income for the Council and consistently exceed the budget. Whilst income can be broken down into granular detail e.g. by month, by car park and by charge type, this level of detail is not currently held for expenditure as the car parks are viewed as a whole service. There will be some cross subsidisation across the car parks and repairs and maintenance are carried out on car parks as they are needed and is not necessarily distributed evenly over the car parks. If costs were broken down and identified for specific car parks there would be some car parks that may not produce a surplus, but these car parks meet a need and in all likelihood would not lead to a decision to close an individual car park. Such a decision is rarely taken and would generally only be considered if it could be demonstrated that a different use would provide better value for money for that asset.

### Options for Increases

2.10 In the period between when the pay and display charges were last increased (July 2022) to April 2025 (next proposed increase) the rate of inflation will be 11.3% which assumes a target rate of 2% at March 2025 per national forecasts. It is proposed that car park charges are reviewed every other year as this involves a lot of work and it costs around £20,000 pounds to implement an increase. Therefore the increase should factor in inflation for the two forthcoming years so that the charges cover the increases in costs for both years. A 10p per hour increase would not cover the cost of inflation since the last increase.

2.11 The following options for increasing fees and charges are presented for consideration with the accompanying potential impact on income.

**Option 1** – Increasing fees across all car park by 10p, 20p or 30p an hour with corresponding increases to 24-hour and 7-day charges

**Option 2** – Seasonal charges at coastal car parks during April to September

**Option 3** – Re-introducing a flat rate evening charge across all car parks

**Options 4 & 5** – Increase charges for season tickets.

**Option 6** – Increase charges for coach parking.

**Option 7** – Introduce car parking charges at other car parks

## Option 1 – increasing fees across all car parks

2.12 The following tables show the impact of increases under this option.

<b>Standard Tariff Charges</b>				
<b>Duration</b>	<b>Current charge</b>	<b>10p increase per hour (£1.30 for first hour, then £0.90/hr)</b>	<b>20p increase per hour (£1.40 for first hour, then £1.00/hr)</b>	<b>30p increase per hour (£1.50 for first hour, then £1.10 /hr)</b>
30 minutes	£0.50	£0.60	£0.60	£0.60
Up to 2 hours	£1.20	£1.30	£1.40	£1.50
Up to 3 hours	£2.00	£2.20	£2.40	£2.60
Up to 4 hours	£2.80	£3.10	£3.40	£3.70
Up to 5 hours	£3.60	£4.00	£4.40	£4.80
Up to 6 hours	£4.40	£4.90	£5.40	£5.90
Up to 7 hours	£5.20	£5.80	£6.40	£7.00
24 hours	£6.00	£6.50	£7.00	£8.10
7 days	£24.00	£26.00	£28.00	£32.00

<b>Resort Tariff Charges</b>				
<b>Duration</b>	<b>Current charge</b>	<b>10p increase per hour (£1.60 for first hour, then £1.30/hr)</b>	<b>20p increase per hour (£1.70 for first hour, then £1.40/hr)</b>	<b>30p increase per hour (£1.80 for first hour, then £1.50/ hr)</b>
30 minutes	£0.60	£1.00	£1.00	£1.00
Up to 1 hour	£1.50	£1.60	£1.70	£1.80
Up to 2 hours	£2.70	£2.90	£3.10	£3.30
Up to 3 hours	£3.90	£4.20	£4.50	£4.80
Up to 4 hours	£5.10	£5.50	£5.90	£6.30
Up to 5 hours	£6.30	£6.80	£7.30	£7.80
Up to 6 hours	£7.50	£8.10	£8.70	£9.30
24 hours	£8.50	£9.00	£9.50	£10.80
7 days	£34.00	£36.00	£38.00	£42.00

<b>Coastal Tariff Charges</b>				
<b>Duration</b>	<b>Current charge</b>	<b>10p increase per hour (£1.00/hr)</b>	<b>20p increase per hour (£2.00/hr)</b>	<b>30p increase per hour (£2.10/hr)</b>

30 minutes	£0.60	£1.00	£1.00	£1.00
Up to 1 hour	£1.80	£1.90	£2.00	£2.10
Up to 2 hours	£3.60	£3.80	£4.00	£4.20
Up to 3 hours	£5.40	£5.70	£6.00	£6.30
Up to 4 hours	£7.20	£7.60	£8.00	£8.40
24 hours	£8.50	£10.00	£10.50	£13.00
7 days	£34.00	£40.00	£42.00	£52.00

- 2.13 The 30-minute charge for resort and coastal car parks has increased to £1.00 to achieve a better fee differential to the 1-hour charge as currently the 30-minute charge will purchase 1.5 hours in a resort car park including a 30p overpayment and 1.5 hours in a coastal car park if purchased 30 minutes at a time.
- 2.14 The 24 hour and 7-day ticket prices in coastal car parks are to be increased at a higher rate than those in the standard tariff to reflect the differential hourly charges between the tariffs. The increased charges for these tickets across all car parks still maintain the current discount of 7 days for the price of 4 (rounded to the nearest pound) based on the charge for a 24-hour ticket.
- 2.15 The impact on income of the changes proposed.

Option	£
Option 1 – 10p	219,800
Option 1 – 20p	410,100
Option 1 – 30p	622,700

- 2.16 There are several permutations for increases. The figures in the above table are indicative of the level of additional income that could be achieved by applying the same increases across all car parks. A mix and match approach could be adopted whereby varying increases could be applied to each tariff. For instance, if the increase in standard tariff car parks was only 10p per hour rather than 20p per hour then the total additional income would be £373,100 compared to £401,100 a reduction of £28,000.
- 2.17 A 10p increase does not fully cover the inflation rise of 11.3% between the last review and the proposed the new charges in April 2025 resulting from that level of increase or the 8% at which other fees and charges were increased for April 2024. The percentage increase ranges from 5.56% on the hourly rate at a coastal car park to 12.5% on the £0.80 per additional hour rate at a standard tariff car park.
- 2.18 The 20p increase covers the inflation rise of 11.3% between the last review and the proposed new charges in April 2025 plus it also allows for inflationary increases in costs if car park charges are only reviewed every 2 years. This also seems a reasonable increase when considering that the users of the car parks have not seen an increase for over 2 years and that it will be nearly 3 years by the time the new charges come into force. A 20p increase would still provide good value and still remain generally lower than those at comparative locations.
- 2.19 It is important to note that, as with any financial forecasting, these figures are indicative and can be impacted by a range of factors. The forecasts do accommodate some reduction in the number of users, but this is difficult to

predict. The biggest unknown factor is obviously the weather. A bad summer weather wise could impact negatively both in terms of visitor numbers and length of stay during a period which generates a very significant contribution to the annual income. Conversely a prolonged spell of good weather would have a beneficial impact.

### **Option 2 – Seasonal Charges at Coastal Car Parks**

- 2.20 As previously mentioned in the report car park income is seasonal in nature and this is greater in Coastal car parks which achieve over 75% of the annual income in the period April to September, rising to 88% between March and October. Appendix A shows this in graphical format.
- 2.21 This is a variant on Option 1 and would introduce seasonal charges across this type of car park, increasing charges for the period April to September and having lower fees during the months of October to March. This would provide a benefit to residents who live within the district all year round whilst still generating additional income from the significant influx of tourists and visitors during the peak season. This could be introduced in combination with the proposal outlined in Option 1.
- 2.22 If a 20p increase was introduced between 1 April and 30 September the expected additional income would be £76,500 which assumes no change in activity in Coastal car parks.

<b>Coastal Tariff Charges</b>			
<b>Duration</b>	<b>Current charge</b>	<b>20p increase per hour (£2.00/hr)</b>	<b>Summer parking 1 April - 30 September - 40p increase per hour (£2.20/hr)</b>
30 minutes	£0.60	£1.00	£1.00
Up to 1 hour	£1.80	£2.00	£2.20
Up to 2 hours	£3.60	£4.00	£4.40
Up to 3 hours	£5.40	£6.00	£6.60
Up to 4 hours	£7.20	£8.00	£8.80
24 hours	£8.50	£10.50	£13.00
7 days	£34.00	£42.00	£52.00

- 2.23 A possible disadvantage of introducing seasonal charges is the complexity in terms of parking machine software configuration and updating which can be resolved as seasonal charges are in operation elsewhere. A further tier of charging might lead to confusion for customers; however such charging is becoming more prevalent and widespread with tourists and visitors more used to seasonal charges.

### **Option 3 – Re-introducing evening charges**

- 2.24 The Council has in the past trialled a £1 evening charge for parking after 6pm which generated an annual income of approximately £90,000. This was removed from all car parks in November 2014. A further option for consideration is to reintroduce a nominal evening charge of £1 or £2 across



all car parks. It is anticipated that if a £1 charge was introduced then this is anticipated to generate income of £100,000 per annum.

- 2.25 A further option for consideration is to reintroduce a nominal evening charge of £1 or £2 for the coastal car parks during the summer months. As the district continues to attract significant numbers of visitors it is anticipated that a £1 charge could generate income of around £50,000, although a more prudent might be 80% of this when setting a budget. There would be additional costs of enforcement if an evening charge was introduced. Whilst this has not be costed this would reduce the net income from this charge.
- 2.26 An introduction of an evening charge in the resort and standard car parks is likely to have a detrimental effect on the evening economy within our towns. Therefore a re-introduction for evening charges at these car parks needs to be given careful consideration. However by not introducing an evening charge in these car parks it will probably reduce the potential to generate additional income in the coastal car parks as users will be inclined to migrate to the resort car parks.

## Options 4 & 5 - Increase in Charges for Season Tickets

### Current Charging Regime

2.27 The current charges are in the following table.

		2024/25 Charge	Charge/ Day	Charge/ Hour
3 Months	- 3 hour stay max.	£16.00	£0.17	£0.06
	- 24 hour stay max.	£66.00	£0.72	£0.07
6 Months	- 3 hour stay max.	£31.00	£0.17	£0.06
	- 24 hour stay max.	£122.00	£0.67	£0.07
12 Months	- 3 hour stay max.	£56.00	£0.15	£0.05
	- 24 hour stay max.	£204.00	£0.56	£0.06

2.28 The season ticket prices have had only very small increases in price. In 2016 there was £4 increase to the £200 charge which had been in place since 2009. At £204 for 12 month 24-hour ticket is exceptional value to residents as this represents a cost of just £0.56 per day to park when compared to the 24 hours charge of £6.50 in a standard tariff car park and £8.50 in resort and coastal car parks.

2.29 As these charges have not increased meaningfully in 15 years and the last small increase having been approved 8 years ago the charge is now not only considerably behind other local charges but also out of step with charges on individual car parks and the 3 months 3-hour stay at £16.00 barely covers the cost of issuing the ticket.

2.30 The table below shows what other nearby local authorities are charging for 'season' tickets. Whilst not directly comparable to NNDC's charging regime it does demonstrate that our charges are very low.

Location	Charges
Great Yarmouth	Weekly - £40.30 3 Day (72 Hrs) - £17.50 Monthly - £72.00
Kings Lynn	Monthly - £44.00 Annual Long Term Stay - £484.00 Annual Short Term Stay - £968.00
Lowestoft	Annual Long Stay - £350.00 1 Month = £65.00

2.31 The table below shows the amount of income received from season tickets over the last 5 years and what we have received to date for 2024/25.

<b>Season Ticket Sales (Long/Short Stay)</b>						
	<b>2019/20</b>	<b>2020/21</b>	<b>2021/22</b>	<b>2022/23</b>	<b>2023/24</b>	<b>2024/25 (July)</b>
	<b>£'000s</b>	<b>£'000s</b>	<b>£'000s</b>	<b>£'000s</b>	<b>£'000s</b>	<b>£'000s</b>
<b>Long Stay</b>	£88	£78	£102	£105	£95	£37
<b>Short Stay</b>	£175	£152	£188	£207	£211	£84
<b>Total</b>	£263	£230	£290	£312	£306	£121
<b>% - Long Stay</b>	34%	34%	35%	34%	31%	31%
<b>% - Short Stay</b>	66%	66%	65%	66%	69%	69%

### Options for Increases

2.32 There are two proposed options which are detailed below. Option 4 is an increase that has just applied the CPI rate of inflation since 2016 i.e. 33% to bring the prices up to today's prices. Then Option 5 is an increase of 50% which covers the inflation since 2016 but also factors in an increase that will start to bring this up to a more realistic level.

#### Increase that covers just the inflationary increase since 2016

		<b>2024/25 Charge</b>	<b>Charge/ Day</b>	<b>Charge/ Hour</b>	<b>Increase</b>	<b>2025/26 Charge Option 4</b>	<b>Charge/ Day</b>	<b>Charge/ Hour</b>
3 Months	- 3 hour stay max.	£16.00	£0.17	£0.06	£5.50	<b>£21.50</b>	£0.24	£0.08
	- 24 hour stay max.	£66.00	£0.72	£0.07	£22.50	<b>£88.50</b>	£0.97	£0.10
6 Months	- 3 hour stay max.	£31.00	£0.17	£0.06	£10.50	<b>£41.50</b>	£0.23	£0.08
	- 24 hour stay max.	£122.00	£0.67	£0.07	£43.50	<b>£165.50</b>	£0.91	£0.09
12 Months	- 3 hour stay max.	£56.00	£0.15	£0.05	£19.50	<b>£75.50</b>	£0.21	£0.07
	- 24 hour stay max.	£204.00	£0.56	£0.06	£71.00	<b>£275.00</b>	£0.75	£0.08

#### Increase that covers the inflationary increase since 2016 plus an increase to start to bring these up to a more realistic level.

		<b>2024/25 Charge</b>	<b>Charge/ Day</b>	<b>Charge/ Hour</b>	<b>Increase</b>	<b>2025/26 Charge Option 5</b>	<b>Charge/ Day</b>	<b>Charge/ Hour</b>
3 Months	- 3 hour stay max.	£16.00	£0.17	£0.06	£9.00	<b>£25.00</b>	£0.27	£0.09
	- 24 hour stay max.	£66.00	£0.72	£0.07	£34.00	<b>£100.00</b>	£1.10	£0.11
6 Months	- 3 hour stay max.	£31.00	£0.17	£0.06	£16.00	<b>£47.00</b>	£0.26	£0.09
	- 24 hour stay max.	£122.00	£0.67	£0.07	£61.00	<b>£183.00</b>	£1.00	£0.10
12 Months	- 3 hour stay max.	£56.00	£0.15	£0.05	£28.00	<b>£84.00</b>	£0.23	£0.08
	- 24 hour stay max.	£204.00	£0.56	£0.06	£102.00	<b>£306.00</b>	£0.84	£0.08

2.33 The table below provides an indication of the levels of income that could be generated from increasing charges for season tickets.

		Sales	Increase Option 4	Additional Income Option 4	Increase Option 5	Additional Income Option 5
3 Months	- 3 hour stay max.	570	£5.50	£3,135	£9.00	£5,130
	- 24 hour stay max.	421	£22.50	£9,473	£34.00	£14,314
6 Months	- 3 hour stay max.	576	£10.50	£6,048	£16.00	£9,216
	- 24 hour stay max.	157	£43.50	£6,830	£61.00	£9,577
12 Months	- 3 hour stay max.	4,043	£19.50	£78,839	£28.00	£113,204
	- 24 hour stay max.	571	£71.00	£40,541	£102.00	£58,242
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>6,338</b>		<b>£144,865</b>		<b>£209,683</b>

2.34 The proposals are for a realistic increase considering these charges have not changed for several years. Season ticket holders have been parking for very little cost and have benefited for many years. Therefore it seems fair to increase the charges so that season ticket holders are contributing more to the upkeep of the car parks. Both options still represent exceptional value and there is probably scope to increase beyond the proposed levels over the coming years, especially considering prices at other locations.

2.35 A further option is to introduce a one-month ticket as this is provided elsewhere and seems common practice. However elsewhere the charges are substantially higher than the Council currently charges and so there is a need to carefully consider what would be an acceptable charge to both still achieve an acceptable level of income but have a differential price to the 3-month tickets. It is quite difficult to achieve this with the season ticket prices already being relatively low. Therefore it is recommended that this is not introduced until the charge for the 3-month ticket has increased to a more realistic level.

2.36 The forecast additional income assumes no changes in the number of season tickets purchased, however it is recognised that there may be a reduction in the numbers of season tickets purchased. However this may lead to increases in other pay and display charges.

### Option 6 - Coach Parking Fees

2.37 The current fee regime for Coaches is contained in the table below.

Current Charges for Coach Parking

Duration	Charge
4 Hours	£6.00
24 Hours	£12.00

2.38 Charges for Coach Parking is outstanding value. This is evident when compared to the hourly charges for cars, these being £1.50 in a resort car parks and £1.80 in a coastal car park when the equivalent hourly rate for a coach is £1.50 and the fact that coaches take up around the same area required for 4 cars and can typically carry 50 passengers.

2.39 The current fee is lower than that charged in Great Yarmouth, which is £7.50 for 3 hours (equivalent hourly rate of £2.50), £13.00 all day and £66.00 for a weekly ticket.

2.40 The proposal is to increase the charges as follows:

Proposed Increases for Coach Parking:

<b>Duration</b>	<b>Charge</b>	<b>Charge</b>
4 Hours	£10.00	£12.00
24 Hours	£20.00	£24.00
Weekly ticket (7 days) – new charge	£80.00	£96.00

2.41 The proposed charge increases the equivalent hourly charge for a 4-hour ticket to either £2.50 or £3.00, which is still considerably lower than our coastal and resort rates for parking a car. The 24-hour ticket cost of either £20.00 or £24.00 still represents the good value as it equates to just either £5.00 or £6.00 per car park space (compared to £8.50 for a 24 hour car park ticket) or either £0.40 or £0.48 per passenger if there are 50 passengers on the coach. A weekly ticket could be introduced on the same basis as for cars i.e. 7 days for the price of 4 days which is obviously exceptional value.

### **Option 7 – Introduce car parking charges at other car parks**

2.42 The Council could introduce car parking charges at the car parks that it currently does not charge for across the district. The most notable one for consideration is the Hornbeam Road car park in North Walsham which is currently free. This is the car park that probably users who currently catch a train in North Walsham would use. If a pay and display machine was introduced here it would be a significant cost and enforcement would be required. To reduce the costs the car park could be made one that is available to only permit holders. It is thought that this car park is the one that commuters use and so this form of charge would work well for these users.

2.43 Users might migrate to using the Victory Pool car park, but a charge could be introduced here to stop this, and the charge could give users free use for up to a maximum of 2 hours. However again this would again incur cost of installing a pay and display and would need to be enforced.

2.44 A charge could also be introduced at the Reef leisure centre, however as there are other options to park nearer to the town centre it would probably not be worth the additional cost of introducing a charge here as most of the users would continue to be users of the Reef itself for which there would need to be free usage for up to 2 hours again.

## **3 Car Park Order**

3.1 Any change to the charging regime will have to be formalize through the agreement of a new Car Park Order, the statutory consultation process which takes 3 months.

3.2 If no significant objections are received the Order could be agreed under delegated powers.

3.3 The cost of implementing the changes to the current charges would be in the region of £20k, this would cover signage overlays, car park leaflets and reprogramming of the pay & display machines.

## **4 Corporate Priorities**

- 4.1 The provision of car parking facilities directly supports a wide variety of economic and social activities within the district.
- 4.2 The income from off-street parking is a significant contributor to the finances of the Council.

## **5 Financial and Resource Implications**

- 5.1 The costs and income relating to car parks form a significant part of the Councils budgets and it is important that charging levels are set correctly so that all direct and indirect costs of providing the car parks are recovered.
- 5.2 The income raised from car parking charges is a significant funding stream and this will continue to be factored in as such when formulating the MTFS. The income offsets the costs of providing and maintaining car parks in the district.
- 5.3 Significant external factors can affect the usage of car parks and therefore the income received.

## **6 Legal Implications**

The legal team will be supporting the Car Park Order process to ensure that the Council complies with the consultation requirements.

## **7 Risks**

- 7.1 The detail within section 2 of the report highlights the risks associated with increasing charges.

## **8 Net Zero Target**

None as a direct consequence of this report

## **9 Equality and Diversity**

None as a direct consequence of this report

## **10 Community Safety Issues**

None as a direct consequence of this report

## **11 Conclusion and Recommendations**

- 11.1 As one of the largest external income sources car parking charges have a significant contribution to the Council's sustainability and MTFS. The pay and display charges have not been increased since July 2022. The season tickets prices have not been increased since 2016 (and not since 2009 before that).
- 11.2 There are multiple variations on the possible range of pricing options for the pay and display charges. This is Option 1 considered in the report. There are also other options to consider, and these are to introduce seasonal charges for the coastal car parks, introduce evening charges for car parks, increase charges for coach parking and increase charges for season tickets.
- 11.3 The recommendation for Option 1 is to introduce an increase of 20p per hour for standard, resort and coastal car park charges from 1 April 2025 as per the tables in paragraph 2.12. This represents an increase that will cover the

inflation since the charges were last increased in 2022 and also factors in an element of inflation until the charges are reviewed again.

11.4 It is also recommended that car park fees and charges should be reviewed every other year as the costs to introduce a change is approximately £20,000 and the prices can be increased to factor in the two year price increase regime.

11.5 Recommendations for the other options considered in this report are

11.5.1 Option 2 – Seasonal charges at Coastal Car Parks – whilst this would generally only have an impact on visitors and is a common practice in many other tourist destinations it does bring another level of complexity in charging e.g. reprogramming the machines twice a year at a cost. It is recommended that this be looked at again when next reviewing the prices and that a seasonal charge is not introduced at this time.

11.5.2 Option 3 - Re-introducing evening charges. This could be considered for coastal car parks as these are closest to the attractions that may bring visitors onto the car parks in the evening. A re-introduction elsewhere would probably, on balance, have a detrimental impact on the night-time economy. There would also be an additional cost for the additional enforcement required. Therefore it is recommended that an evening charge is not introduced at this time.

11.6 Options 4 & 5 Increase in season ticket charges. These charges have not been increased for 8 years and so the level of charge is well below what it needs to be to make an appropriate contribution to the running of the car parks. The 3-month 3-hour maximum stay charge of £16.00 doesn't cover the costs of issuing the ticket. Therefore the options that are proposed are both for a considerable rise, the first (Option 4) being an increase that is equivalent to the CPI inflation over the 8 year period since 2016 i.e. 33% and the second option (Option 5) is to increase the charge by 50%. This will help to bring the charge up to a more realistic level so that a fair contribution is made to the upkeep of the car parks by the users of these tickets. It is recommended that Overview and Scrutiny recommend the option of increasing the charge by 50% to Cabinet.

11.7 There is also the option of introducing a one month ticket as this is common practice elsewhere, however until the price for the longer-term season tickets is set a more reasonable level then there does not appear to be a price that this could be set at which would make sense i.e. to achieve a satisfactory level of income but that would create a reasonable differential between buying a day ticket and a 3-month ticket. Therefore it is not recommended that a one month season ticket be introduced until the 3-month season ticket charge is at a more reasonable level.

11.8 Option 6 Increase in Coach Parking charges. These charges when compared to both the equivalent number of car parking spaces and other similar authorities' charges are generally lower. Therefore it is proposed to increase the charge to a level that is equivalent to the 4 car parking spaces that a coach takes up. With a coach carrying around 50 passengers this still provides very good value for money. It is recommended that Overview and Scrutiny recommend to Cabinet an increase to £12 and £24, and a 7-day ticket be introduced at £96 as detailed in paragraph 2.40.

11.9 Option 7 Introducing fees at other car parks. There is currently no charge for using Hornbeam Road car park in North Walsham. The main users are commuters. It is recommended that parking for this car park be introduced but for permit holders only. This would generate additional income but without the significant extra cost of installing a pay and display machine. This type of ticket

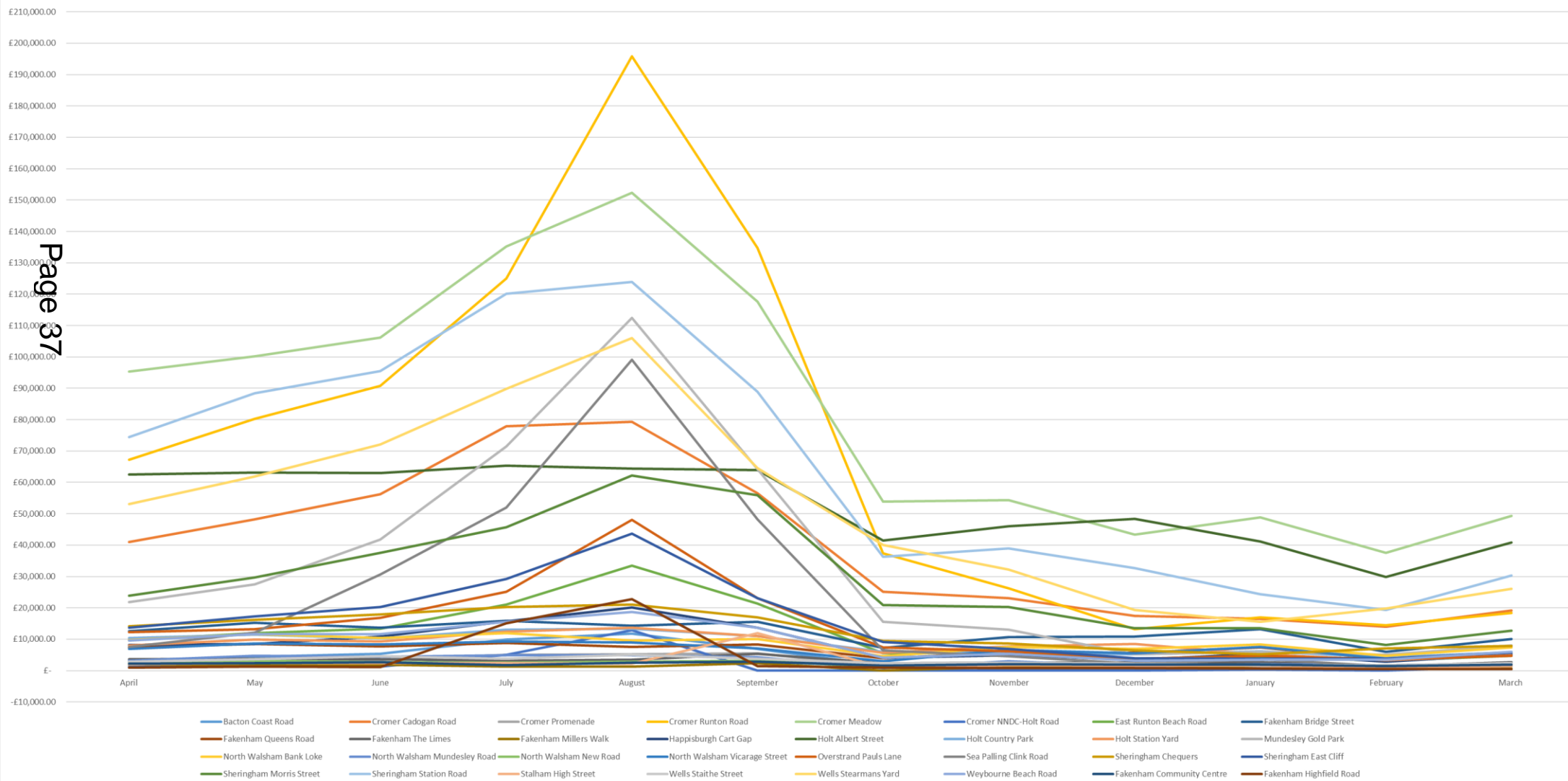
which can be purchased on-line would probably suit commuters who would not want to queue at a machine to purchase a ticket. It is recommended that this be introduced at this car park.

11.10 Introducing charges at the Victory Pool and the Reef would have to be on a pay and display basis and would have to offer 2 hours free car parking to ensure it does not put users off from using the facilities. This would incur significant additional costs in installing pay and display machines. So at this time it is recommended that if permit only parking is introduced at Hornbeam Road car park that the situation at the Victory Pool is monitored to check that there isn't a migration to parking for free all day, which may become an issue. If this appears to be an issue then it is recommended that the situation be revisited with a view to putting in pay and display machines. Introducing pay and display machines at the Reef is not recommended as there are other parking options closer to the town centre and so it is assumed that it would not be used as a general rule other than by users of the Reef.

11.11 These increased if approved could generate additional income in the region of £0.5m-£0.6m per annum.



Total Income By Month - Line Graph Trend 2022/2023, 2023/2024, 2024/2025



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<b>Annual Review of Beach Huts and Chalets</b>	
<b>Executive Summary</b>	<p>This report provides an annual review of the Beach Huts and Chalets service, for a 12-month period between 2023/24 and 24024/25.</p> <p>Leased sites, which continue to have high demand, have seen an increase in income due to the 350 lease renewals undertaken during the year.</p> <p>It continues, to be a challenging period for weekly let bookings during summer peak periods. In recent years occupancy has increase, however this year has seen a small fall in occupancy. Whilst advertising has been undertaken, the lack of bookings may be due to current economic situation (cost of living crisis) impacting on discretionary spend across a wide range of sectors, poor weather conditions and coastal works.</p> <p>A new customer feedback exercise this year has found a high level of weekly let customers are repeat customers and in the main, their feedback is very positive and helpful.</p> <p>In order to optimise the service, 7 key options ranging from a change of marketing and administration alongside various alternative management strategies have been considered and presented in this report.</p>
<b>Options considered</b>	<p>The following options have been considered:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Convert existing weekly lets to leased units</li> <li>• Subscribing to a national beach hut letting website and booking system</li> <li>• Subscribing to an international holiday accommodation booking system</li> <li>• Converting weekly lets to leased sites</li> <li>• Lease all weekly lets on a commercial basis</li> <li>• Lease of both weekly lets and leased units commercially</li> <li>• Sell beach huts and chalets on a long leasehold with annual ground rent.</li> <li>• Operating through a trading company</li> </ul>
<b>Consultation(s)</b>	None
<b>Recommendations</b>	<p>It is recommended:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To consider the annual review and,</li> <li>• For the Asset Strategy Manager to be delegated authority to proceed with the alternative management Option E - Lease of both weekly lets and leased units to one commercial operator or create 4 smaller location-based opportunities, subject to viable bids being received.</li> </ul>

<b>Reasons for recommendations</b>	Considered to be the most optimal of all options available, with less disruption to existing tenants, creates the most savings, generates a consistent rental income and improves capacity issues with existing resources.
<b>Background papers</b>	Beach Hut and Chalet Review 2018

<b>Wards affected</b>	Cromer, Mundesley, Overstrand, Sheringham
<b>Cabinet member(s)</b>	Cllr Lucy Shires. Portfolio Holder for Finance, Estates & Property Services
<b>Contact Officer</b>	Renata Garfoot, Asset Strategy Manager tel: 01263 516086. Email. Renata.Garfoot@north-norfolk.gov.uk

<b>Links to key documents:</b>	
Corporate Plan:	A Strong, Responsible, & Accountable Council
Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS)	Income generation from rental income and rent reviews.
Council Policies & Strategies	Asset Management Plan 2018 -2022

<b>Corporate Governance:</b>	
Is this a key decision	No
Has the public interest test been applied	N/A
Details of any previous decision(s) on this matter	N/A

## 1. Purpose of the report

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to provide an update on the previous period following the Beach Hut and Chalet Review 2018 and to respond to specific questions raised by the Overview and Scrutiny meeting

## 2. Introduction & Background

- 2.1 In 2018 an Overview and Scrutiny Task and Finish Group was set up in order to review the Council's beach hut and chalet service. Since the review, annual update reports have been presented to Overview & Scrutiny.

## 3. Booking Performance – Weekly lets

- 3.1 The Council has a total of 17 beach huts (7-Mundesley, 7-Sheringham, 3-Cromer) and 16 chalets as weekly lets (12-Cromer, and 4-Sheringham), which is an increase of 3 from the previous year. 33 weekly lets in total.

- 3.2 Over the period of monitoring from 2017 the rate has seen an increase year on year to 52% for the 2023 period. Booking performance has seen a fall during 2024 to 47.5% as shown below.

### 3.3

	01.01.24- 15.08.24			
	2024			
Month	Number of bookings	Number of bookings available (stock)	% booked	Comments
January	24	25	96%	Block booking
February	24	25	96%	Block booking
March	24	25	96%	Block booking
April	24	25	96%	Block booking
	1	28	4%	Mundesley only
May	24	25	96%	Block booking
	5	28	18%	Mundesley only
June	21	159	13%	All
July	46	127	36%	All
August	71	160	44%	All
September	42	100	42%	All
October	25	25	100%	Winter/Spring Block Booking
November	25	25	100%	Winter/Spring Block Booking
December	25	25	100%	Winter/Spring Block Booking
<b>Total</b>	381	802	47.5%	

3.4 The summer months continue to have lower rates of bookings which again could be due to a number of factors:

- Wet and cold weather conditions
- Continued economic impact on discretionary spend
- Whilst the weekly hire fee didn't increase for 2024/25 during summer months, the fees may still be beyond what the market are willing to pay
- Coastal works in relation to Cromer and Mundesley

3.5 The block booking option available over the winter/spring months, continues to be popular. A shorter 6-week period at Mundesley has been introduced this year for the autumn period, before the huts are removed for storage.

#### 4. Waiting Lists for 5-year leases

4.1 Over the previous period there continues to be strong demand for 5-year leases of beach hut plots and chalets, as demonstrated by the current waiting lists. The waiting lists have grown since the review was undertaken in 2018 with a total of 525 at that time which has increased from 895 at the last review to 902 for this period.

4.2 Beach hut plots at Sheringham East continues to have the largest number of people on the waiting list.

4.3 The waiting list fee increased in 2023 to £50, per list, which was not increased for the 2024/25 period.

4.4 With the 2024 lease renewal process it has seen some applicants withdraw or be removed from the list, as they are no longer wanting a lease or have not been contactable. This has caused the overall growth of the waiting list this period to be nominal and in some resorts the waiting list has fallen.

4.5 The waiting list summary is as follows:

Location	Type	Entries as at 05.09.23	2024 New Entries (to 15.08.24)	Total on list	Oldest Entry
Cromer East	Chalet	126	13	135	27.08.14
Cromer West	Chalet	67	13	80	30.05.17
Sheringham	Chalet	121	7	127	24.03.14
Overstrand	Beach Hut Plot	66	1	56	27.06.18
Cromer East	Beach Hut Plot	100	9	83	18.10.16
Cromer West	Beach Hut Plot	46	5	49	02.05.18
Sheringham East	Beach Hut Plot	174	9	174	21.10.14
Sheringham West	Beach Hut Plot	129	8	136	20.06.16
Mundesley	Beach Hut Plot	66	3	62	27.03.15
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>895</b>	<b>68</b>	<b>902</b>	

## 5. Turnover of 5-year leases

- 5.1 At the time of writing the report there have been 26 tenants who have given notice that they wish to relinquish their lease at the end of the term (31.03.24). See below.

Location	Number
Mundesley	7
Cromer	8
Sheringham	4
Overstrand	7
TOTAL	26

- 5.2 Currently the turnover of leases is not of concern due to the continued high number of people on the waiting list.

- 5.3 In response to questions, **the possibility of conversion from weekly to five-year leases and not having Council huts and instead having them as private leases**

- 5.4 The income on Weekly lets for 2024/25 at the time of writing the report was estimated at £42,325, with the average rate per unit at £1,283. The income anticipated if all the weekly lets became leased units would be £25,280 with average of £766 per unit.

- 5.5 If this option was taken forward it is not expected that any salary savings would be made as existing staff would be required to manage the additional leased units and respond to other promenade/leisure management. There would be business rate savings of approx. £10,000 as this would pass to the tenant and no advertising budget needed. Other costs would still be payable by the Council, such as insurance, repairs maintenance, beach hut removal which is either recharged to the tenant or deducted from the income. Council recharges would also remain and with this option there would be less income to fund expenditure.

- 5.6 Whilst this option would reduce the number of people on the waiting list, the period of time a person would need to wait would not see a material change.

Weekly income annual estimate 24/25	Conversion to Leased units annual estimate	Loss of income	Savings Generated	Overall effect
£42,325	£25,280.00	- £17,045.00	£11,715	-£5,330.00

- 5.7 The Council could seek to reduce the number of weekly lets focusing on those that are the most popular and convert the least popular into leased sites. Further analysis would be required to establish the financial impact.

- 5.8 If this option was to proceed, officers would start prior to 1<sup>st</sup> March 2025 when the booking opens for the new season and start new leases once the winter booking period has expired.

## **6. Alternative management options**

6.1 In the previous report, there was a proposal to consider widening tenants use of their beach hut/chalet in the lease with a higher rent. Currently the lease does not allow tenants to charge a fee for independently hiring the beach hut/chalet. The tenant cannot include the hut/chalet as a benefit within the letting of another property or accommodation. The Council could agree to change the lease to allow a tenant to use them as part of their holiday accommodation as a more commercial arrangement.

6.2 As part of this review, officers have considered a number of alternative management options and details of these can be found in the appendix. These comprise:

- A. Subscribe to a national beach hut letting website/booking systems
- B. Subscribing to an international holiday accommodation booking system which has other similar beach huts available for hire.
- C. Convert all or some weekly lets to leased sites.
- D. Lease all weekly lets commercially, allowing the tenant to hire their unit.
- E. Lease of both weekly lets and leased units to one commercial operator or create 4 smaller location-based opportunities
- F. Sell the Council's physical assets (3 huts at Cromer and all 93 Chalets) on long lease with annual ground rent.
- G. Establish a trading company and transfer all weekly lets and leased assets to it.

### **6.3 A. Subscribe to a national beach hut letting website/booking systems**

6.4 There are a couple of beach hut specific letting websites, that advertise the facilities to hire across the country. As the Council's booking system is unsupported and is not fit for purpose the Council could utilise a letting website as an alternative system.

6.5 Costs - The fee for using the website is a % of booking income and when using the 23/24 income as an example, the cost would have been £4,500 - £5,000. The current advertising budget would need to be increased by £3,000 to cover potential fees. That would require approximately an additional 14 peak week bookings to just cover that cost. All other property costs would remain the same.

6.6 Savings - There would be no real savings generated as the same level of budget would be required to manage the service, however there would be less internal IT support required.

6.7 Income - It is difficult to predict if a beach hut specific website would generate more bookings. Whilst they may reach more potential customers through their website, factors as the weather and economic climate will still negatively affect bookings. It could be trialled for 12-24 months to test how successful or not it might be.



- 6.8 Key benefits - would be to resolve current booking system issues, be on a higher-ranking specific booking website, basic booking queries are dealt with by the company.
- 6.9 Disadvantages - no budget is saved (it would cost a further £3,000) and it doesn't resolve change over challenges that arise from lack of resources and that would add further pressure with offering short term or short notice bookings.
- 6.10 An alternative option to this would be to have a "White Label" bookings system. This is taking the new booking software and linking to the Councils website again removing the need for the current unsupported booking system. Whilst it might be marginally cheaper to take forward, the Council would lose the benefit of wider exposure to more potential customers and therefore this is not recommended.
- 6.11 **B. Subscribing to an international holiday accommodation booking system which has other similar beach huts available for hire.**
- 6.12 Holiday accommodation websites such as Airbnb have a few beach huts available to book for non over night stays. The Council could close down its current booking system and use Airbnb for example as an alternative booking system.
- 6.13 Costs – Again the fees are based on a percentage of the booking income. Based on 23/24 income the cost would be £1,415. All the Councils property costs would remain the same.
- 6.14 Savings –There would be no real savings generated as the same level of budget would be required to manage the service, however there would be less internal IT support required.
- 6.15 Income – Again it is difficult to predict potential income. Whilst Airbnb is well known, most people are seeking overnight stays and therefore advertising on such a website might not reach customers seeking beach hut hire. Again, factors as the weather and economic climate will still negatively affect bookings. It could be trialled for 12-24 months to test how successful or not it might be.
- 6.16 Key benefits – It's a low-cost well-known booking system and the current advertising budget would cover the costs of using it.
- 6.17 Disadvantages – It's not specifically beach hut focused, the customer pays an additional 14% booking fee to Airbnb which might reduce demand, or the Council would need to reduce its hire rates to reflect this. It requires 24/7 proactive management responding to queries and adjusting pricing to improving ratings and impacted by algorithms. Whilst automated messaging could be implemented the Council does not have the resource to do this affectively. The Councils assets are not photogenic and any poor feedback displayed could affect bookings.
- 6.18 The option is not recommended as it is not expected to reach the right customer bases and requires greater resource to optimise results.
- 6.19 **C. Convert all or some weekly lets to 5-year leased sites.**

- 6.20 Up to 33 weekly lets could offered to the waiting list as a 5-year leased site. As the lists are extensive, there would be sufficient demand to have all sites leased.
- 6.21 Costs – this change could be managed internally and therefore no additional costs would be incurred.
- 6.22 Savings – would be generated by reduced business rates and advertising costs. If all weekly lets became leased sites a saving of £11,715 is expected. There would be no expected savings with the current resource involved in the operation of the service as any time saved would be filled by other work in their existing roles.
- 6.23 Income – The leased sites generate less income than weekly lets as an average. For 2024/25 rents income would have reduced to £25,280 and whilst there would have been a saving generated there would still be an overall loss of income of £5,330 that year.
- 6.24 Key benefits- Some savings created, pre agreed rental income generated, no further investment into weekly let furniture required, small reduction in waiting lists and unsupported booking system would be closed down.
- 6.25 Disadvantages – rental income is lower than weekly lets, overall budget savings is low and risk of complaints/PR issues from regular customers from ceasing weekly lets.
- 6.26 Whilst this would reduce the waiting lists marginally and removes the need for a booking system, this option is not recommended as it would result in a loss of income.
- 6.27 **D. Lease all weekly lets commercially, allowing the tenant to hire their unit.**
- 6.28 A procurement exercise could be undertaken offering all weekly lets available on a commercial basis. They could be offered as one lot, small groups, or individual lots. To ensure best value, potential tenants would be asked to submit their maximum bid. Tenants would be able to relet huts on any basis they wish to generate income.
- 6.29 Costs – are anticipated to be at around £1,000 to cover advertising fees. Internal resource would manage this option.
- 6.30 Savings – would be generated on business rates and other property costs and has been estimated at £11,715 a year. No resource savings expected as for the reasons outlined in 6.22.
- 6.31 Income – the value of potential bids is unknown until a marketing exercise is undertaken; however, it is expected that they would be more than the rents currently received. There may still be a reduction in the overall income if it equates to less than the weekly lets produced. The market could be tested and in no suitable bids were received, then weekly let's could be implemented.
- 6.32 Key benefits- Some savings created, consistent rental income generated, reduces the waiting list, no further investment into weekly let furniture, current booking system is closed down and creates opportunities for local business and possible job creation.

- 6.33 Disadvantages – still requires internal resources to manage a high number of tenants.
- 6.34 Whilst there is more consistency over the level of income generation as it is not impacted in the same way weekly lets are, there is a risk that the overall income is still less, and overall budget savings are low. Due to this it would not be the preferred option.
- 6.35 **E. Lease of both weekly lets and leased units to one commercial operator or create 4 smaller location-based opportunities**
- 6.36 This option would see all the weekly lets and leased sites offered to let on a commercial basis with all existing tenants remaining. It could be offered as one lot or smaller location-based groups. The tenant would take a long lease on the ground rents of the beach hut plots and the chalets and sub-let to the existing tenants. With any vacant sites/chalets the tenant would be free to let as they wish as a leased site or hire it for shorter stays. The Council could make specific conditions however if these are too onerous it will impact on the level of interest and bids.
- 6.37 Costs – are anticipated to be at around £1,000 to cover advertising fees. Internal resource would manage this option.
- 6.38 Savings – this option has potential to make the largest saving as subject to negotiation all property costs would pass to the new tenant. The Council would recharge insurance as it does with other commercial tenants.
- 6.39 and still generate income would be to lease weekly let and leased units to one (or more) commercial operators.
- 6.40 Income – the value of potential bids is unknown until a marketing exercise is undertaken. There may be a reduction in the overall income if offers are received are less, however the financial savings generated would need to be factored. Again, the market could be tested and in no suitable bids were received, then weekly let's could be implemented.
- 6.41 Key benefits – Current bookings system is closed down, maximum savings generated, consistent income generated, maintenance liability passes to tenant(s), smaller number of tenants to managing improving capacity issues within existing resources.
- 6.42 Disadvantages – Possible complaints from current tenants and customers due to a change in management and or hiring options.
- 6.43 As this option creates the most savings and would generate more consistent rental income, this is the recommended option. It is proposed that officers seek to advertise the opportunity to establish potential interest from commercial operators. If the proposals submitted did not prove viable the Council could consider an alternative option.
- 6.44 **F. Sell the Council's physical assets (3 huts at Cromer, Mundesley and Sheringham and all 93 Chalets) on long lease with annual ground rent.**
- 6.45 As an initial phase the Council could sell on a long leasehold basis:

- All the weekly let beach huts (17) with a long leasehold of their plot
  - All 16 weekly let chalets
  - All remaining chalets (77) to existing tenants or when the property becomes vacant.
  - All leased beach hut plots could also be offered for sale to existing tenants.
- 6.46 Costs – are anticipated to be at around £1,000 to cover advertising fees. Internal resource would manage this option.
- 6.47 Savings – Full savings would be gradually realised over the delivery period which could take 5 or more years.
- 6.48 Income –Capital sum generated over a gradual phased approach, starting with weekly lets and remaining leased sites on as they become vacant, due to legal constraints. As there is no direct comparable evidence the sales value is unknown until a marketing exercise is undertaken.
- 6.49 There are beach huts sold at Wells-next-the-Sea, with one currently being advertised at £77,500 plus a 15% purchaser commission payment. Others in Suffolk and Essex are lower and range from £18,000. It is important to note that the location and property type will have an impact on the value, and this is unlikely to be the same in North Norfolk coastal resorts. The economic climate is also having a negative effect on property sales and values at the current time.
- 6.50 A high sales value may mean that the majority of existing tenants would not be able to afford to purchase the property and a PR issue could arise if the felt unfairly disadvantaged.
- 6.51 Whilst a ground rent would be charged for a long lease this would be much reduced from the current rent. Other ground rents with sale of huts are generally advertised at between £350 - £500. Usual rent review terms can be included.
- 6.52 Key benefits – Capital receipt is obtained, savings made over time, liability for maintenance move to tenant, booking system can be closed down, consistent ground rent received (but at a lower value), less disruption to existing tenants as their existing lease would remain.
- 6.53 Disadvantages – Service charge would be needed to manage repairs and maintenance of chalet blocks resulting in budgets still being required, additional resource requirements to manage this, potential for arrears, similar level of resources required to manage 422 tenants a reduction in revenue income.
- 6.54 Whilst this option would generate some capital receipts, it would not be recommended, as it is complex and time consuming to deliver due to a phased approach. High level of resources still required to manage a significant number of tenants, deal with repairs and maintenance and administering service charges. Revenue income would be less.
- 6.55 **G. Establish a trading company and transfer all weekly lets and leased assets to it.**
- 6.56 The Peer Review recommended that a trading company could be considered to manage the beach huts and chalets. At the time of writing this option was not

supported due to the complexity of operating a trading company outweighing the benefits.

## **7. Beach Hut Removal**

7.1 Currently beach huts are only removed from Mundesley over the winter period and the costs are recharged to the tenants. Proposals for removing huts at Overstrand is again being considered due to the issues caused from winter adverse weather conditions.

7.2 In response to the question, **the relationship with private tenants including the removal of huts from the beach**. Officers consulted with all Overstrand tenants during 2021 to establish if they would support the removal of beach huts during the winter period as undertaken at Mundesley.

7.3 Out of the 59 huts sites the following responses were received:

- 9 - would like to consider the option to remove their hut
- 17 - wanted their hut to remain on site
- 23 didn't reply (this figure includes a few people that did reply but didn't confirm either way)

7.4 The majority of the tenants either didn't reply which we assume means that it wasn't of interest to them, or they responded to say they didn't wish to move their huts. This was mainly for the following reasons:

- Preference for all year round use
- They had insurance in place to cover such eventualities
- Not supportive of the additional cost for this service - some wanted a rebate in rent

7.5 With the lease renewal process nearing completion Officers are contacting tenants to consult them over Winter up lift options.

## **8. Additional Beach Hut Plots**

8.1 No additional hut sites have been established during the review period.

8.2 There will be one less leased hut site at Sheringham for the next season. This is due to the tenant being impacted by consistent ground water on the prom at its location. Moving of the hut also enables access to underground drainage systems.

## **9. Condition and Maintenance**

9.1 Capital budget was approved for further repairs to chalets, including roof works at Sheringham, general improvement works to Donkey Shelter Cromer and Art Deco roof and railings replacements. The roof works have largely been

completed along with the new railings. Works to the Donkey Shelter are on hold subject to a review regarding the future letting of the building.

- 9.2 Some weekly beach huts are now in need of redecoration and other repairs including weather boards to doors, door handle replacements, which is intended to be undertaken.
- 9.3 Some chalets are suffering from damp causing peeling paint from walls and floors, which is causing some customer complaints.
- 9.4 Winter storms has resulted in some damage and movement of Council and private beach huts at Sheringham and Overstrand.

## 10. Medium Term Financial Strategy

- 10.1 In terms of the current income position, the table below represent data from the booking system and expected income from leased sites.

	Weekly Lets		Leased	
	01.01.24 – 06.09.24		(24/25)	
	Beach Huts and Chalets		Beach Huts and Chalets	
Location	No. available	Income (gross)	No. available	Income (gross)
Cromer Chalets (East)	9	£13,570	31	£28,522.48
Cromer Chalets (West)	3	£3,355	21	£20,529.02
Cromer Huts (East)	0	£0	86	£53,328.91
Cromer Huts (West)	3	£2,975	37	£22,199.19
Mundesley Beach Huts	7	£5,690	58	£37,449.59
Sheringham Chalets	4	£6,365	25	£29,441.50
Sheringham Huts (East)	7	£9,535	80	£48,909.18
Sheringham Huts (West)	0	£0	9	£5,855.08
Overstrand Huts	0	£0	51	£34,045
<b>Total</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>£41,490</b>	<b>398</b>	<b>£280,280</b>
Average income per unit per annum	£1,257		£704	

- 10.2 The weekly let average income has fallen from £1,509 in 2023/24 to an average income of £1,257 per weekly let unit per annum.
- 10.3 The leased sites average increased from £650 to £704 during the last period and increased the overall expected income from £273,665 to £280,280 per annum. This was due to a approx. 350 lease renewals and rent increase being undertaken following expiry of the original 2019 leases.
- 10.4 Whilst the weekly lets per unit average is higher than a leased unit, it is important to note that this is a gross figure and doesn't take into account resources required to manage the weekly lets which are generally more management intensive.

- 10.5 Out of all the types, the leased beach hut plots continue to be the least management intensive as general repairs and maintenance expenditure are the responsibility of the tenant. Officers' main involvement is when adverse weather conditions cause damage to the promenade and/or requiring repositioning.
- 10.6 Due to limited bookings during the peak weeks, it is not intended to increase the rate for weekly let hire during this same period for the 2025/26 season.
- 10.7 A rent review on the annual leases has been undertaken for 2025/26 season and it is proposed to increase the rent as shown in the tables below
- 10.8 Leased beach hut sites rental summary:

PRICES INCLUDE VAT	CROMER		SHERINGHAM		MUNDESLEY	OVERSTRAND
	West Promenade	East Promenade	WEST PROMENADE	EAST PROMENADE	PROMENADE	PROMENADE
Beach Hut sites	7.5	7.5	7.5	7.5	7.5	9
2019/20	£ 500.00	£ 500.00	£ 500.00	£ 500.00	£ 500.00	£ 500.00
2020/21 to full	£ 525.00	£ 500.00	£ 525.00	£ 500.00	£ 550.00	£ 550.00
2021/22 - 5% increase	£ 551.25	£ 525.00	£ 551.25	£ 525.00	£ 577.50	£ 577.50
2022/23 - 5% increase	£ 579.00	£ 551.00	£ 579.00	£ 551.00	£ 606.00	£ 606.00
2023/24 - nill Increase	£ 579.00	£ 551.00	£ 579.00	£ 551.00	£ 606.00	£ 606.00
2024/25 - 6% increase	£ 613.74	£ 584.06	£ 613.74	£ 584.06	£ 642.36	£ 642.36
2025/26 - 5% increase	£ 644.43	£ 613.263	£ 644.43	£ 613.26	£ 674.48	£ 674.48

- 10.9 Leased chalet rent summary:

PRICES INCLUDE VAT	CROMER				SHERINGHAM		
	West Promenade		East Promenade		WEST PROMENADE		
Chalet Site	33-39	126-142	15-42	43-46	CHALETS 1-13	14-18	19-29
2019/20	£ 696.00	£ 750.00	£ 775.00	£ 800.00	£ 900.00	£ 900.00	£ 900.00
2020/21 to full	£ 696.00	£ 885.00	£ 775.00	£ 895.00	£ 1,017.50	£ 1,085.00	£ 997.00
2021/22 - 5% increase	£ 727.05	£ 925.50	£ 807.50	£ 955.50	£ 1,054.63	£ 1,125.50	£ 1,145.60
2022/23 - 5% increase	£ 763.00	£ 972.00	£ 848.00	£ 1,003.00	£ 1,107.00	£ 1,182.00	£ 1,072.00
2023/24 - Nill increase	£ 763.00	£ 972.00	£ 848.00	£ 1,003.00	£ 1,107.00	£ 1,182.00	£ 1,072.00
2024/25 - 6% increase	£ 808.78	£ 1,030.32	£ 898.88	£ 1,063.18	£ 1,173.42	£ 1,252.92	£ 1,136.32
2025/26 - 5% increase	£ 849.22	£ 1,081.84	£ 943.82	£ 1,116.34	£ 1,239.84	£ 1,315.57	£ 1,193.14

- 10.10 Summary of total leased income anticipated for 2025/26.

Rental Income Anticipated for 2025/26	
Beach Huts	£204,963
Chalets	£82,487
Waiting list	£1,500
<b>TOTAL RENT DUE</b>	<b>£288,950</b>

- 10.11 The total income for 2024/25 for weekly lets has been estimated below.

<b>Estimated Income</b>	<b>2025/26</b>
Weekly Lets	£45,000

10.12 The weekly beach hut and chalet hire fees increased in 2023/24 and it is intended to only increase in 2024/25 where there is strong demand for those specific hire periods.

Type/Period	Fees 2023/24	Fees proposed 24/25	Fees Proposed 25/26
Chalets - Peak unserviced Per Week	£235	£235	£235
Chalets - Peak serviced Per Week	£290	£290	£290
Chalets - Mid unserviced Per Week	£135	£135	£135
Chalets - Mid serviced Per Week	£150	£150	150
Chalets - Low unserviced Per Week	£95	£95	£95
Chalets - Low serviced Per Week	£105	£105	£105
Chalets - Winter season unserviced Per Season	£380	£400	£425
Chalets - Winter season serviced Per season	£420	£450	£475
Beach Huts - Peak per Week	£215	£215	£215
Beach Huts - Mid per Week	£115	£115	£115
Beach Huts - Low per week	£80	£80	£80
Beach Huts - Winter season	£380	£400	£425
Beach Huts – Mundesley Autumn (up to 2 months)	N/A	£185	£200
Beach Huts – Mundesley Spring (up to 6 weeks)	N/A	N/A	£185

## 11. Financial and Resource Implications

11.1 The expenditure for 2023/23, which has increased on the previous year, is shown below.

Budget	2019/20	2020/21	2020/22	2022/23	2023/24
Staff salaries and other expenses	£37,863.69	£43,187.44	£20,355.22	£18,203.18	£12,004.35
Repairs and maintenance	£12,192.23	£3,287.92	£13,045.78	£21,145.11	£7,076.01
Business rates	£4,761.74	£4,756.65	£5,205.95	£5,768.66	£9,972.04
Electric	£287.43	£817.69	£439.36	£902.51	£2,430.10
Insurance	£2,692.37	£2,749.72	£2,895.77	£3,430.52	£7,155.15
Other Services Recharges	£140,380.00	£104,015.00	£97,284.00	£117,946.00	£103,420.00
Beach hut removal	£14,495.00	£15,003.00	£15,184.00	£13,965.00	£14,127.50
<b>Total</b>	<b>£212,672.46</b>	<b>£173,817.42</b>	<b>£154,410.08</b>	<b>£181,360.98</b>	<b>£156,185.15</b>



11.2 Please note:

- The repairs and maintenance budget is a revenue budget and excludes capital expenditure, which is £33,000 for roof repairs and railing replacement at the Art Deco and Sheringham.
- Some staff salaries have been reallocated following the restructure and the expenditure in this budget is predominantly one part time administrator and salary on costs.
- Other staff involved with the management of the service are included as Other Services Recharge.
- Expenditure for 2023/24 has seen a decrease due to a reduction in repairs and maintenance.

11.4 In response to the question, **The split of costs between weekly and five-year huts**. It is not possible to provide that level of detail due to how current budgets are structured and repairs/maintenance is recorded. However, we can make the following assumptions:

- The majority of leased sites are beach hut plots (321) with the tenant being responsible for repairs/maintenance, business rates, insurance. Removal costs are recharged to the tenants and therefore these assets are likely to have the least expenditure.
- There are 33 weekly lets comprising both chalets and huts that require repairs and maintenance, insurance, utilities, business rates, advertising that will require budget.
- There are 77 leased chalet sites, with repairs/maintenance, utilities, insurance and business rate expenditure. Due to the number of sites, it is anticipated that this group have the greatest expenditure on this budget.
- Salaries for 2024/25 will have more time connected to leased sites, due to increased time spent on lease renewals.

**11. Customer Service**

11.1 Feedback forms - At the time of writing 35 responses have been received. A summary is provided below:

Question	Outcome
How did you find out about hiring	Most responses stated they had hired previously; this was followed by the Councils website.
How Easy was it to book	Most responses stated very easy or easy.
How was key collection/drop off	Most responses stated very convenient and somewhat convenient
Was the Hut clean and tidy	Most responses stated it was very clean and tidy.
Overall experience	Most responses were somewhat satisfied and highly satisfied.

- 11.2 Summary of experience comments: 10 out of 10. We love beach huts. Very good. Always good for us. We were very pleased and will be back again. Lovely. Great location for beach access with dog and children Brilliant it really made our holiday. We only opened it once, too small too limited equipment. Crack in window – we would have preferred an upstairs chalet. When booking it was not possible to view the hut and on arrival, we found the hut was close to railings with a high drop off from that caused concern over young child potentially falling.
- 11.3 Summary of other comments: We didn't receive a confirmation email, check out later as 12 cuts the day short, 2023 check out at 3:30pm was better. We spent £235 on this, so very poor value for money, perhaps a more accurate description would be helpful. Tourist office very helpful in finding an alternative hut away from works. Why do we have to hand the key back at noon when we have paid for the whole day. Inconvenient taking keys back to Cromer, easier if key collection was in Sheringham. Clarity needed on what time people need to leave as previously it was 6pm, then 3pm and now 12pm.
- 11.4 Waiting list - Clarity on waiting lists numbers and expected timescales has been included on the website. Alongside this an online webform is being developed for customers to apply to be on the waiting list. This will replace the current paper version and remove the need for cheque payments. Reducing the number of cheques is part of a wider initiative.

## 12. Marketing

- 12.1 In response to the question, **How to best market and promote the beach huts.**
- 12.2 The following has been undertaken during 2024/25:
- Advertising in local magazines in early summer
  - Social media through the Councils social links
  - Postcards with booking information are provided with keys to enable hirers to send to friends and family.
  - North Norfolk Visitor Centre newsletter
  - Advertising boards installed with QR codes.
  - Visit North Norfolk website.
- 12.2 Through the feedback forms we have found that around 50% of the hirers have hired previously and most others found it through the Councils website, with limited bookings from social media or magazine advertising.
- 12.3 The following are potential marketing and other income generation opportunities:
- Competition – a further win a beach hut for the week.
  - Social media influencers
  - Social media advertising
  - Local business referral – a small payment made to them for any bookings they refer.
  - Beach hut booking website.

- Alternative magazines
- Promotions – 10% discount in the summer?
- Install a mini hut in the car parks with posters.
- Rent as weekly pop-up shop (subject to planning) during summer as non-food for crafts, and artisans.

### 13. Corporate Priorities

13.1 The key corporate priorities as contained within the current Corporate Plan that relate to this project are:

- A Strong, Responsible, & Accountable Council, in utilising property assets to generate revenue income.

### 14. Financial and Resource Implications

Budget, rental levels and weekly let income and expenditures are detailed throughout the report.

#### Comments from the S151 Officer:

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

The recommended option would provide a consistent level of income. This option should be explored to see whether there is a reasonable level of interest and to see how the net income position compares with our current in-house option. The option should be explored further to ascertain what the actual benefits and disadvantages would be

### 15. Legal Implications

15.1 Legal implications are to be considered more fully if proposals to change the current lease arrangements are to be progressed.

15.2 Leases are in place for all sites.

#### 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's recent Peer Review report outlined the importance of the need to consider how the Council can enable its existing capabilities and maximize returns from its assets, such as beach huts. The recommendation potentially provides the largest saving of the options set out and provides consistency of income. Eastlaw are available for any specific advice.

### 16. Risks

16.1 The current economic situation continues to have a negative impact on bookings, and this may continue over the forthcoming season. This has can impact income generation and cause rent arrears.

16.2 Adverse weather conditions and storm surges continue to cause damage the

portfolio and tenants huts.

- 16.3 Repair works required to improve the chalets become not financially viable.

## 17. Net Zero

- 17.1 In response to the question, **the green levy and how far that might be extended**. The intention for Beach huts and chalets was to take a small sum from each booking or lease that could be set aside to build a fund that could be used on sustainable measures that support climate change initiatives in that locality. As it would be a small amount, it would not fund large scale projects but as an example it could be used for replacing current sanitaryware with water saving sanitaryware in public toilets.
- 17.2 This proposal could be extended more widely to include other income producing assets such as car parks or an additional sum charged to event organisers when hiring Council land. This sum could be utilised to support other community initiatives such as replacement town center signage, repairs to railings, lighting, redecorating prom retaining walls, repairs to seating etc.
- 17.3 At the current time a Green Levy tax is not supported and no further work to investigate this has been undertaken.
- 17.4 In response to the question, **the sustainability of beach huts physically** – this will have a huge variation depending on the materials and products used in construction, as well as the facilities available once constructed.
- 17.5 Materials used can range from virgin plastics and unsustainable wood to recycled plastic, cardboard, wood or sustainably sourced FSC wood. Contributing to a circular economy by using second hand recycle products drastically improves sustainability and associated carbon emissions. Beach huts made from virgin sources will have larger waste, environmental and carbon impacts. Any construction is still less sustainable than no construction.
- 17.6 Additional sustainability depends on whether they are using bottled gas compared to mains electricity. Whilst there are a small number of units with electric and none with mains gas, some tenants do use gas camping stoves for food and drinks. Both will increase emissions due to materials required and fossil fuels burnt to provide the power.
- 17.7 As the huts and chalets are in exposed locations certain elements need regular repair and replacements including padlocks and accessories within the units. Having to continually repair damaged units is not sustainable as no matter how environmentally friendly the building is, emissions and waste will be associated with any additional work and materials needed.
- 17.8 The leased huts at Overstrand had been impacted by storm conditions on 3 occasions during the last review period and the Council was involved in moving huts back into position.
- 17.9 In response to the question, **the effect on the carbon footprint of people coming to use the beach huts**. As the beach huts have or tenants use temporary supplies of electricity, gas and water, people's activity whilst using them will increase carbon emissions. Beach huts/chalets are likely to encourage more visitors and therefore travel associated emissions to the beaches will increase. If people are able to store things in the beach huts which then prevent the use of cars, this would potentially decrease emissions but that would rely on a climate conscious user.
- 17.10 A Climate Impact Assessment has been undertaken and below is the summary;

Criteria	Score	Justification	Mitigation
Energy Use	0	There are a small number of units with electric and there is no intention to increase the supply to other units	
GHGs	-4	The Council has existing beach hut and chalet units and it's an alternative operation proposal is being considered. If an alternative operation model results in more people using the units then there may be a slight increase in people traveling to the location by vehicles.	The booking system promotes sustainable travel options to access the huts and highlights EV charging available nearby as a mitigation measure. (The booking system offers money off if you are travelling by public transport?)
Air quality	-4	There will be a slight increase to air pollution if an alternative operational model increases the number of users.	The booking system promotes sustainable travel options to access the huts and highlights EV charging available nearby as a mitigation measure. (The booking system offers money off if you are travelling by public transport?)
Land use change	0	The units are existing and located on proms that are already built.	
Soil and waterway health	0	None expected	
Waste	-2	If there are more users of the units this is likely to increase waste in the local area due to people bringing food and drink with them to consume. Waste may	Add more bins, increase signage
Sustainable Transport	0	There is no regular access to vehicles on the prom requiring people to walk to their units, not further sustainable transport improvements are expected	
Biodiversity	-2	If there are an increase in bookings and people using the huts there may be a slight increase to indirect impacts such as noise and light pollution.	Signage/limits
Climate Change Adaptation	0	Whilst works to Coastal defences in Cromer and Mundesley are taking place these are not directly due to this proposition. The huts will be increasingly prone	
Sustainable Materials	-4	The beach hut units can be damaged during storm conditions and debris enters the sea. The majority of the hut is made of wood, but the source of this material is unknown as the huts are purchased by the tenants. Items stored inside the huts will be of mixed materials and these can also enter the sea.	A requirement that recycled or sustainably sourced materials are used on replacement
Food	0	The use of the units does not directly impact food	
Health	4	the use of the units offers a blue beach location for users to relax and may encourage exercise through walking and swimming	
Housing	0	This proposal does not directly impact housing	
Education	0	This proposal does not directly impact education	
Built Community	4	Access to the coastal foot path and blue flag beaches for an increased number of people if use is increased	
Cultural Community	0	This proposal is not expected to have any impact on culture	
Accessibility	-2	The huts and chalets are not fully accessible	
Local Economy and Jobs	4	Increased usage may see an increased in spend in the local economy	
Safety	-2	Increased usage may result in a slight increase in crime in the local area/vandalism, however this is likely to be a very rare occurrence.	
Democratic Voice	-4	A proposal to move towards an alternative approach will be based on financial assessment and not community feedback. It is expected that an alternative model would result in units still being available for hire.	None needed.
Equity	0	No impacts on groups with protected characteristics.	

## 18. Equality, Diversity & Inclusion

18.1 There are no direct implications from this report.

## 19.1 Section 17 Crime and Disorder considerations

19.1 There are no direct implications from this report.

## 20. Conclusion and Recommendations

20.1 Leased sites, which continue to have high demand, have seen an increase in income due to the 350 lease renewals undertaken during the year.

20.2 It continues, to be a challenging period for weekly let bookings during summer peak periods. In recent years occupancy has increase, however this year has seen a small fall in occupancy. Whilst advertising has been undertaken, the lack of bookings may be due to current economic situation (cost of living crisis) impacting on discretionary spend across a wide range of sectors, poor weather conditions and coastal works.

20.3 A new customer feedback exercise this year has found a high level of weekly let customers are repeat customers and in the main, their feedback is very positive and helpful.

20.4 In order to optimise the service, 7 key options ranging from a change of marketing and administration alongside various alternative management strategies have been considered and presented in this report.

20.5 It is recommended:

- To consider the annual review and,
- For the Asset Strategy Manager to be delegated authority to proceed with the alternative management Option E - Lease of both weekly lets and leased units to one commercial operator or create 4 smaller location-based opportunities, subject to viable bids being received. The reason for this is that it is considered to be the most optimal of all options available, with less disruption to existing tenants, creates the most savings, generates a consistent rental income and improves capacity issues with existing resources.



**Beach Hut Management Options**

Running Costs (leased and weekly)		2024/25 Budget				INCOME	
Budget	2022/24	Comments					
Staff salaries and other expenses	£ 12,004.35	Across both types	Staff salaries and other expenses	£12,004.00	Leased sites	214,704.55	
Repairs and maintenance	£ 7,076.01	All Weekly and chalet leases	Rep & Maint (Reactive)	£11,989.00	Weekly lets	47,179.95	
Business rates	£ 9,972.04	All weekly	R & M Plant - Service Contract	£0.00	<b>Total</b>	<b>261,884.50</b>	
Electric	£ 2,430.10	All Weekly and chalet leases	R & M Grounds - General	£3,300.00			
Insurance	£ 7,155.15	Across both types	Business Rates	£9,715.00			
Other Services Recharge		Both Weekly and leased. Would be spread other budgets unless reduction in headcount	Electricity	£2,184.00			
Beach hut removal	£ 14,127.50	All weekly and leased plots, mundesley only	Prem Insurance - Fire/General	£8,570.00			
<b>Total</b>	<b>£ 52,765.15</b>		Equipment Purchases	£3,000.00			
			Mats Purchases - Consumables	£0.00			
			Other Professional Fees	£13,000.00			
			Marketing - General	£2,000.00			
			Health & Safety	£700.00			
			<b>Total</b>	<b>£66,462.00</b>			

Beach Huts.com	Cost based on 23/24 income £	Cost comments	Weekly Let Income £	Income comments	Savings General	Savings Comments	Benefits	Disadvantages	Comments
Option 1 - Huts/Chalets listed directly on website	£3,774.00 plus process fee of £707.00 Total of £4,481	Was 12.5% discount if all 33 units to 8% of booking income plus 1.5% process fee if payment taken at point of booking. All other costs to remain	£47,179.95	*Assumed weekly let income is the same as it is not known what additional income if any could be generated through this system.	£0.00	All costs remain	* Might secure bookings from hirers considering other areas listed. 10 others listed in Norfolk. * NNDC resources needs reduced to manage NNDC Booking, but Estates resources still need to update pricing, monitor bookings. *High up on Google search *Dedicated site could for beach hut bookings drive more income *Less admin: it reduces the number of telephone and email enquiries you have to respond to as Beach huts.com answers customer enquires via the 'Any Questions?' link. *Beach hut.com deal with cancellations and amendments with email update on changes	*No budget savings generated *Previous advertising budgets £2k could be re allocated towards this an further £3,000 required (including contingency) to fund. *Doesn't resolve change over challenges for short term/notice hires	If weekly lets are to be retained, it is recommended to take this option forward. Whilst the cost is higher than a white label option. The Council may secure more bookings by advertising with a specialist beach hut booking website. If after 1-2 years it is not proving successful a white label option could be taken forward.
Option 2 - White label - Use Beach Hut.com booking system on NNDC website	£2,358.00 plus process fee of £707.00 Total of £3,065	5% of booking income booked through white label website plus 1.5 % process fee for payments taken All other costs to remain	£47,179.95	*Assumed weekly let income is the same as it is not known what additional income if any could be generated through this system.	£0.00	All costs remain	*Replaces current unsupported booking system with a supported system * Availability and prices are synchronised between white label and beachhut.com websites *No set up fees	* Payment monthly in arrears. Currently hirers pay in advance *Previous advertising budgets £2k could be re allocated towards this an further £1,500 required (including contingency) to fund. *Doesn't resolve change over challenges for short term/notice hires *Doesn't drive any additional bookings to the Councils website.	Option 1 preferred if weekly lets are to be retained. - due to wider exposure to potential customers

Beach Huts 4 Hire .com	Cost based on 23/24 income £	Cost comments	Income £	Income comments	Savings General	Savings Comments	Benefits	Disadvantages	Comments
Option - List on Beachhuts4hire.com	£4,290.00	£50 set up fee £50 - £120 per year per hut depending on level of promotion on their website. All other costs to remain	£47,179.95	*Assumed weekly let income is the same as it is not known what additional income if any could be generated through this system.	£0.00	All costs remain	* High on google search *Once set up fees will reduce to be the annual fee.	*3 other huts available in Norfolk, which might limit bookings. * Estates resource required still to manage advertising, customer queries *Doesn't resolve change over challenges for short term/notice hires * No booking system, therefore manual booking required or additional booking system needed to manage enquires	Alternative website but has not booking system, which would be needed or dealt with manually.

Happy Huts	Cost based on 23/24 income £	Cost comments	Income £	Income comments	Savings General	Savings Comments	Benefits	Disadvantages	Comments
Wells next the Sea only	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	All costs remain	N/A	N/A	Discounted as they do not currently manage beach huts outside of Wells

Airbnb	Cost based on 23/24 income £	Cost comments	Income £	Income comments	Savings General	Savings Comments	Benefits	Disadvantages	Comments
International online booking system for mainly for overnight accommodation but does have some beach huts. The website also includes booking options for experiences, however these are fairly limited in Norfolk.	£1,415.00	3% of booking fee All other costs to remain	£47,179.95	*Assumed weekly let income is the same as it is not known what additional income if any could be generated through this system.	£0.00	All costs remain	*Well known booking accommodation system *Low costs to use *Includes some other beach huts to hire *Current advertising budget would cover this cost	*Hirer pays addition 14% which may reduce demand or price to be adjusted to reflect this * Might cause confusion around being able to stay over as Airbnb is predominantly property accommodation *Requires active management 24/7, which NNDC is not able to resource. This is needed to ensure superhost status linking to algorithms, pushing the asset towards the top of the list meaning more chance of a booking *Poor feedback is displayed which could limit future bookings * NNDC assets are not photogenic which could limit demand *Doesn't resolve change over challenges for short term/notice hires	Discounted. Low cost booking system that is well known but focused on accommodation, which could limit number of customers. Would require resources to actively manage to optimise results.

Convert Weekly Lets to Leased sites	Cost based on 23/24 income £	Cost comments	Income £	Income comments	Savings General	Savings Comments	Benefits	Disadvantages	Comments
Up to 33 weekly let are made available for 5 year leases	£0.00	Estates and Eastlaw resource to manage letting	#REF!	*Income estimated based on 24/25 rents. *Reduction income	£11,715.00		*Business Rates become payable by the tenant. *Saving on advertising *Overall effect is a £5,330 loss per year. *Pre agreed rental income in generated *Marginally reduces waiting list *Some savings created *No further investment into weekly let furniture * Electric charge would be recovered with increased rent for relevant units *Unsupported bookings system closes (if leisure team find alternative booking process)	*Rental income is lower that weekly lets *Results in a reduction of income * No resources savings *Overall budget saving is low *Anticipate complaints from regular weekly booking customers due to loss of facilities	High number of customers on waiting list which would take leases, however whilst some small savings are made it would result in less overall income that then current position.

Lease weekly lets on commercial lease with option to sub let	Cost based on 23/24 income £	Cost comments	Income £	Income comments	Savings General	Savings Comments	Benefits	Disadvantages	Comments
Up to 33 weekly let are made available for 5 year leases either as 1 lot or broken into small groups or individual lots. Local businesses, hotels or holiday lets are possible tenants.	£1,000	Advertising and Estates and Eastlaw resources to manage letting	Unknown	Advertising on the open market seeking bids would establish the potential income	£11,715.00		*Business Rates, become payable by the tenant *Some repairs/maintenance, electric, insurance paid by new tenant. NNDC still liable for remaining leased sites. *Pre agreed rental income in generated *Marginally reduces waiting list *Some savings created *No further investment into weekly let furniture * Electric charge would be recovered with increased rent for relevant units *Unsupported bookings system closes (if leisure team find alternative booking process) *Units likely still to be available for hire *Provides opportunities for local businesses/possible job creation	*Requires Estates and Eastlaw resources to manage tenants	Would require advertising to establish the demand, would make some savings but assume overall income would reduce as tenant requires some margin.

Lease weekly lets and annual ground leases on commercial lease with option to sub let	Cost based on 23/24 income £	Cost comments	Income £	Income comments	Savings General	Savings Comments	Benefits	Disadvantages	Comments
33 weekly lets and 389 ground leases offered to let as a commercial letting as 1 lot or broken into smaller groups. Local businesses, holiday let companies, property investment companies are possible tenants.	£1,000	Advertising and Estates and Eastlaw resources to find tenants and complete lease. Ongoing Estates resources to manage tenant.	Unknown	Advertising on the open market seeking bids would establish the potential income	£66,462.00		*All costs become payable by the tenant *No saving on recharges as allocated to other budgets unless reduction in headcount * Unsupported booking system no longer required * Smaller number of tenants to manage *Creates highest saving	*Possible complaints/concerns from current tenants regarding change of management. *Potential for less income on assumption new tenant needs to create a financial margin,	Would make the highest savings, however there is the potential for less income which would be established following marketing of the opportunity. If not viable at that point the Council could consider an alternative option. Would require less resource to manage which could create some savings or could be allocated to other work.

Sell physical assets on long leasehold and charge annual rent.	Cost based on 23/24 income £	Cost comments	Income £	Income comments	Savings General	Savings Comments	Benefits	Disadvantages	Comments
17 weekly let beach huts and 16 weekly let Chalets, followed by the remaining 77 chalets sold either to the existing tenant or when they become vacant, due to lease implications. Proposal could be made to existing tenants, however take up may be limited depending on purchase price.	£1,000.00	Advertising and Estates and Eastlaw resources to find tenants and complete lease. Ongoing Estates resources to manage tenant. Service charge revenue budget needed with costs recharged to tenants	Unknown	Capital income generation alongside annual rent	Savings would be gradually realised over the delivery period	Any savings would be	* Unsupported booking system no longer required * Minor repairs dealt with by tenants *Would generate capital receipts.	*Likely to need to operate a service charge for repairs/maintenance, which requires resource *would take years to fully complete due to low turn over * Resource still required to manage R & M to buildings, service change, rent reviews and queries from 422 tenants. *Reduction in revenue income.	Would complex and time consuming to deliver due to phased approach. Whilst small amounts of capital might be generated through disposal this is expected to results in less income as loss of weekly lets income.

Trading Company	Cost based on 23/24 income £	Cost comments	Income £	Income comments	Savings General	Savings Comments	Benefits	Disadvantages	Comments
The Peer Review recommended the Council consider a trading company to manage the Beach huts and chalets									Not supported due to complexity of operating such a company outweighing the benefits. Awaiting more detailed feedback.

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<b>Planning Service Improvement Plan Update</b>	
<b>Executive Summary</b>	This report provides an update on the progress towards the completion of the Planning Service Improvement Plan (PSIP).
<b>Options considered</b>	This report does not consider options
<b>Consultation(s)</b>	This report does contain feedback from customers.
<b>Recommendations</b>	<p>a) That the Committee welcomes the changes and improvements made as a consequence of the Planning Service Improvement Plan process; and,</p> <p>b) That the Committee note that future performance reports will be made available via reports to Development Committee quarterly and annually.</p>
<b>Background papers</b>	N/A

<b>Wards affected</b>	All
<b>Cabinet member(s)</b>	Cllr Andrew Brown
<b>Contact Officer</b>	Russell Williams

<b>Links to key documents:</b>	
Corporate Plan:	Customer Focus
Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS)	No direct links to the MTFS
Council Policies & Strategies	Not applicable

<b>Corporate Governance:</b>	
Is this a key decision	No
Has the public interest test been applied	N/A
Details of any previous decision(s) on this matter	O&S meetings 13.09.23, 15.02.23 and 28.09.22

## 1. Purpose of the report

1.1 To provide an update on the Planning Service Improvement Plan (PSIP).

## 2. Introduction & Background

2.1. During 2021, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee considered that the Planning Service should be subject to a performance review, following perceived concerns over the speed of decision making, communications between stakeholders and Members and difficulties in obtaining information in relation to planning obligations (S106 contributions). It was also suggested that insufficient focus and/or cross-service priority has been attached to business related proposals.

- 2.2. Following this, at the Overview & Scrutiny Committee in March 2022 it was agreed that the Director for Place and Climate Change should undertake the formation of a Planning Service Improvement Plan (PSIP).
- 2.3. A Draft PSIP Strategy was subsequently presented to this Committee on 28th September 2022 and following further public and Town & Parish Council consultation, a completed PSIP Strategy and supporting Action Plan was agreed by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee in February 2023.
- 2.4. The resolution of the February 2023 Committee (item 137) states:

Resolved

1. *That the Overview & Scrutiny Committee supports the Planning Service Improvement Action Plan.*

Actions

1. *Update on action plan to be added to 23/24 Work Programme, to include breakdown of performance as impacted by delays with statutory consultees.*

### 3. Current Position

- 3.1. The PSIP is a priority for the Planning Service. With much of the programmed plan now completed, officers are continuing to improve our service provision through additional work streams including, software development, a training and development programme to better inform and upskill our staff and the monitoring and the roll out of quarterly and annual performance report(s).
- 3.2. At headline level – the Council’s Planning Service is now recognised as one of the very best in the country for speed and quality of its Development Management service - see: [North Norfolk identified as ‘platinum’ rated Planning Service. This shows that](#) our Planning Service was one of twelve nationwide recognised as being at a ‘Platinum’ (i.e. the top) level (and the second highest district authority).
- 3.2 This report will focus on reporting on progress with the Plan. The Action Plan, agreed in February 2023, had three headline ‘areas’ under which sat 13 delivery components. The areas of focus were:
  - People;
  - Process; and
  - Performance.

3.3 The 13 components were:

- 1) Undertaking a comprehensive training and support programme for Members
- 2) Improving engagement and support for Town & Parish Councils
- 3) Engaging the public effectively
- 4) Improving Communication through website functionality and accessibility
- 5) Improving communication and strengthening links with key stakeholders
- 6) Providing exemplary customer service to planning service users
- 7) Ensure that North Norfolk District Council provides a positive work environment for planning staff
- 8) Improve accessibility and transparency of Development Committee (DC) and planning processes
- 9) Planning Service Process Improvements
- 10) Using performance to measure success
- 11) Managing S106 payments & processes
- 12) Managing and responding to complaints and compliments
- 13) Performance enabling

3.4. Presently, approximately 80% of the Plan has been completed. Further information is provided in Appendix 1.

3.5. In recent months, Development Committee have considered a series of reports on progress with key elements of the Plan.

#### 4. Forthcoming tasks

4.1. Whilst significant progress has been made, there will be a continuation of the PSIP work in order to see a continual improvement and embracing of best practice. This will involve:

- A new local validation list – *a first draft has been reported to Development Committee with consultation about to commence. It is anticipated that this will be formally adopted prior to the end of the calendar year.*
- The new pre- planning application (pre-app) service – *a draft was tabled for Development Committee in August 2024 and should be finalised and introduced in the coming months. The related fee schedule will require approval by Full Council.*
- Improved performance monitoring – *a draft suite of Performance Indicators was tabled at Development Committee in August 2024. The new suite should be reported on – for the first time – following the end of Quarter 2 (i.e. July to September) – and will be reported publicly to Development Committee. These Indicators cover the full breadth of the Planning Service and not just the Development Management part.*
- Ongoing training for Development Committee Members – *a programme for training was agreed at Development Committee in July 2024.*

- Ongoing training for Planning Staff – *Quarterly all Service sessions now take place alongside ‘Learning Lunches’ for staff. Staff completed a skills questionnaire which has led to the production of a Service Training Plan which is due to be launched this autumn.*
- Improved planning web pages – *‘new look’ webpages will launch during October / November 2024.*
- Improved back-office procedures including streamlining processes and quality checking document templates – *this work continues – although a number of elements have already been introduced – such as, a new report format for our Householder Officer reports and clearer guidance to Officers around presentation content and lengths for Development Committee. In addition clearer guidance and prioritisation of workloads has been set put for internal consultees and better, more accessible information provided to team leaders and managers on staff workloads. Finally, we have reviewed and made improvements to processes and provided additional training on dealing with the Appeals.*

## 5. Customer Feedback questionnaire responses

5.1 Since May 2023 we have been including a feedback questionnaire link to the applicant /agent when decision notices are issued. Unlike earlier consultations this is aimed specifically at those that have used our Development Management service.

5.2 Currently we have received 51 feedback responses. Generally, the feedback is positive with many applicants suggesting we listened to their views and reasons for the decision were easy to understand. We have been working on the website improvements including providing more help and guidance in the early stages.

Fig 1: Feedback questionnaire results

2. Thinking about your recent experience of the Council's Planning service (from start to finish) , please can you indicate your thoughts on the following questions.

[More Details](#)

■ Excellent ■ Good ■ Satisfactory ■ Poor ■ N/A

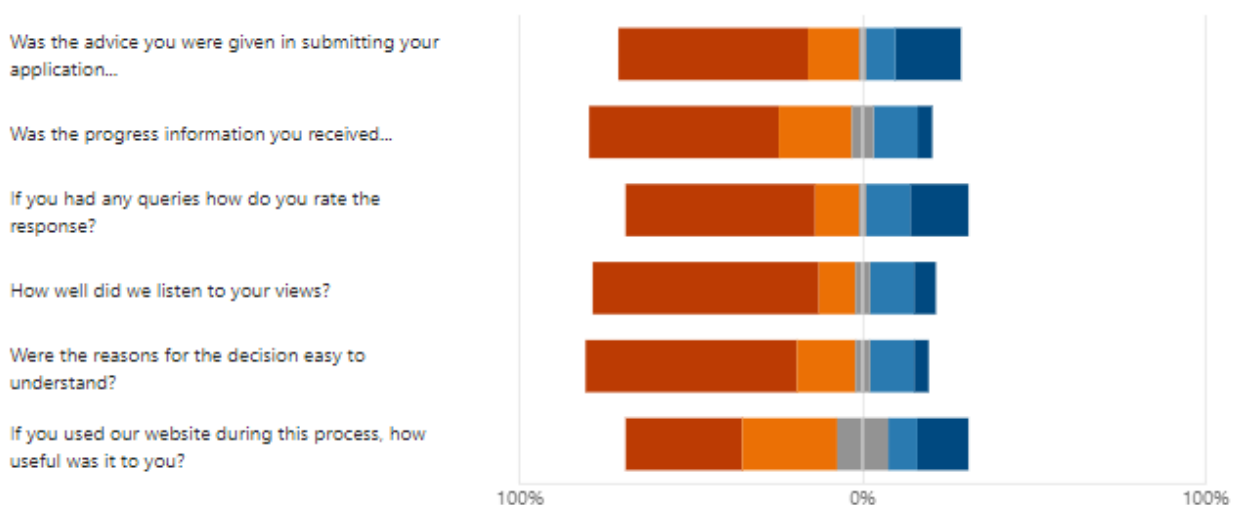
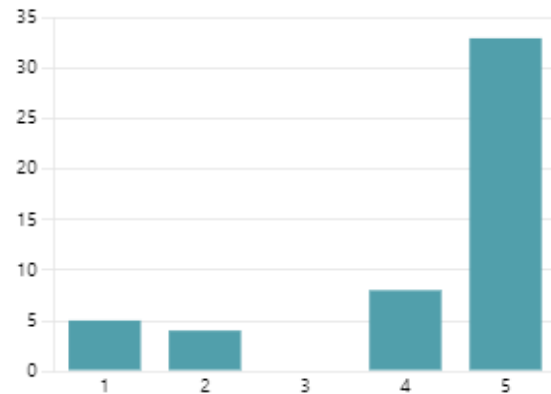


Fig 2 Overall score for service received

## 9. Overall - from start to finish how would you rate the service you received?

[More Details](#)[Insights](#)

4.20  
Average Rating



## 5.3 Responses to what we 'did well' included:

- *"You were incredibly helpful when we re-submitted the application - you actually helped us source and submit the correct supporting plans etc - the planning officer really went above and beyond and we were very appreciative."*
- *"The turnaround time from your on-site visit to notification of the decision was very fast."*
- *"Telephone contact initiated by officer cut out delays with written communication to move things forward quickly."*
- *"All the staff were very friendly and knowledgeable"*
- *"Good communication that enabled the productive momentum to continue"*
- *"I was kept well informed during the whole process and was very happy with the way it was handled."*

## 5.4 Responses to 'what we 'could do better' included:

- *"A couple of things were perhaps not as clear as they could have been e.g. how to mark out the location site colours, but help was available."*
- *"Only speed. Mainly it seemed that some of the departments took a very long time to respond to the planning officer, which I understand is what caused the two extensions."*
- *"Quicker decisions needed for minor permissions and too many people involved in correspondence plus final answer could include 'yes' or 'no' decision instead of technical language."*

## 6. Town and Parish Council Roadshows

- 6.1 During the past 12 months the service has organised and participated in series of training events (7 to date) for Town & Parish Members and Clerks. To date well over 100 people have attended the sessions with representatives from over 40% of councils now having attended at least one session.

6.2 These sessions have been well received with each future event having been improved and honed following initial feedback.

6.3 Feedback included:

- *“This session was excellent but the presentation possibly a little too detailed. Apart from enforcement which is an area of concern and might benefit from a little more depth. Case studies in both planning and enforcement would be helpful. The Q&A was on target - the more the better.”*
- *“Thank you for your transparency and depth of instruction that was pitched at the right level.”*
- *“It was helpful to know how that responses to planning applications should be correctly framed to make the most impact as a parish council when responding to applications in our area. Also food for thought in the neighbourhood plan.”*
- *“I wouldn't change much. It was good and hung together well, I thought.”*
- *“Excellent session that probably should be compulsory attendance for all Parish councillors. truly helped to increase my understanding of the process but also the complexities around planning and the various roles.”*

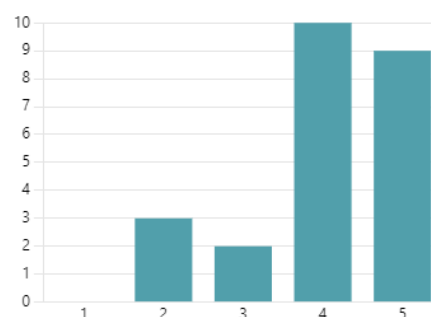
Fig 3: Overall score awarded by attendees of T&PC Training sessions

6. Overall how would you rate the event?

[More Details](#)

[Insights](#)

4.04  
Average Rating



## 7. The Future

7.1 A quarterly update on Planning Performance will be reported to Development Committee and an Annual Report published. In each such Annual Report there is an intention to identify some areas where the Service will look to manage change / improvement in the coming year – and progress on those will then be covered within the subsequent Annual Report.

7.2 All these reports will be made to Development Committee offering Councillors the opportunity to ask Officers about performance matters and to shape and influence the areas where the Service should look to improve.

## 8. Corporate Priorities

- 8.1 This report will support the 'A Strong, Responsible and Accountable Council' Priority of the Corporate Plan 2023-2027. Action 3 of that part of the 2024/25 Annual Action Plan stated:

*“To continue improvements to our Planning Service under the Planning Service Improvement Strategy introduced in March 2023 and to deliver the action plan by July 2024, with the intention of providing exemplary customer service to planning service users, improving performance monitoring and reporting, web pages, training for members and staff, review of appeal decision notices and pre-application processes and refining validation list requirements.”*

## 9. Financial and Resource Implications

- 9.1 There are no direct financial implications resulting from this update report.

*Comments from the S151 Officer:*

*Although there are no direct financial implications. Once implemented the improved service will hopefully be able to generate additional income for the Council.*

## 10. Legal Implications

- 10.1 There are no legal implications relating to this update report.

*Comments from the Monitoring Officer*

*This is an update report as to progress on the Planning Service Improvement Plan, and as such there is no direct governance issues arising. With reference to the proposed future tasks, where such require changes to fees/ to the Constitution such will need approval at Full Council. Eastlaw has been contacted with reference to aspects of this and the proposed pre-application service.*

## 11. Risks

- 11.1 The key risks are:

- 1) outstanding tasks are not completed due to resource issues.
- 2) Performance will suffer if support, particularly with regard to software development is not ongoing

## 12. Net Zero Target

- 12.1 No implications for this update report.

## 13. Equality, Diversity & Inclusion

- 13.1 No impact identified with this update report.

## **14. Community Safety issues**

14.1 No impact on community safety issues with this update.

## **15. Conclusion**

- 15.1 The Development Management service is, without doubt, in a better place than it was at the beginning of this process. Indeed, it is now recognised as a high performer at national level - which is a step change from where we started prior to PSIP being introduced. The conclusion of the PSIP in 2024 will not mark a cessation in our endeavors to monitor and improve the service. Our customers will remain at the heart of what we do, both now and in the future.
- 15.2 Whilst there are a few parts of the PSIP that are still being finalized. These should be completed in the next few months.
- 15.3 A new programme of improvements across the wider planning service area will be identified within each planned Annual Report on performance. Further improvements will help to maintain and improve our performance levels and will help ensure that our Planning service is effective and transparent in its operations and effectiveness.
- 15.4 Feedback provided by customers is a fundamental and valued element of improving the customer experience. Officers will continue to seek feedback, as appropriate, in identifying and carrying out continuous service level improvements.
- 15.5 A series of key performance indicators have been identified and we will monitor them and use the data to pro-actively manage team performance whilst also providing meaningful data to Members, senior management and staff alike. Regular performance reports will be presented to the Development Committee.

## **16. Recommendations**

16.1 It is recommended that:

- a) That the Committee welcomes the changes and improvements made as a consequence of the Planning Service Improvement Plan process; and,
- b) That the Committee note that future performance reports will be made available via reports to Development Committee quarterly and annually.



**Appendix 1: Feedback regarding the PSIP elements agreed by O&S**

<b>1 PEOPLE</b>		
<b>1.1 Undertake a comprehensive training and support programme for Members</b>		
<b>Actions</b>	<b>Outcomes</b>	<b>Comment</b>
Develop, consult on and implement a training programme for post-election delivery to Members	Members feel confident in their knowledge of the planning process, their roles they and how best they can support their wards in the planning process.	Some upskilling/information sharing events have been held but a 'formal' training calendar was agreed at Development Committee in July 2024 - for roll out commencing Autumn 2024.
Provide accessible guidance to support learning for Members	Members know there are easily accessible resources to support their learning process	The Planning Advisory Service guidelines for Members was thought to be the best available and has been circulated to Members. Members have been invited to attend the Town & Parish Council training roadshow during 2023/24.
Provide quarterly updates on local and national planning matters to all Members (electronically)	Members are kept up to date on planning related matters that affect their communities and the district as a whole	This is planned to start formally alongside the publication of quarterly service data referred to in the body of the report.
<b>1.2 Improving engagement and support for Town &amp; Parish Councils</b>		
<b>Actions</b>	<b>Outcomes</b>	
Regularly attend T&PC Forum to provide updates and training on planning matters and received feedback. Where appropriate attend T&P Council meetings.	Town & Parish Council members feel that they have a greater understanding of the Planning Service and their role in the Planning process. Provide opportunity to ask questions and receive training.	The Planning Team has attended T&PC Forums to update attendees on Planning Matters. We have also delivered seven roadshows for Town and Parish Councils (in Cromer, Stalham, Well-Next-The-Sea, Holt, North Walsham and Fakenham and one via Teams)
Provide an easily accessible suite of T&PC specific guidelines and resources through a dedicated page on NNDC website	Town & Parish Council members feel that they have a greater understanding of the Planning Service and their role in the Planning process. Provide opportunity to ask questions and receive training.	The Planning team spearheaded the review of how we present all pages to T&PCs. A landing page was developed and a range of topic based pages pulled together service information across the Council.
Regularly seek feedback via Town & Parish Forum – intervals to coincide with meetings	The Planning Service can act on feedback and make improvements in its support of T&P Councils	We have sought feedback on the seven (thus far) 'Planning Training Roadshows' .
<b>1.3 Engaging the public effectively</b>		
<b>Actions</b>	<b>Outcomes</b>	
Create and implement improved communication channels to better inform our local communities i.e., Outlook Magazine, social media and digital newsletters	An improved public perception of the Planning Service through greater understanding, transparency and communication.	The Planning Service has and will continue to contribute to the content of the Outlook Magazine as well as social media.
Introduce customer feedback questions as part of the planning process through normal correspondence (e.g., with all decision notices)	The public are able to give timely feedback on their experience and for the service to understand issues and undertake regular and timely reviews and improvements to all aspects of the Planning Service provided.	The Planning Service had a feedback questionnaire in place which is sent to applicants following the issue of a decision notice.

Provide improved information through interactive, and intuitive web pages and new media, to include videos explaining processes and issues	For the public and stakeholders to value our website and consider that it provides informative, accessible and topical information. Users feel they have a good understanding of the planning process and service provision.	Whilst the changes to the website have been slower than we might have hoped - because of the amount of work to be done to re-set many of the pages, we are confident the 'new look' website will be available in the autumn of 2024. Feedback will be sought on this following its release.
<b>1.4 Improving Communication through website functionality and accessibility</b>		
<b>Actions</b>	<b>Outcomes</b>	
Review and compare websites, identify best practice and useful tools and external links. Plan options and seek feedback. Implement changes.	The provision of easily accessible planning advice and guidance to a wide-ranging audience with different needs. Successful employment of various media to purvey the provision of a professional but personal and understanding service provider.	The website is being redeveloped to improve accessibility, especially for those who have not dealt with a Planning application previously. This work will be ongoing and managed to ensure regular 'public-friendly' content will be added frequently. We looked at other Planning websites as part of this work.
Seek feedback from various forums including T&P Councils, Members and service users.	To obtain positive feedback on changes made and continue to discover preferred ways of communication and user needs. Continued development and enhancement of the web pages.	We will seek feedback when the main website upgrade happens and make further changes where necessary.
<b>1.5 Improving communication and strengthening links with key stakeholders</b>		
<b>Actions</b>	<b>Outcomes</b>	
Set up and facilitate regular agent / developer Forums	To hold regular meetings encouraging open dialogue, facilitated training and planning updates in a forum that is well attended and appreciated because the Council listens to and responds to the questions and concerns of major developers and Agents.	We have held quarterly meetings with Agents and Developers. Because it is normally held via Teams we average 25-30 developers and agents per meeting. An in-person session was held in July 2024.
Set up regular consultee and stakeholder forums (i.e., Norfolk County Council, Anglian Water, Historic England, Natural England)	To hold regular meetings encouraging open dialogue, facilitating cross working and shared planning related updates.	Many Stakeholders are now being met on a regular and / or as and when needed basis.
<b>1.6 Providing exemplary customer service to planning service users</b>		
Clarifying a specific set of customer service performance indicators around communication and delivering to high customer service standards. Raising awareness and setting expectation across the service and to the public.	<p>Providing clarity regarding the planning process</p> <p>Providing verbal or emailed updates at key points in the application</p> <p>Responding to correspondence in a timely manner in accordance with Council standards</p> <p>Making timely decisions</p>	<p>A guide for Town &amp; Parish Councils and the forthcoming website changes will give greater clarity to our customers and stakeholders. Customer Service expectations have been made very clear to case officers.</p> <p>Our response to complaints system has been overhauled and is delivering far better to target than was the case in 2023 and before.</p> <p>Our speed of decision performance has contributed to us being rated as a Platinum Service.</p>
Regularly monitor performance – 6 monthly	Reducing the need for extensions of time by determining applications within the original statutory time limit wherever possible	This will be measured and reported upon for the first time within the new set of Performance Indicators.

Address shortfalls in customer service promptly through direct contact. Aim to resolve any issues without need to follow complaints process through better engagement and timely responses.	Being responsive, polite and helpful at all times.	Evidence from customer feedback has shown this has improved greatly and where service has been lacking this is picked up immediately with the Team Leader to address at staff one to ones.
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### 1.7 Ensure that North Norfolk District Council provides a positive work environment for planning staff

Actions	Outcomes	
Provide a 'planning specific' induction programme for all new staff joining the service.	New starters feel welcomed, informed and comfortable with what they are being tasked to do. They know who to contact when they have questions, who their colleagues are and how the service functions. Written guidelines provide additional support and clarity. Everyone is provided with the same process and Managers / Team Leaders know what they are expected to do.	This has been put into place and has been in place for the last half a dozen new recruits.
Create and implement a clear communication matrix ensuring everyone is clear and about who, how and when we actively engage with various other parties both internally and externally	Planning staff feel that they are well informed and kept up to date with planning related and corporate matters. Provide the opportunity to seek clarity and offer well informed advice.	All of the Planning teams have reviewed all its interactions to ensure an appropriate amount of communication, information sharing and cross working takes place. Seeking staff feedback on will be part of the performance indicator suite.
Provide opportunities for personal development and learning, following personal development plans.	Planning staff feel they can grow and progress within the service and are supported in doing so.	The Planning Service has recently undertaken a comprehensive skills audit which is allowing officers to produce personal development plans. The audit is enabling the service to better respond to development needs in a variety of ways including formal training, learning lunches and mentoring.
Provide platforms to orchestrate communication, engagement and change.	Planning staff feel they have a voice, are given opportunities to participate in service wide objectives and are regularly consulted on things that affect them.	All staff are encouraged to use MS Teams (chat and announcements) and various meetings take place to discuss cases and raise issues whether this is on a wider corporate level at Quarterly service meeting, Team Meetings or at weekly one- to ones.

## 2 PROCESS

### 2.1 Improve accessibility and transparency of Development Committee (DC) and planning processes

Actions	Outcomes	
Agree, establish and implement clear communication guidelines for Member/ case officer interactions	Members feel confident about when, how and who to contact in the service area with planning enquiries	A new Call In Form / Process will be introduced from September 2024 following discussion at Development Committee.  The weekly list of applications ensures that Councillors see everything in one place on a consistent basis.

Develop and deliver comprehensive DC training programme and resources for Members including allowing for ongoing training needs	The Development Committee feels fully informed and able to carry out its role effectively with full understanding of role in delivering transparent, considered decisions.	The new Councillor training programme that has been agreed has two inter-linked but separate components – one relates to training on planning matters for all councillors and one relates to training that is more targeted at those that sit on Development Committee.  The new Performance Indicator suite will ensure – for the first time – that we report on some key elements of Committee Performance.
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## 2.2 Planning Service Process Improvements

Actions	Outcomes	
Draft, consult on and implement a new local validation list	The new local validation list that is understood by applicants, developers and planners and provides a clear, professional working framework.	The draft is due to be reported to Development Committee in September 2024. It will then need to go out for public consultation before it can be adopted.
Identify best practice and benchmark our service delivery against others.	A planning service that is confident in providing quality documentation and process and seeks to improve where necessary.	The new performance indicator suite is intended to enable the performance of the whole service to be assessed and should aid efforts to benchmark / compare our performance with that of others.
Review, Revise and implement the Council's Pre-App service. Roll out through website and communications with customers.	A clear, concise pre-app service that is fit for purpose and attractive to customers. Clear charges and outcomes promoted.	The new revised pre-apps service has been tabled at Development Committee in August 2024. The fee structure will need to be approved by Full Council before it can be introduced. This should be in the next few months.
Following on from the Planning Advisory Service 'best practice workshops' in October 22:	To provide a planning process that is efficient and fit for purpose.	Whilst this work remains ongoing, many improvements have already been implemented (see rows below).
Review, and revise report writing to improve speed of decision making, offer consistent production of high-quality documents and communications.	To improve speed of decision making, offer consistent production of high-quality documents and communications.	Our software system - Uniform - is being developed to provide a smarter way of working for officers which ensures consistency in report content and appearance.
Undertake Uniform (IT) changes to templates and process: Report writing, Allocations; workload management, and decisions & conditions drafting.	To have a supporting IT system that works with case officers to enable better management of caseloads, easy templates and processes that are clear and logical.	This is ongoing work but much has been done to streamline processes, upskill officers and set the foundation for ongoing improvements.
	To ensure the supporting IT systems (Uniform/Enterprise/Exacom) are functioning well, are regularly upgraded to offer best support and functionality. Downtime is kept to a minimum.	A further (3yr) contract was procured which led to the continuation of the Idox (Uniform) contract. This in turn has led to continued development to improve how officers undertake and manage their work.

## 3 PERFORMANCE

### 3.1 Using performance to measure success

Actions	Outcomes	
Introduce a set of targets relating to customer service. Monitor the targets and report to Service Managers. Ensure any 'underperformance' is dealt with promptly and effectively.	Focus on customer care because staff seek to provide the best service though understanding of the customer perspective.	A new suite of performance indicators have been introduced that relate to the whole Planning service. These will be monitored and reported on regularly to Development Committee.

Establish a robust system for monitoring development conditions, as identified through a matrix.	The Council is seen to take action to safeguard against unapproved or inappropriate development or conditions of development approval.	This has be introduced – where Case Officers analyse conditions attached to approvals and identify cases for our Enforcement Condition Compliance officer to keep under review.
<b>3.2 Managing S106 payments &amp; processes</b>		
<b>Actions</b>	<b>Outcomes</b>	
Ensure that developer contributions are managed effectively. Educate officers and stakeholders so they are aware of how the funding criteria works and it can be accessed.	Stakeholders experience a transparent process supported by fully accessible software and educated staff, that allows the public to interrogate and identify the current S106 funds for their locality, parish or ward. Developers are clear of their commitments.	Exacom software was procured and an S106 officer recruited to enable better management of our S106 payments. This public facing software has enable greater interrogation and management.
Working with Eastlaw, review and establish protocols and sound legal agreements for securing and recording S106 agreements.	Developers, officers and stakeholders have clarity and security regarding obligations and payment of S106 monies.	The Assistant Director – Planning meets with the Council’s Legal team planning lead to discuss workload and cases on a fortnightly basis.
<b>3.3 Managing and responding to complaints and compliments</b>		
<b>Actions</b>	<b>Outcomes</b>	
Establish an effective system to monitor all correspondence relating to dissatisfaction (or praise) of services provided (that pre-empt / are not already captured by the corporate complaints system).	Ensuring monitoring and reporting of informal complaints/ potential complaints to ensure appropriate responses and that lessons are learnt. To reduce escalation of complaints.	Systems are now in place to monitor and make timely responses to, our informal complaints.  Our system that we operate to respond to formal complaints has also been over-hauled.
<b>3.4 Performance enabling</b>		
<b>Actions</b>	<b>Outcomes</b>	
Enable and enact the enforcement team to undertake mobile working through the use of tablets and connections to back office via a mobile application (app).	Efficiencies in working through officers having easier digital access to site plans, conditions etc whilst on any site. Ability to Take pictures and make notes that are automatically uploaded to main databases.	This has been completed.
Digitise all remaining DM and Building Control paper records.	Reduced storage need, easier access to files.	This has been completed across all of the Planning Service including Building Control.

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## OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – WORK PROGRAMME

20 September Scrutiny				
Topic	Purpose	Type	Cabinet Member	Decision Maker
<b>Homelessness Task and Finish Group</b>	To report back when its work is complete	TFG	Cllr W Fredericks	Scrutiny
<b>Budget Monitoring/Corporate Plan reporting/Performance Management/ Risk Management</b>	To consider what issues the council will face over the next 3 to 6 months	<i>Quarterly</i>	Cllr L Shires	Cabinet

16 October Pre-Scrutiny				
Topic	Purpose	Type	Cabinet Member	Decision Maker
Page 7/5 <b>Beach Huts &amp; Chalets Monitoring</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- How to best market and promote the beach huts</li> <li>- The possibility of conversion from weekly to five-year leases</li> <li>- The split of costs between weekly and five-year huts</li> <li>- The question of not having Council huts and instead having them as private leases</li> <li>- The green levy and how far that might be extended</li> <li>- The relationship with private tenants including the removal of huts from the beach</li> <li>- The Sustainability of the beach huts physically and financially,</li> <li>- The effect on the carbon footprint of people coming to use the beach huts</li> </ul>	<i>Policy review</i>	Cllr L Shires	Scrutiny
<b>Car Park Charges</b>	To consider the Council's Car Parking Charging Structure	Budget Savings	Cllr L Shires	Cabinet
<b>Planning Service Improvement Plan</b>	Progress /Completion of the Planning Service Improvement Plan – along with yearend data for 2023/24 (e.g. during 'Quarter 2')	Update	Cllr A Brown	Scrutiny

13 November Budget Scrutiny				
Topic	Purpose	Type	Cabinet Member	Decision Maker
<b>Medium Term Financial Strategy</b>		Policy	Cllr L Shires	Cabinet
<b>Budget Monitoring</b>		Quarterly	Cllr L Shires	Cabinet

## OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – WORK PROGRAMME

<b>Budget Savings Proposal</b>				
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11 December Budget Scrutiny				
Topic	Purpose	Type	Cabinet Member	Decision Maker
<b>2025/26 Budget Proposals</b>		<i>Annual</i>	Cllr L Shires	Cabinet
<b>2025/26 Fees and Charges</b>		<i>Annual</i>	Cllr L Shires	Cabinet

15 January Scrutiny				
Topic	Purpose	Type	Cabinet Member	Decision Maker
<b>Budget Monitoring/Corporate Plan Report/Performance Management/Risk Management</b>	To consider what issues the council will face over the next 3 to 6 months	Quarterly	Cllr L Shires	Cabinet

12 February Public Issue				
Topic	Purpose	Type	Cabinet Member	Decision Maker

12 March Scrutiny				
Topic	Purpose	Type	Cabinet Member	Decision Maker
<b>Budget Monitoring/Corporate Plan reporting/Performance Management/Risk Management</b>	To consider what issues the council will face over the next 3 to 6 months	<i>Quarterly</i>	Cllr L Shires	Cabinet



## OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – WORK PROGRAMME

	Potential Items			
Topic	Purpose	When	Cabinet Member	Decision Maker
<b>Benjamin Court Cromer</b>	To consider the correspondence received in the appendix to this report		Cllr T Adams	
<b>Crime &amp; Disorder Update</b>	To invite the PCC following the election on their plans in North Norfolk	Annual		Scrutiny
<b>Water Issues</b>	(A) the Chairman of the Norfolk Strategic Flooding Alliance be invited to a future meeting on how the Council is working with the alliance on flooding issues, (B) Anglian Water and Water Resources East be invited to the same meeting on the strategic water issues that affect North Norfolk to include the Anglian Water Strategic Investment Plan		Cllr A Varley	Scrutiny
<b>Waste Update</b>	Progress made in planning, implementing, and embedding the round reorganisation on a regular basis	Review	Cllr C Ringer	Scrutiny
<b>Waste Update</b>	Only when performance has dropped to a level that is of significant concern or that progress on the gap analysis items is not adequate	When triggered	Cllr C Ringer	Scrutiny
<b>Car Park Income</b>	Committee Chairman and Vice Chairman to meet with the Portfolio Holder for Finance, Estates and Property Services and appropriate officers to consider the information that should be in a future report to the Committee on the Council's Car Parks		Cllr L Shires	Scrutiny
<b>Council's Workforce Development Strategy</b>	How vacancies are managed, how agency staff are used, what work the council does to recruit staff, as well as the impact of vacancies, especially key staff, on the Council's service delivery and budget		Cllr T Adams	Scrutiny
<b>Local Postal Services</b>	Report from Councillor Hankins			Scrutiny
<b>North Walsham High Street Heritage Action Zone initiative</b>	Update in 12 months' time on the impact of the North Walsham High Street Heritage Action Zone initiative and learning from this, to establish a set of evaluation criteria, including baselines, that can then be used for similar projects in other towns in North Norfolk	17 July 2024 meeting	Cllr J Toyne	Scrutiny

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## **Response to the Healthwatch Norfolk report about the future of Benjamin Court**

### **Introduction**

We would like to thank everyone who took the time to share their views about the future of Benjamin Court, as well as those who shared their experiences of being cared for there. It is clear the services that have been provided from Benjamin Court in the past have been highly valued by the local community.

The report by Healthwatch Norfolk contains three recommendations. This document takes the recommendations in turn and provides a response to each, and it sets-out the ICB's decision about the future of the building and the next steps.

### **Recommendation 1**

**The recommendation:** "The majority of respondents asked for the reinstatement of the re-enablement service to Benjamin Court. The role of Healthwatch Norfolk is to represent the views of the public and, with such overwhelming support, we would recommend investigation of this as an option for the future of the building."

**Our response:** We have looked at the recommendation to use the building to provide reablement care again. As part of this, we have talked to Norfolk County Council who provided reablement from Benjamin Court until June 2023 when they moved to caring for people in their own homes instead.

We have shared Healthwatch Norfolk's report with Norfolk County Council so that they could see the feedback from the community. In return, they have provided an update on the Norfolk First Support service and the impact that providing reablement in people's homes has had.

The change to supporting people in their own homes has meant that Norfolk First Support has been able to care for more people in North Norfolk. In July 2024, 213 people in North Norfolk started to receive care from Norfolk First Support, compared to 163 in July 2023. This marks a c.30% increase, and is part of a wider rise in the number of people receiving care from the service across Norfolk over the last two years (from a baseline of c.5,000 to achieving a target of c.8,000 county-wide).

The service is making a real difference to people by being provided at home. 39% of people receiving home based reablement have been fully reabled, compared with 13% when bed-based reablement was delivered at Benjamin Court. By refocusing the service so that it is home based, more people are being helped to be independent.

Given that the service is now helping more people and is proving to be more effective at fully reablement people, the council intends to continue providing reablement care in people's homes.

Some of the responses to the engagement exercise proposed that an NHS-led reablement service should be established at Benjamin Court, rather than a council run service. The Norfolk First Support staff who were employed by the council to run the previous service at Benjamin Court did not have nursing or medical skills. It was felt by some people taking part in the engagement exercise that establishing a service at Benjamin Court employing people with nursing or medical skills would help to meet the needs of the local population.

We have considered this proposal too and how it fits with the model of care we want to provide. We know that most people want to return to their own home after a stay in hospital and so we have a 'home first' approach as an Integrated Care System. People recover well in their own home in familiar surroundings – they want to be in their own bed. That is not to say there aren't times when people do need bed-based care, but where we can care for people at home, that is what we want to do.

One change we have made that supports the 'home first' approach is the introduction of virtual wards. The virtual ward has 'step-down' beds which care for people at home following treatment in hospital. While the community virtual ward has 'step-up' beds that allow patients to receive hospital monitoring and treatment at home to help prevent avoidable admissions to hospital. We know from experience that recruiting staff in north Norfolk can be difficult. The virtual ward helps with this as staff can care for north Norfolk residents while being based elsewhere.

The virtual wards are looking after similar groups of patients as could be looked after by an NHS-led reablement service at Benjamin Court. The community ward has three treatment pathways for patients over 18: respiratory, frailty and heart failure, with the 'step-down' ward looking after those who've been treated in hospital.

There were some questions raised through the engagement exercise about the effectiveness of virtual wards and whether they provide value for money. Virtual wards are relatively new and services across the country continue to learn and adapt. The latest evaluations are showing that virtual wards are providing real benefits and represent good value for money. For example, the 'South East Region Virtual Wards Evaluation Report' provides more detail and can be read here: <https://ppl.org.uk/what-we-do/virtual-wards-consultancy/>.

There are challenges with the virtual wards for people who are digitally excluded and we recognise that in north Norfolk there is an older population, some of whom may find the technology difficult. Virtual wards are a part of how we want to care for people and overall they receive positive feedback from patients, but they are of course not the only service available.

In summary, there are reablement services already in place supporting residents of north Norfolk. We have looked at the case for establishing an NHS-led reablement service at Benjamin Court, however it does not fit with our model of care. We will

continue to keep under review the services available in north Norfolk, as well as across the rest of Norfolk and Waveney, and if other opportunities arise we will explore them, as we have with Benjamin Court.

Through the engagement exercise there were some mentions of the new Willows Unit being constructed in Norwich. We just wanted to note that the new therapy-led centre is not and was never intended to be a replacement for the reablement service that was provided at Benjamin Court by Norfolk County Council. The replacement for the service provided at Benjamin Court is the service being provided in people's homes by Norfolk First Support.

The Willows Unit will provide some additional bed-based capacity. It will care for people from north Norfolk, as well as those living in and around Norwich and south Norfolk. For those living further away from Norwich, including north Norfolk residents, we know that transport to and from the city can be difficult. We understand this and know it is not a perfect solution, but it being located in Norwich makes it more accessible for a greater number of people.

## **Recommendation 2**

**The recommendation:** "Mindful of the brief to ensure any future use can be both funded and safely staffed, the majority of all respondents suggested Benjamin Court should be the home of a facility or service relating to health and care for North Norfolk residents. We would recommend that all avenues are explored to explore the feasibility of such a service."

**Our response:** There were a range of ideas put forward as part of the engagement exercise for the future use of Benjamin Court, from support for carers to health hubs. We have considered these in the round, however the estimated revenue costs for the building alone are £353,000 per year, on top of which would be the costs of actually running a service, and we have not been able to identify a way the ideas put forward could easily be funded.

The NHS has an underlying deficit in Norfolk and Waveney of over £200m – if we didn't change anything, over the course of this financial year we would spend over £200m more on services than we have in our budget. We have a big programme of work ongoing to improve the efficiency and productivity of services, but the financial challenge is very difficult.

That said, we will keep the ideas put forward in mind and in particular we are very conscious of the need to support carers. We know that people do tend to recover better in their own home with familiar surroundings, but this can put pressure on carers. We are committed to continuing to work with Norfolk County Council, carers organisations and others to see what more can be done to support carers.

## **Recommendation 3**

**The recommendation:** "A lack of communication is a common thread within the feedback, and we would recommend clear communication around whatever decision

is made about future use to ensure those living and working in North Norfolk understand the reasoning and rationale behind it.”

**Our response:** We are very grateful for the time and effort that people have put into sharing their views about the future of Benjamin Court. We hope that this document clearly sets-out our response to what people have told us. We will endeavor to keep north Norfolk residents and stakeholders informed about the next steps with Benjamin Court and developments with other services too.

## **Conclusion and next steps**

We know the people who have taken part in this engagement exercise care deeply about their local community and some will likely be disappointed that we are not taking forward the ideas they have put forward. We ran this exercise because, like those who took part in it, we wanted to find a solution that would mean the building could continue to be used to support the health and wellbeing of north Norfolk residents.

We have tried hard to find a solution. In addition to the public engagement exercise, we also asked local NHS trusts, Norfolk County Council, all the local district, borough and city councils, the police service, the fire service and a local housing provider if they might have a future use for the site.

Unfortunately we have not been able to find a solution that fits with the other services available and the model of care we want to provide, or which is financially viable. As a result, we have decided we have no future use for the building and so we will return the site to NHS Property Services. The ICB has to pay some money to NHS Property Services even when the building is vacant, so given the challenging financial position, we will return the site to them immediately.

This will enable NHS Property Services to look for alternative tenants. If they are unable to find an alternative use for the building, NHS Property Services could look to sell the site. If they were to sell it, then half of the proceeds from the sale would be available to reinvest in other NHS Property Services sites in Norfolk and Waveney.

Our decision to return the site to NHS Property Services does not in itself mean that the building will not be used for public services or to support the local community in future. When we asked local partners earlier in the year if they had a potential use for the site, we did receive an expression of interest from one of the local housing providers. The organisation was clear that a full feasibility would need to be undertaken and they would only do this if the decision was made that the NHS did not have a use for the building. The idea of using the building for key worker accommodation is one we would support if it was possible to achieve.

In line with the third recommendation from the Healthwatch report, we will ask NHS Property Services to keep us and the local community informed of progress with the site. As noted above, we will continue to keep under review the services available in north Norfolk, and if other opportunities arise to invest in services we will explore them fully, as we have with Benjamin Court.

# Ideas for the future of Benjamin Court

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Please contact Healthwatch Norfolk if you require an easy read; large print or a translated copy of this report.



# Who we are and what we do

Healthwatch Norfolk is the independent voice for patients and service users in the county. We gather people's views of health and social care services in the county and make sure they are heard by the people in charge.

The people who fund and provide services have to listen to you, through us. So, whether you share a good or bad experience with us, your views can help make changes to how services are designed and delivered in Norfolk.

Our work covers all areas of health and social care. This includes GP surgeries, hospitals, dentists, care homes, pharmacies, opticians and more.

We also give out information about the health and care services available in Norfolk and direct people to someone who can help.

At Healthwatch Norfolk we have five main objectives:

1. Gather your views and experiences (good and bad)
2. Pay particular attention to underrepresented groups
3. Show how we contribute to making services better
4. Contribute to better signposting of services
5. Work with national organisations to help create better services

We make sure we have lots of ways to collect feedback from people who use Norfolk's health and social care services. This means that everyone has the same chance to be heard.

# Summary

The Norfolk and Waveney NHS Integrated Care Board (ICB) asked Healthwatch Norfolk to seek the views of the public about what should happen to one of the buildings at Benjamin Court in Cromer.

The building has previously offered reablement, rehabilitation, respite, palliative care services, and was most recently used for short-term rehabilitation, usually for people leaving hospital.

The ICB approached a range of organisations to see if they could use the buildings. Two ideas came forward – one from an NHS trust who could use a small area for nurses to be based in between visits, and a local housing provider whose use would be subject to a feasibility study and the NHS saying it could no longer use the site.

Healthwatch Norfolk was asked to carry out engagement in person and online to find out what ideas people had for the future of the Benjamin Court building, bearing in mind the current constraints around funding and staffing.

Healthwatch Norfolk received full or partial responses from 295 people, with the majority living in the Cromer (NR27, 131 people) and Sheringham (NR26, 49 people) areas.

The most popular suggestion was the reinstatement of Benjamin Court as a reablement (or rehabilitation/convalescence) centre, with 79 per cent (232 people) giving this response. This is despite Norfolk County Council mostly delivering this type of care in people's homes.

A total of 21 per cent of respondents (63 people) suggested other ideas relating to health and care including palliative care, respite facilities, specialist clinics, community projects, and a Day Centre. Some also suggested re-purposing the building to offer either housing for keyworkers in health and care, or for assisted living/sheltered housing flats.

The majority of respondents asked for the reinstatement of the re-enablement service to Benjamin Court. As Healthwatch Norfolk's role is to represent the

views of the public, we would recommend investigation of this as an option for the future of the building.

Mindful of the brief to ensure any future use can be both funded and safely staffed, the majority of all respondents suggested Benjamin Court should be the home of a facility or service relating to health and care for North Norfolk residents. We would recommend that all avenues are explored to investigate the feasibility of this.

A lack of communication is a common thread within the feedback, and we would recommend clear communication around whatever decision is made about its future use to ensure those living and working in North Norfolk understand the final decision made by the ICB when it has considered all representations.

# Why we looked at this

The NHS Integrated Care Board (ICB) for Norfolk and Waveney asked Healthwatch Norfolk to seek the views of the public about what should happen to one of the buildings at Benjamin Court in Cromer. Benjamin Court is made up of two buildings joined by a corridor. One of these buildings (building two) is let to Broadland Housing Group, and this is not set to change. Building one is mostly empty, however, and it is this building that the ICB sought the public's views on.

Until 2014, the buildings were used by Norfolk Community Health and Care (NCHC, an NHS organisation), and provided reablement, rehabilitation, respite, and palliative care services. Most recently, building one was used by Norfolk County Council (NCC) for people across Norfolk needing short-term rehabilitation, usually after leaving hospital. However, NCC has changed the way that it provides support for people needing this kind of care, and this is now mostly provided in people's own homes. The building has therefore been largely empty since June 2023.

The buildings are owned by NHS Property Services and any tenants lease the buildings from them. The estimated revenue costs to lease the vacant building are around £353,000 per year. The ICB was keen to hear ideas which could be sustainably funded, and which could be staffed, bearing in mind that it can be hard to recruit health and care staff in North Norfolk.

The ICB asked local organisations whether they would have any use for the building, including local NHS trusts, NCC, all the local district, borough and city councils in Norfolk, the police service, the fire service, and a local housing provider. The only ideas that were put forward were from an NHS trust that said their nurses could benefit from space to use between visits (although this would only need a small space, and could be located elsewhere); and a local housing provider which said that they might be able to use the site, but only subject to a feasibility study and only if the NHS formally says that it will have no use for the building.

Healthwatch Norfolk was asked to carry out engagement both online and in person to find out what ideas people had for the future of the building. It was set up as a one-question survey to give people the opportunity to make suggestions, which could then be considered.

Healthwatch Norfolk has analysed all the feedback we received around these ideas for a future use for this report, which has been presented to the ICB. The ICB

will review the report and then take a decision. They are looking for a solution that is financially viable, can be staffed, and will benefit as many people in Norfolk and Waveney as possible. If no viable alternative can be found, the ICB will return the building to NHS Property Services, who would find an alternative site, or sell the site. Half of any proceeds from the sale would be available to re-invest in NHS Property Services sites in Norfolk and Waveney.

# How we did this

Healthwatch Norfolk undertook a number of engagement visits in north Norfolk, to try to understand the public's views. During these visits we asked people to fill in a short survey, asking them to give their suggestions on what they thought the building should be used for, and asking them for some demographic information. The survey questionnaire is included in the Appendix to this document.

We carried out engagement visits at the following locations:

13/05/2024	Sheringham Library
14/05/2024	Sheringham Little Theatre
15/05/2024	Roys of Wroxham back foyer
16/05/2024	Green Park Rural Centre Wicken Green
16/05/2024	Fakenham Market Place
17/05/2024	Cromer Library
21/05/2024	North Walsham Community Centre

We were initially asked to carry out two in-person engagement visits, one in Cromer and one in Sheringham. We decided to increase the number of locations based on the interest in the engagement. Following representations from the Save Benjamin Court campaign, we also added an additional date in North Walsham.

There was also the opportunity to leave feedback digitally through an online survey hosted on the Healthwatch Norfolk website, and people could also telephone Healthwatch Norfolk to share their suggestions.

Finally, a public meeting was held at the North Norfolk District Council offices in Cromer on 16<sup>th</sup> July, where feedback was also collected. This event was delayed by the need for Healthwatch Norfolk to observe purdah restrictions because of the general election.

The consultation was affected by an organised campaign (the Save Benjamin Court Campaign) which encouraged people to ask for the reinstatement of the service for reablement purposes. The campaign encouraged people to make certain arguments, including that re-opening Benjamin Court would lead to quicker hospital discharge and reduce 'bed blocking' (sic), cut hospital re-admissions, allow older people to return home safely, and avoid long travel times.

The campaign also encouraged people to complain about what the campaign saw as a lack of notice for the workshops, and about their chosen locations. This campaign also submitted a case document laying out their argument for Benjamin Court to be reinstated as a reablement centre, and a dossier of personal testimonies from people in North Norfolk. The Chief Executive of North Norfolk District Council, Cromer Town Council and Trimingham Parish Council also submitted statements in support of re-opening the building for its previous use. These documents are available on the Healthwatch Norfolk website here: <https://healthwatchnorfolk.co.uk/formal-reponses-to-benjamin-court-engagement/>.

The representations from those supporting the campaign and the return of a reablement service were considered alongside other suggestions made for the future of the building, to match the brief we had been given by the ICB to discover what ideas people had for its future use.

## **Who we received responses from:**

We received full or partial responses from 295 people. Of these, respondents told us, based on answers for each individual demography question, that:

- 70 per cent were female (202 people)
- 39 per cent were aged 66-75 (101 people)
- 94 per cent were White- British/English/Northern Irish/Scottish/Welsh (217 people. For comparison, 94.7 per cent of Norfolk's population were recorded as 'White' in the 2021 UK census, Norfolk Insight).
- 20 per cent were a carer (46 people), 22 per cent had a long-term condition (50 people), 13 per cent had a disability (29 people)
- 31 per cent had heard about us via social media (72 people)

The majority of survey respondents lived in the postcodes of Cromer (NR27, 131 people) and Sheringham (NR26, 49 people). The remaining respondents lived in the surrounding North Norfolk area – see the map below.

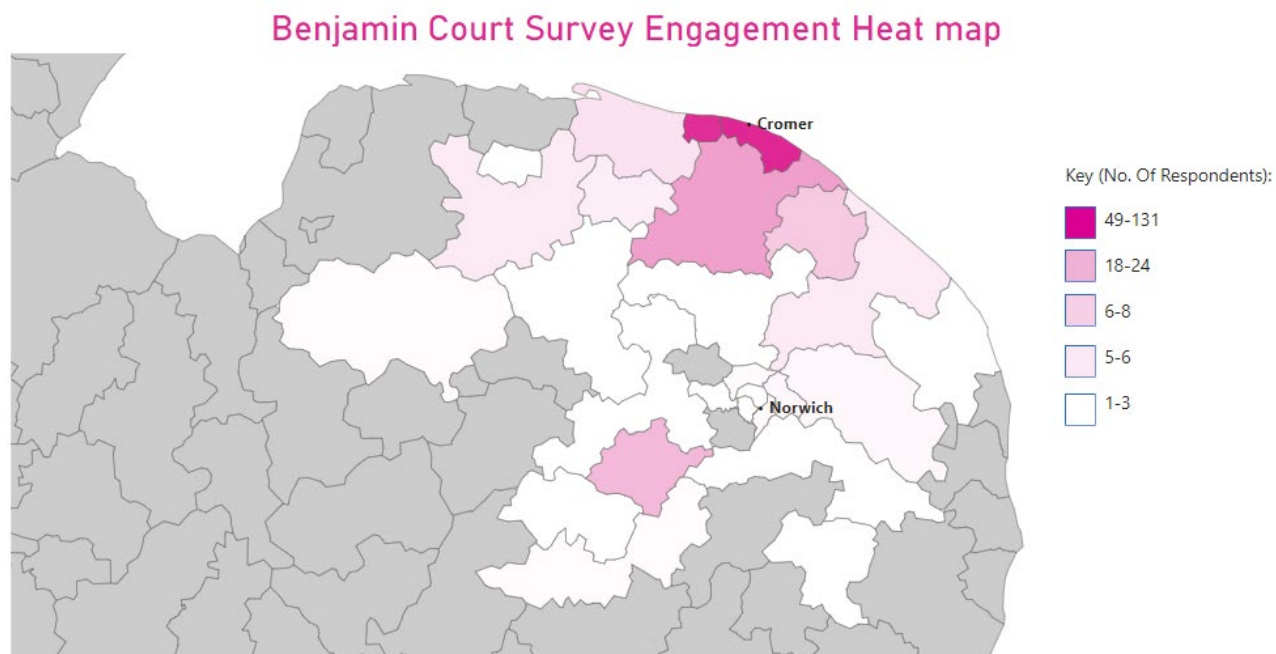


Figure 1 Heat map of Norfolk displaying data of where respondents reside.

Below are some graphs and charts highlighting the demographic data in further detail:



## Respondents' Ethnicities

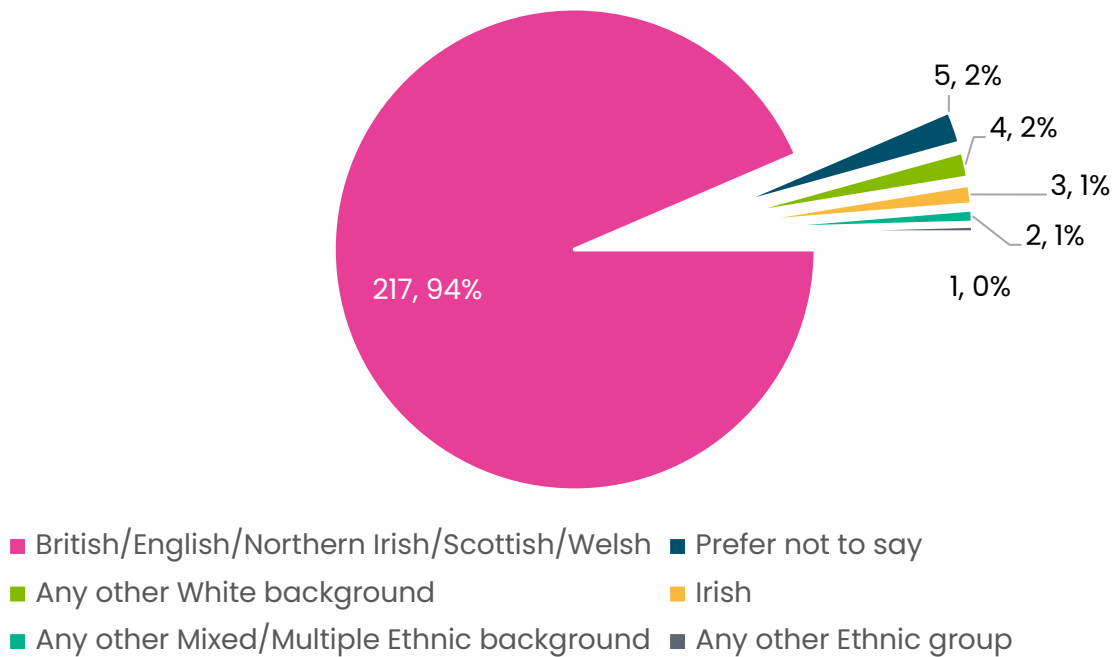


Figure 2 Pie chart displaying the ethnicity breakdown of the survey population. Total responses for this question numbered 232

## Age Range Statistics

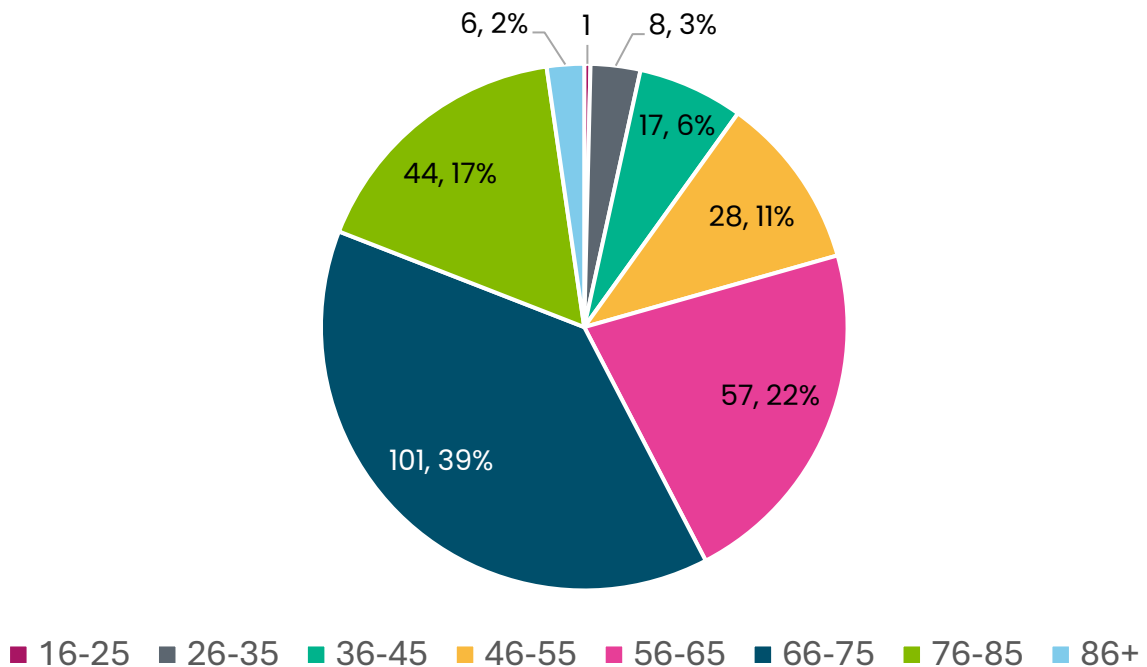


Figure 3 Pie chart displaying the distribution of age ranges within the survey population. Total responses for this question numbered 262.

## Other information on respondents

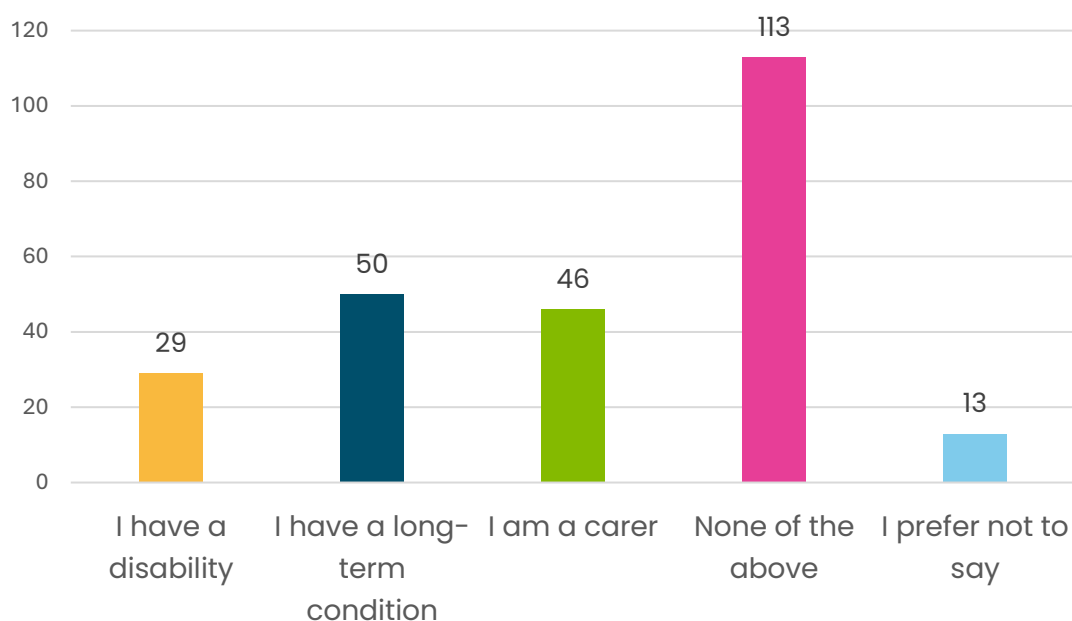


Figure 4 Chart displaying other information on the survey population. Note that users could select multiple options here, with the number of respondents totalling 226.

## How did you hear about us?

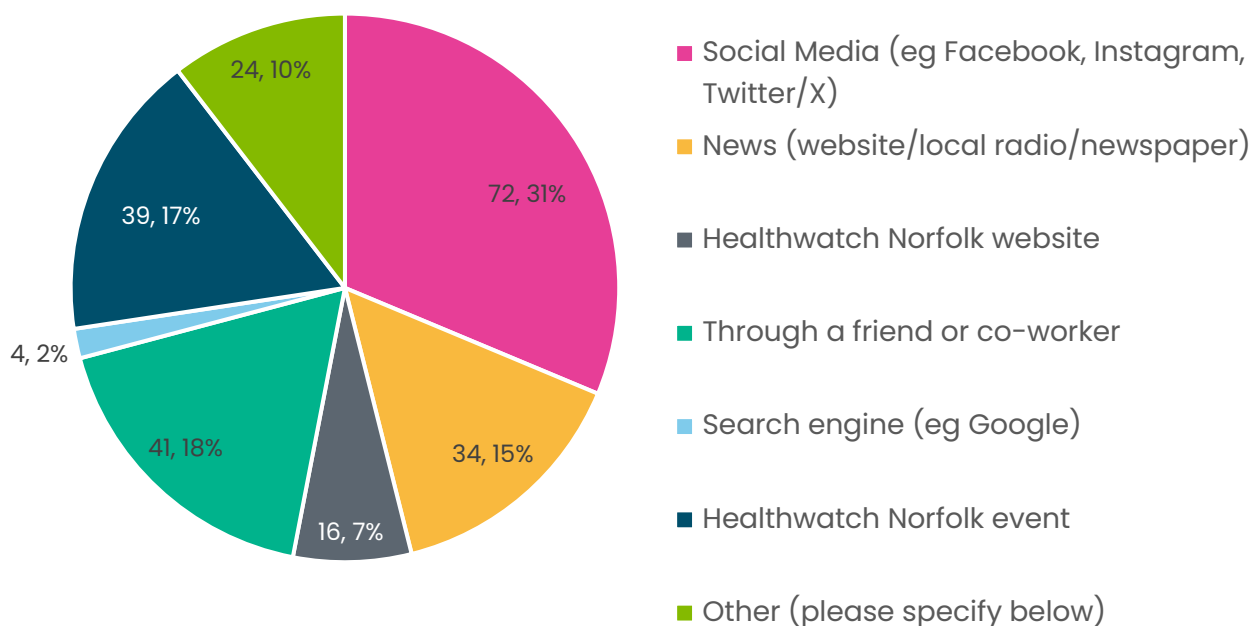


Figure 5 Pie chart displaying the breakdown of how survey respondents became aware of HWN. Total responses for this question numbered 230.

# What we found out

The spread of responses is shown in the table below. Respondents made many different suggestions, and often made more than one suggestion. The table shows how many people made each suggestion and omits suggestions that were made by fewer than ten people, to make it easy to read.

Table 1 *Main suggestions for the future use of Benjamin Court*

Response	Number of people
Re-open as reablement centre	232
Palliative care	22
Respite	24
Specialist clinics	16
Community projects	11
Day Centre	10

As can be seen, the most frequent response by far was that people wanted to reinstate Benjamin Court as a reablement (or rehabilitation/convalescence) centre – 79 per cent (232 people) of respondents gave this response, with 21 per cent (63 people) making alternative suggestions.

People highlighted the need for such a facility in North Norfolk due to the area's ageing population and what they saw as the lack of adequate alternatives, and the difficulty of travelling further afield, especially to Norwich, for care. As one person told us:

As a family we were indebted to Benjamin Court for the wonderful care they gave to Mum. Living in [North Norfolk], it was also such a relief to us, as pensioners, that we did not have to do a round trip of 50 miles a day to see Mum. Thank goodness that we have a car, I cannot imagine how people cope using the bus.

Some of the strength of feeling in favour of re-opening Benjamin Court seemed to come from the perception that North Norfolk has few healthcare facilities

compared to other parts of the county, and that facilities have been closing in recent years.

People also highlighted the former service's compassionate care, supportive environment, and effective rehabilitation services, which enabled patients to regain independence and confidence after hospital stays. Many people recounted their or their family members' positive experiences of the service, for example:

My mother was at Benjamin Court having been discharged from Norfolk and Norwich. As a family it was an absolute lifesaver and for her, she was in her local environment, and it therefore aided her recovery greatly.

I spent several weeks there a few years ago after joint surgery. I was looked after exceptionally well. If I had to stay in hospital I would have been taking a bed up.

My 83-year-old husband experienced the wonderful work of Benjamin Court two years ago following a six week stay in N&N hospital ... The last three of those weeks, he was a 'bed-blocker' ... At last, he was told a bed was available in Benjamin Court in Cromer ... At last, he was given his own room, private bathroom and toilet, peace and quiet, and excellent care from staff, visiting GP and nurses. At last, he could sleep, and he began to eat proper food again. I was able to visit several times a day. It was heaven compared to the hellish hospital ward. Even though he was still very unwell, he slowly regained some mobility and strength after being bedbound for so long. He started to become more like his old self until after two weeks convalescence in Benjamin Court was able to return home ... We cannot praise the staff and running of Benjamin Court enough and are devastated that this centre of excellence is closed.

These kinds of personal experiences seem to have made many people feel passionately that the facility should be re-opened for reablement. For others, their

strength of feeling seemed to come from worries about what would happen to them if they had to go into hospital, if Benjamin Court was not there for them after they were discharged:

The ICB are trying to bring people into their own homes but that is not working in North Norfolk. I would rather see NHS staff looking after our patients. Care does not stop at 5pm. Virtual wards are really great, but what happens when someone falls out of bed or needs to go to the toilet? Benjamin Court is one of the solutions. For people who are worried about coming out of hospital, it is essential they have that 24-hour care. We care about the residents, and this is the right thing to do to find them somewhere safe.

Numerous comments emphasized that a reablement centre would alleviate delayed discharges at the Norfolk and Norwich University Hospital (NNUH) and provide a local, accessible option for patients and their families. Some of the people giving this response criticised the newer model of providing care at home after a hospital admission, expressing scepticism that it could provide 24-hour care in the way that a reablement facility can. As these two people said:

Reablement at home may be a satisfactory alternative for some, but many others, especially the oldest and most vulnerable, need the intensive support that only a unit like this can provide, to enable them to regain their confidence until they feel able to go home.

My aunt was discharged from hospital with carers coming in, it did not work out, she felt scared and eventually had another fall and went back into hospital for another two months.

Several respondents expressed a lack of trust in the decision-making process at the Integrated Care Board (ICB). The closure of Benjamin Court without prior public consultation was criticized by several people who felt that this decision was made unilaterally and without considering the community's needs and opinions. Some people expressed concern about what they said was a lack of transparency in the

consultation process, feeling that the decision to close Benjamin Court may have already been made. They questioned the purpose of seeking public input if the outcome was predetermined. As one person wrote:

I do not know why any of us bother to write all this as those at the top, those making the decisions neither care, nor listen to our opinions. I expect despite the big show of "tell us what you want," the decision is already made.

A few people questioned why the public was being asked for their opinions when the ICB should have the expertise to determine the best use of the building based on data and needs assessments. They suggested that the ICB should present viable options based on their knowledge and then seek public feedback on those options.

People made a number of alternative solutions, which are detailed below:

- **Respite Care:** 22 people suggested using Benjamin Court for respite care, providing short-term breaks for both carers and those they care for. People suggested that this could include day visits and overnight stays, addressing carer burnout and offering a safe environment for individuals needing temporary assistance.
- **Community Health Hub:** People suggested a range of different health services that could be provided from the building. The most popular suggestion (from 16 people) was to provide specialist clinics (such as physiotherapy, occupational therapy, etc.). Other suggestions were for an NHS drop-in centre (similar to the one in Norwich), wound care, diabetes clinic, vaccination centre, GP services, and musculo-skeletal support.
- **Palliative/End-of-Life Care:** Mentioning what they saw as the lack of such facilities in the county, 13 people proposed turning Benjamin Court into a hospice, providing dignified end-of-life care and easing pressure on hospitals.
- **Community Hub:** Ten people suggested opening the space for various community groups and activities, such as youth groups, social clubs for isolated individuals, and support groups for specific needs (e.g., carers, mental health).
- **Day Centre:** Ten people suggested that it could be used as a day centre for people, providing daytime care and activities for older people, disabled people, or other vulnerable groups.

- **Carer's Hub:** This suggestion involves creating a central resource for carers, offering information, support groups, respite services, and a space for connecting with others in similar situations.
- **Mental Health Services:** Nine people suggested that it could be used for mental health services, either as a bedded unit, or a drop-in centre for receiving therapy, or attending support groups.
- **Dental Practice:** Five people specifically mentioned the need for an NHS dental practice in the area, given the existing shortage.
- **Housing Options:**
  - **Key Worker Housing:** With the difficulty of attracting and retaining healthcare staff in North Norfolk, some suggested converting Benjamin Court into housing specifically for these essential workers.
  - **Assisted Living/Sheltered Flats:** A few respondents proposed creating assisted living units or sheltered flats for elderly individuals, providing a supportive environment with access to care.

# Conclusion

Healthwatch Norfolk was tasked with collecting ideas for the future of the Benjamin Court building. The most popular suggestion was to reinstate the reablement service. Additional proposals included providing short-term breaks for both carers and those they care for, creating a Community Health Hub where support services and clinics could be offered, establishing a site for palliative/end-of-life care, and setting up a day centre. Respondents felt it provided a vital service in an area which they felt lacked some services, and many had personal experience of the care given there.

Other suggestions included repurposing the facility to provide housing for key workers in the health and care sectors of North Norfolk or converting it into additional assisted living or sheltered housing flats.

Some respondents expressed concerns about the decision-making process regarding the closure of Benjamin Court and feared that their views might be disregarded during this engagement process.

The decision by the Integrated Care Board (ICB) will need to balance public opinion with considerations of funding and staffing sustainability and be communicated to the public effectively.



# Recommendations

1. The majority of respondents asked for the reinstatement of the re-enablement service to Benjamin Court. The role of Healthwatch Norfolk is to represent the views of the public and, with such overwhelming support, we would recommend investigation of this as an option for the future of the building.
2. Mindful of the brief to ensure any future use can be both funded and safely staffed, the majority of all respondents suggested Benjamin Court should be the home of a facility or service relating to health and care for North Norfolk residents. We would recommend that all avenues are explored to explore the feasibility of such a service.
3. A lack of communication is a common thread within the feedback, and we would recommend clear communication around whatever decision is made about future use to ensure those living and working in North Norfolk understand the reasoning and rationale behind it.

# Formal response

## **Tracey Bleakley, chief executive of the Norfolk and Waveney Integrated Care Board, said:**

“I would like to thank everyone who took the time to share their views about the future of Benjamin Court. We spent time talking with the local community because we wanted to find a solution that would mean the building could continue to be used to support the health and wellbeing of north Norfolk residents.

“Unfortunately, we have not been able to find a solution that fits with the other services already available and the model of care we want to provide, or which is financially viable. As a result, we will return the site to NHS Property Services, which will enable them to look for alternative tenants.

“In line with the recommendations from Healthwatch Norfolk, we have asked NHS Property Services to keep us and the local community informed of progress with the site. We will continue to keep under review the services available in north Norfolk, and if other opportunities arise to invest in services, we will explore them fully, as we have with Benjamin Court.”

# Appendix



## Benjamin Court survey

Please note that you can complete this survey online by visiting:  
<https://www.smartsurvey.co.uk/s/BenjaminCourtFuture/>.

- 1. What ideas do you have for how Benjamin Court could be used in future? Please write your answer in the box below.**

The following questions are optional but completing them helps us to understand if we have heard from a good cross section of the population and whether particular groups of people might be affected differently.

- 2. What is the first half of your postcode? (e.g. NR18)**

- 3. How old are you?**

- 4. What is your gender?**

- Male
- Female
- Non-binary
- Genderfluid
- Genderqueer
- Intersex
- Prefer not to say
- Prefer to self-describe:

**5. What is your sexuality?**

- Bisexual
- Gay or Lesbian
- Heterosexual or straight
- Pansexual
- Prefer not to say

If you feel the choices do not provide a suitable option, please write how you would describe your sexual orientation:

**6. What is your ethnic group?**

**Arab:**

- Arab

**Asian / Asian British:**

- Bangladeshi
- Chinese
- Indian
- Pakistani
- Any other Asian / Asian British background

**Black / Black British:**

- African
- Caribbean
- Any other Black / Black British background

**Mixed / Multiple ethnic groups:**

- Asian and White
- Black African and White
- Black Caribbean and White
- Any other Mixed / Multiple ethnic groups background

**White:**

- British / English / Northern Irish / Scottish / Welsh
- Irish
- Gypsy, Traveller or Irish Traveller
- Roma
- Any other White background

**Other:**

- Any other Ethnic Group
- Prefer not to say

If other, please specify:

**7. Please select any of the following that apply to you:**

- I have a disability
- I have a long term condition
- I am a carer

None of the above

I prefer not to say

**7. Where did you hear about Healthwatch Norfolk?**

Social Media (e.g. Facebook / Instagram / Twitter)

News (website / radio / local newspaper)

Our Website

Through a friend or co-worker

Podcast

YouTube

Search Engine (e.g. Google)

Healthwatch Norfolk Event

**Returning your completed survey**

Please send your completed survey to Healthwatch Norfolk, Suite 6, The Old Dairy Elm Farm, Norwich Common, Wymondham NR18 0SW



# healthwatch Norfolk

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