COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of the Council held on Wednesday, 22 July 2026 in the Council Chamber - Council Offices at 6.00 pm

Members Present:

Cllr T Adams
Cllr P Bailey
Cllr M Batey
Cllr K Bayes
Cllr H Blathwayt
Cllr A Brown
Cllr S Bütikofer
Cllr C Cushing
Cllr N Dixon
Cllr P Fisher
Cllr A Fitch-Tillett
Cllr T FitzPatrick
Cllr W Fredericks
Cllr M Gray
Cllr M Hankins
Cllr C Heinink
Cllr P Heinrich
Cllr V Holliday
Cllr R Macdonald
Cllr G Mancini-Boyle
Cllr L Paterson
Cllr S Penfold
Cllr P Porter
Cllr J Punchard
Cllr C Ringer
Cllr C Rouse
Cllr L Shires
Cllr M Taylor
Cllr J Toye
Cllr K Toye
Cllr A Varley
Cllr L Vickers
Cllr L Withington

Also in attendance: The Chief Executive, the Director for Service Delivery, the S151 Officer, the Monitoring Officer, the Democratic Services & Governance Manager, the Democratic Services Officer (CS)

41 ONE MINUTE SILENCE

The Chair opened the meeting by announcing the death of former councillor and Chair of the District Council, Dr Clive Stockton. He asked members to join him in a moment of silence.

42 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Cllrs D Birch, J Boyle, A Fletcher, N Housden, K Leith and P Neatherway

43 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 17th June were agreed as a correct record.

44 TO RECEIVE DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS FROM MEMBERS

None received.

45 ITEMS OF URGENT BUSINESS

None received.

46 CHAIRMAN'S COMMUNICATIONS

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

Lord Mayor of Norwich City Service – 21 June 2026
Armed Forces Day, Northrepps Village Hall – 27 June 2026
100 years of the Brownies – 27 June 2026
Visit to the 1st Rural (Roughton Mill) Scout Group - 03 July 2026
The Lord Mayor's Weekend Street Procession – 11 July 2026
The King's Lynn Festival Service King's Lynn Minster – 12 July 2026

47 LEADER'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Leader, Cllr T Adams, began by reflecting on the recent death of Dr Clive Stockton, who had been a long serving member of the Council. He had been a member of Cabinet and had held the Planning and Coast portfolios, as well as being Deputy Leader. He had been a wonderful advocate for his local community, particularly Happisburgh, where he was landlord of the pub. Cllr Adams said everyone was very grateful for his service and friendship and wished his family the very best during this difficult time.

Cllr Adams then congratulated Cllr T Wragg on his recent election to the Council as member for Suffield Park. He spoke about recent elections, including the Police & Crime Commissioner, and thanked the Elections Team for their hard work. He then spoke about further changes at national government level and said he did not believe there would be any significant change in direction for NNDC.

Cllr Adams concluded by speaking about the huge number of upcoming events across the district throughout the summer and said he hoped members and officers would get a chance to enjoy them.

48 PUBLIC QUESTIONS AND STATEMENTS

The Chair said that a question had been received in writing from Christopher Buxton. He asked the Monitoring Officer to read it out:

'Can the Leader of the Council confirm what independent legal or governance assurance has been provided to Members that the recommendations before Council—particularly those concerning debt recovery, delegated authority, financial governance and constitutional changes—have been assessed for legality, proportionality, compliance with the Equality Act 2010 (including the Public Sector Equality Duty), the Human Rights Act 1998, principles of procedural fairness, and Members' fiduciary duties, and where Members may inspect that assurance before being asked to vote?'

The Leader, Cllr Adams, replied that when reports came to Full Council and other committees, there was a requirement that the report author ensured that specific sections such as financial and legal risk, equalities matters, Net Zero impact and community safety issues. There was also a separate section where the Monitoring Officer and Chief Financial Officer could comment on particular financial or governance considerations. He went onto say that the Constitution had recently undergone a review, ensuring that it was up to date. There was also a Constitution Working Party that led on this work on behalf of the Council. He added that the Council was subject to audits from an external provider and these are reported to the Governance, Risk & Audit Committee (GRAC). Following a corporate governance audit review in April 2026, which focussed on decision-making and delegated decisions, the audit outcome was substantial, which is the highest rating that can be achieved.

49 COMMITTEE SEAT ALLOCATIONS

The Chair asked the Leader, Cllr T Adams, to introduce this item.

He explained that, following Cabinet's recent decisions to replace the Planning Policy & Built Heritage Working Party with a Local Plan & Conservation Task Group and the establishment of the new Councillor Community Grants Fund Panel, it was now necessary to review the Committee seat allocations. He reminded members that the new Local Plan & Conservation Task Group had been established to respond to recent government changes on new Local Plans..

When there is a change to the size of a committee (or working party or panel) or a new one is established, the Council was required to review the allocation of seats on committees, sub committees and working parties to ensure that they reflected the political balance of the Council, in accordance with Section 15 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 and regulations made thereunder.

It was proposed by Cllr T Adams, seconded by Cllr C Rouse and

RESOLVED

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

50 APPOINTMENTS TO COMMITTEES, SUB-COMMITTEES, WORKING PARTIES & PANELS

The Chair asked if the Group Leaders wished to make any changes to committee appointments. Cllr T Adams, Leader, said that he wanted to inform members about a change to his Cabinet portfolio responsibilities. Cllr L Shires would be taking Legal & Governance from his portfolio and Cllr Varley would be taking on Communications.

The Chair then invited the Group Leaders to appoint members to the Local Plan & Conservation Task Group (a Cabinet Working Party).

Cllr T Adams appointed Cllr A Brown, Cllr R Macdonald, Cllr P Heinrich and Cllr K Toye
Cllr C Cushing appointed Cllr N Dixon and Cllr V Holliday
Cllr J Punchard appointed Cllr L Paterson (Cllr J Puchard as substitute)

51 PORTFOLIO REPORTS

The Chair invited Members to ask questions:

Cllr A Fitch-Tillett asked Cllr H Blathwayt, Portfolio Holder for Coast, why he had not attended the meeting of the Wash & North Norfolk Marine Partnership on 21st July. She also commented that there was no time stated for the Coastal Forum meeting in his Portfolio Holder report. Cllr Blathwayt replied that he had another engagement at the time of the Wash & North Norfolk Marine Partnership meeting, adding that he did not believe he had received an invitation.

Cllr C Cushing asked the Leader, Cllr T Adams, about the costs for harmonising systems for Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) as highlighted in Cllr Ringer's Portfolio Holder report. He said this money could be spent on core services and housing support and he was aware of how complex and costly the migration of systems could be. Given that the new Prime Minister had stated that his focus was on creating new Mayoral authorities, he asked Cllr Adams, along with the other Norfolk Leaders, to write to the new Secretary of State and ask them to scrap the disastrous plans to reform local government and focus on devolution instead. He believed that a strategic authority would give more options for local government reform, with many of the countywide services being placed under mayoral control and avoiding a disaggregation services.

Cllr Adams said that he was aware of the Prime Minister's views on devolution and said that he was sceptical that enough funding would be made available for a Norfolk and Suffolk Mayoral authority. Regarding LGR, he said that he was not aware of any statements from central government regarding LGR in Norfolk, but he was not expecting to see a change of approach. He agreed that NNDC's resources and time would be better spent on existing services and there was no promise that they would improve under LGR, adding that it would cost a huge amount of money for relatively intangible outcomes. He said that he had been asked to sign a letter on behalf of Leaders but had not yet had sight of it.

Cllr K Bayes asked Cllr Adams about street trading licence charges for community events and asked whether he would consider reviewing the current charging policy for Stalham and Holt, which he believed were unfairly impacted by these fees. Stalham Town Council and the Business Forum organised a number of events throughout the year that supported the local community and encouraged visitors. He said that unlike most other towns across the district, Stalham and Holt were not exempt from these charges as they did not have a market charter. He believed this was archaic and unfair. He asked for the Council to review the policy and introduce a fairer approach so that all market towns in North Norfolk were treated equally. Cllr Adams replied that he did not feel it was unfair and the legislation around street trading had been in place for many years and the Council had a regulatory position to uphold. The reason it was in place was to protect existing businesses and no profit would or could be made by the Council. He went onto say that he welcomed the will to introduce additional markets in North Norfolk, but he did not feel there was a justification to review the policy which had recently been the subject of a district-wide consultation. He said that alternative options were available to Town and Parish Councils regarding introducing a market under the Food Act (Section 50). He suggested that early conversations around this were held with Norfolk County Council.

Cllr P Fisher asked Cllr H Blathwayt about the reference in his Portfolio Holder report to the benefits of retaining staff and the Coastwise team. He asked whether any progress had been made. Cllr Blathwayt replied that Council was being asked to ratify the extension of the team's contracts (recommendation from Cabinet, agenda item 11). He added that a new team leader had been recruited from within the team. Due to the officer stepping up into this role, two enable posts would be advertised and recruited to, taking forward key actions identified in the community transition plans and other key aspects of the programme.

Cllr S Butikofer began by saying how sorry she was to hear of the death of Clive

Stockton and she sent her condolences to his family. She asked Cllr Blathwayt about the Eastern Regional Flood & Coastal Committee (RFCC) and the potential for match funding for each of the proposed Coastal Adaptation pilots in the region and whether he could provide an update. Cllr Blathwayt replied that NNDC on behalf of itself and Great Yarmouth Borough Council and East Suffolk Council submitted a request for a 10% contribution up to £1.2m to the RFCC. He confirmed that the RFCC had agreed to the request and said it was a large step forward towards the advanced coastal adaptation pilot funding for which Norfolk and Suffolk could be £10m to £12m.

Cllr S Penfold said that, as he had done in previous years, he wanted to ask Cllr L Withington, Portfolio Holder for Leisure, whether she agreed that the Worstead Festival represented the best day out in North Norfolk, especially as it was the 60th anniversary of the festival. Cllr Withington replied that she couldn't choose between all of the exceptional events that were going on across the district throughout the summer, including Cromer Carnival, the Sheringham 1940s weekend, and various Stalham events. She wished them all every success, saying that they were a showcase for the district and vital to attracting visitors to the area.

Cllr P Heinrich asked Cllr C Ringer about the recent trial collecting films and flexible plastics and requested an update on when this would be rolled out more widely. Cllr Ringer, Portfolio Holder for Environmental Services & Waste, replied that central government had initially indicated that all local authorities would have to collect these items as part of their recycling waste collection service from 2028 onwards. This had now been delayed to 2030 and whilst he acknowledged this was disappointing, he said it did give the County's material recovery facility additional time to upgrade so that it could handle that waste properly. Consequently, it would be the successor authority that would oversee this.

Cllr C Rouse asked Cllr L Withington, Portfolio Holder for Community, Leisure and Outreach, about the future of the Community Outreach team, which was undertaking excellent work across the district. Cllr Withington replied that the Community Outreach officers were part of a wider, holistic service and it was very much a partnership approach. The service was widening its connections with partners outside the Council, with the aim of supporting vulnerable residents as effectively as possible. She said there were no immediate planned changes to this work at present but the People Services team was subject to ongoing reviews. She reassured members that even if it was no longer financially viable for NNDC to fund the community outreach services, it would move to a different operating model, delivered via existing teams and strengthening referral escalation and partnership arrangements.

Cllr V Holliday asked Cllr A Brown, Portfolio Holder for Planning, about historic planning enforcement cases going back to 2014 and she queried why the older ones were not being prioritised for decision and if there was a capacity issue. Cllr Brown replied that there had been some capacity issues but he assured members that the historic cases were being considered on a regular basis by the Enforcement Board and if they were over 10 years old there was a good reason for it.

Cllr P Porter asked Cllr L Shires how many traffic wardens there were covering on-street parking in North Norfolk. Cllr Shires replied that this was a responsibility of Norfolk County Council.

Cllr T FitzPatrick asked Cllr Adams, as Portfolio Holder for External Partnerships, about the Norfolk Strategic Parking Partnership and the lack of regular enforcement in rural villages, particularly those with tourism footfall. Cllr Adams replied that it wasn't a responsibility of NNDC and the Council was not a voting member on the Norfolk Parking Partnership. Concerns had been raised previously regarding issues in Wells. Ultimately it was a responsibility of the County Council and suggested that members engaged with them on these concerns. He added that any specific examples would be helpful so he could raise it.

Cllr T Wragg thanked members and officers for their warm welcome to the Council. he asked Cllr Brown for an update on the development and progress of the Local Plan. Cllr Brown replied that the Council was on track regarding the review of the current Local Plan. There had been one call for sites and 200 responses had been received. The second call for sites had just commenced and would run into August. The scoping consultation was also underway, asking the public and stakeholders what they would like to see in the next Local Plan, which would be completed in the next 30 months. Cllr Brown went onto say that there had been successful recruitment to planning policy posts. The District Design Guide was also being reviewed along with a landscape survey review.

52 RECOMMENDATIONS FROM CABINET 6TH JULY 2026

The Chair invited Cllr L Shires, Portfolio Holder for Finance, Estates & Property Services, to introduce the first two items:

1. Cabinet Agenda item 8: <u>2025/2026 Outturn Report</u>

Cllr Shires began by saying how sorry she was to hear of Dr Clive Stockton's death. He had been very supportive when she was first elected to the Council. She laso welcomed Cllr Wragg to the Chamber.

Cllr Shires then said that for the first time in four years, the Council had been able to publish its Statement of Accounts, which was a great testament to the Finance Team. She thanked the Governance, Risk & Audit Committee and Overview & Scrutiny Committee for their input.

Cllr Shires drew Member's attention to Recommendation c. It should read:
c) The surplus of £0.354m to be transferred to the New Burdens Reserve - <u>not</u> the General Reserve as stated in the Cabinet agenda and on the Full Council agenda front-sheet. The report in the agenda pack did include the updated information. She explained that the New Burdens reserve was there to cover costs imposed by central government for matters such as food waste collection and Local Government Reorganisation (LGR). She then referred to recommendation d – which showed that the balance on the General Reserve was higher than usual due to the reallocation of the Extended Producer Responsibility Fund. The surplus money from this would be transferred into the New Burdens Reserve in period 4. Cllr Shires referred to page 115, and the roll forward for the Fakenham 3G facility which was noted in the Capital Programme. This was previously known as the North Walsham/Fakenham 3G facility but as Fakenham was progressing faster with their facility, the funding was now being allocated specifically to Fakenham.

It was proposed by Cllr L Shires, seconded by Cllr M Batey and

RESOLVED unanimously

a) The provisional outturn position for the General Fund revenue account for 2025/26 (as shown in Appendix A);

b) The transfers to and from reserves as detailed within the report (and Appendix C);
c) The surplus of £0.354m to be transferred to the New Burdens Reserve
d) To note the balance on the General Reserve of £4.266m.
e) The financing of the 2025/26 capital programme as detailed within the report and at Appendix D.
f) The updated capital programme for 2026/27 to 2031/32 and scheme financing as outlined within the report and detailed at Appendix E;
g) Approval of additional funding to cover capital project overspends of £0.012m as detailed in paragraph 5.7.
h) Approval of capital project budget roll-forwards from 2025/26 into 2026/27 paragraph 5.10.
i) To note the addition of £26,834 towards Property Services Electric Vehicles, to be funded by the Asset Management Reserve over a four-year lease period. This budget has been approved by the Deputy S151 Officer under constitutional powers.
j) To approve the addition of £188,539 to renovate Fakenham Play Area to be funded from Capital S106 Contributions in 2026/27.

k) To approve the addition of £100k to the Community Housing Fund (Grants to Housing Providers) project, to be funded by Capital Receipts following a repaid grant in 2025/26.
l) To approve the updated Cromer Coast Protection Scheme budget to reflect that the approved RFCC (Environment Agency) grant has been awarded to the Mundesley Coastal Defences project only. This leaves the 2025/26 budget as £1,037,656. This is a movement of budget from the Cromer scheme to the Mundesley Scheme to meet grant conditions.

1. Cabinet Agenda item 9: Debt Recovery 2025-2026

Cllr L Shires introduced this item. She began by saying that lots of support was available to residents finding themselves in financial difficulty and the Council encouraged people to get in touch as soon as they realised they were having difficulty with council tax payments or their business rates.

She then congratulated the Revenues Team on their excellent collection rates. Once again, the Council was top for collection rates across the Norfolk authorities for business rates and council tax. The team were also second in the Eastern region for business rates collection and fourth for council tax. Nationally, the Council finished 11th for business rates collection and 14th for council tax.

It was proposed by Cllr L Shires, seconded by Cllr M Batey and

RESOLVED to

1. approve the annual report which details the Council's write-offs, in accordance with the Council's Debt Write-Off Policy and performance in relation to revenues collection.

2. approve the continued delegated authority as shown in appendix 2 for write offs.

3. Cabinet Agenda item 11: Coastal Adaptation Pilot – Extending Delivery of Coastwise

Cllr H Blathwayt, Portfolio Holder for Coast, introduced this item. He said that the Regional Flood & Coast Committee had given assurance that funding would be allocated towards the project. Consequently, any jeopardy was now removed.

It was proposed by Cllr H Blathwayt, seconded by Cllr A Brown and

RESOLVED to

Approve the allocation of up to £500,000 as match funding for the programme to be sourced from reserves if Local Levy (from the Regional Flood and Coastal Committee, RFCC) or other grant sources is not forthcoming

1. Cabinet Agenda Item 13: Local Plan Review Governance Arrangements

Cllr A Brown, Portfolio Holder for Planning & Enforcement, introduced this item. He said that the recommendations had been covered elsewhere in the agenda.

It was proposed by Cllr A Brown, seconded by Cllr C Rouse and

RESOLVED to

1) Approve changes to the overall Committee seat allocations, ensuring that political balance rules are reflected.
2) Approve any consequential changes to the Constitution arising from the establishment of the new Local Plan & Conservation Task Group
3) Receive nominations from the Group Leaders to appoint Members and substitutes to the Task Group (in line with recommendation 3 above).

53 RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 15TH JULY 2026

Cllr V Holliday, Chair of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee introduced this item. She said that the Committee had considered the following item at the meeting on 15th July:

Overview & Scrutiny Committee Agenda item 12: Housing Benefit Debt Recovery Report – 1st April 2025 to 31st March 2026

The Committee had agreed to add an additional paragraph to the strategic approach section, to identify the preventative approach taken.

It was proposed by Cllr V Holliday, seconded by Cllr M Hankins and

RESOLVED

i Note the performance of the debt management function carried out by the Benefits service.
ii Note the debt write-offs for the year.
iii Note the ongoing impact of the completed Universal Credit migration programme on Housing Benefit debt recovery and collection methods.
iv To support the implementation of future recovery strategies, with a new paragraph being added to the strategic approach to identify the preventative

approach taken.
v To approve the annual report giving details of Housing Benefit Overpayment debt recovery in accordance with the Council's Debt Recovery Policy, Write-Off Policy, and Housing Benefit Overpayment Recovery Policy.

54 RECOMMENDATIONS FROM LICENSING COMMITTEE (REGULATORY) 8TH JULY 2026

Cllr C Rouse, Vice-Chair of the Licensing Committee (Regulatory) introduced this item. He said that the Licensing Committee (Regulatory) had considered the following report at the meeting held on 8th July:

Licensing Committee Agenda Item 6: Statement of Licensing Policy 2026 – 2031

It was proposed by Cllr P Fisher, seconded by Cllr L Withington and

RESOLVED

To adopt the revised Statement of Licensing Policy 2026–2031 to Full Council for adoption; and delegates authority to the Assistant Director of Environment and Leisure, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder and Chair of the Licensing Committee, to make any final minor amendments required for accuracy, formatting, accessibility or legal consistency before publication.

55 RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE CONSTITUTION WORKING PARTY 30TH JUNE 2026

Cllr A Varley, Chair of the Constitution Working Party, introduced this item. He began by thanking members for their engagement with the meeting on 30th June and said it had been very helpful having the Portfolio Holder for Planning and the Chair of Development Committee in attendance.

He explained that the Council needed to reflect the changes imposed by Government in the constitution. There had been a lengthy discussion about concerns relating to the mandatory changes and the impact on local democracy and the transparency of the planning process, it was important that it was progressed. He highlighted the second recommendation which clearly set out the Working Party's reluctance to support the required changes.

Cllr Varley added that there were also some proposed changes to the procedure for amendments to motions, to ensure that it was clearer and more robust.

Cllr C Cushing said that he wanted to congratulate the Working Party on the second recommendation. He said that despite the Prime Minister's claim that he want to give power to the people, these changes to the Planning system had the opposite effect and ensured that decisions were taken away from elected representatives and placed into hands of unelected officials. Planning decisions were often finely balanced and members gave full and careful consideration to applications that came to the Development Committee. This was now being taken away and it was an appalling move away from democratic processes.

Cllr T FitzPatrick said that he had proposed the additional resolution at the meeting of the Working Party. He had been a member of the Council for 15 years and throughout that time, work had been ongoing on the Local Plan and these proposals took away a lot of the work that had been done to date.

Cllr L Paterson said that he agreed with Cllr Cushing's comments.

It was proposed by Cllr A Varley, seconded by Cllr A Brown and

RESOLVED

1. To approve the proposed amendments to the Constitution as required by changes prescribed pursuant to the Government's proposed Town and Country Planning (Discharge of LPA Functions) (England) Regulations 2026 once enacted.

2. To endorse the Working Party's strong reluctance to support the required changes to the Constitution, with Members noting that failing to accept them would leave the Council open to judicial review.

It was proposed by Cllr A Varley, seconded by Cllr L Shires and

RESOLVED

That Full Council approves the following changes to Chapter 2, part 2, section 18.1 (*additional proposed sections in italics*)

Amendments to motions

18.11. An amendment to a motion must be relevant to the motion and may be in either or both of the following forms:
(a) To refer the matter to an appropriate body or individual for consideration or reconsideration; or
(b) To leave out words and/or add and/or insert words as long as the effect of so doing is not to negate the motion.

18.12. Any amendment must be in writing and submitted to the Proper Officer by no later than noon on the day of the meeting, except:
(a) with the consent of the Chair, including amendments proposed during the meeting,
(b) amendments to motions which have been moved without notice, or
(c) amendments to recommendations arising from Officers' reports.

18.13. Amendments shall be taken in the order in which they have been moved (unless the Chair determines otherwise for the efficient running of business). Only one amendment may be moved and discussed at any one time. No further amendment may be moved until the amendment under discussion has been disposed of.

18.14 If an amendment is moved, the Chair will ask the proposer of the original motion if they are willing to alter their motion in accordance with the amendment. If they accept, the amendment becomes the substantive motion and is debated. If the proposer of the original motion is unwilling to alter their motion, the Chair will ask if there is a seconder for the amendment. If there is a seconder, the amendment will then be debated and voted upon.

18.15 If an amendment is not carried, other amendments to the original motion may be moved.

18.16 If an amendment is carried, the motion as amended takes the place of the original motion. This becomes the substantive motion to which any further amendments are moved.

18.17. After an amendment has been carried, the Chair will read out the amended motion before accepting any further amendments, or if there are none, putting it to the vote.

18.18 *Members are encouraged to discuss their proposed amendment with the mover and seconder of the motion prior to the meeting to determine if any agreement can be reached.*

56 ELECTORAL SERVICES - INCREASE TO ESTABLISHMENT

Cllr Adams, Portfolio Holder for Electoral Services, introduced this item. He explained that due to increased pressures on the Elections team, a modest increase in capacity was proposed. There was no realistic alternative at this time.

It was proposed by Cllr T Adams, seconded by Cllr L Shires and

RESOLVED

To approve an increase of 7 hours in the Electoral Services staffing establishment budget and the associated growth of £4,293 per annum.

57 NNDC MILEAGE RATES

The Chair advised members that this item had been withdrawn from the agenda, to allow for further work to be undertaken.

58 QUESTIONS RECEIVED FROM MEMBERS

None received.

59 OPPOSITION BUSINESS

The following item of Opposition Business had been proposed by Cllr N Dixon, seconded by Cllr T FitzPatrick:

<u>Relief of Local Water Cycle Stress – A Vital Part of the Hydrologic Cycle.</u>

Water is the arguably most precious natural resource vital to all life on Earth. In simple terms Water Cycle Stress is the condition of having too much or too little fresh water so that the functioning and quality of life and the environment is put at risk, or seriously harmed in some way, as conditions become more extreme with climate change. Aside from the science driving the local Water Cycle, the most obvious indicators are the impacts of the extremes of heavy and prolonged rainfall and surface water flooding (causing foul water escapes with environmental pollution); and, prolonged periods of drought and freshwater shortages causing risk and harm to life, food production and ecosystems of the environment.

This must be a key part of the climate change agenda which this Council has embraced and promoted over recent years; yet, in common with most public bodies little is done to raise public awareness and remediate the causes of local Water Cycle stress. We must take every opportunity, within our scope of influence, to mitigate and reverse the stress rising trends. Fresh (rain) water is the most precious free natural resource we have yet we seem to value it much less than most other resources. NNDC can be a local leader and key influencer in addressing the challenges through development policies for the built and natural environments and by working with public and private sector partners and home/landowners to plan and deliver changes in practices and standards. Key partners include: the Environment Agency, NCC (LLSFA and Norfolk Strategic Flood Alliance), the Internal Drainage Boards, Anglian Water and the NFU.

This is mainly about capturing and storing water during times of prolonged/heavy rainfall or times of high river levels and flood risk conditions, to be released and used during drier times. Examples of practices and solutions are:

1. Promoting the reinstatement of field boundary ditches to stop or attenuate run field off and encourage greater infiltration to below ground storage.
2. Promoting building of reservoirs for crop growing needs particularly by expediting approvals.
3. Promoting reduced domestic potable water consumption and rainwater capture for both grey water and or garden needs by specifications in Planning policies - through water efficient systems and installation of holding tanks.
4. Promoting surface water infiltration of drives and garden surfaces and drains to prevent run off and help replenish underground supplies in Planning policies and influencing farmland management and drainage practices.
5. Encouraging property owners with surface water connections to foul water systems to redirect this water to storage tanks, soak aways or nearby water courses, as appropriate, to reduce loads on foul water drains and Water Recycling Centres; and, reduce the risk of storm water release to rivers and coastal waters, reducing water pollution.

Local Water Cycle Stress relief must be a key part of Planning policies, and working with local partner agencies, private sector influential bodies and property owners.

This motion calls on Council to agree and take the following actions:

1. Ensure appropriate water cycle stress reduction measures are embraced in relevant Planning policies; the current review of the Local Plan creates opportunities for incorporation and by later amendments.
2. To ensure effective liaison, facilitation and collective working with appropriate public and private sector partners and property owners to reduce water cycle stress.
3. To promote and support public awareness and remediation schemes available to reduce water cycle stress and environmental pollution risks.

The Chair invited Cllr Dixon to introduce it. He began by saying that the motion was focused on the very prolonged period of drought that North Norfolk had been experiencing in recent weeks. He said that the strategic objectives in the Council's new Local Plan included climate resilience. This clearly out climate change as a high priority and there was already a strong strand of work around carbon footprint reductions and net zero. Resilience was about capacity to deal with the shocks of extremes and water was a resource where extremes in its availability were becoming more frequent. Prolonged periods of little or no rainfall and increasing temperatures causing drought were exacerbating the situation and then heavy bouts of rain were leading to flooding. Amongst all of this, little was being said or done to relieve water cycle stress. Part of the motion was about understanding how water resources could be managed more efficiently and to anticipate and mitigate the impact of climate extremes, especially surface water flooding problems and the impact of drought on the environment, food production and quality of life. Cllr Dixon said that the motion supported the Council's climate change agenda and even added width and depth by placing water as a key priority alongside carbon. In simple terms, it was about capturing and storing water during times of prolonged heavy rainfall and then released and used during drier times. If rainfall was captured and managed, current surface water problems would be largely solved. The Council could be a local leader and influencer, as it had been on carbon footprint reduction.

Cllr FitzPatrick reserved his right to speak, as seconder of the motion.

The Chair asked Cllr Adams, Leader of the Council if he wished to respond. Cllr Adams replied that he would allow the debate to proceed.

The Chair opened the debate:

Cllr J Punchard said that he saw the motion in the context of both extreme water shortage in the summer and heavy flooding in the winter and that any work the Council could do to support residents as to where surface water would go during flooding, would be beneficial.

Cllr A Varley thanked the Opposition for bringing the motion forward and said that he welcomed constructive engagement on climate change issues. He clarified that NNDC was not the responsible authority for a lot of the matters set out in the motion, however, the Council did do extensive work and engaged fully with those bodi8es that were responsible as part of the planning policy process. In addition, NNDC regularly engaged with external partners such as Anglian Water and the Environment Agency and was a partner on the Norfolk Strategic Flooding Alliance. He added that there was a lack of precise detailing on progressive actions but he was happy to support it.

Cllr A Fitch-Tillett said that she had lived in East Africa and she knew what it was like to go without water for periods of time. She felt that this summer was worse than the last drought in 1976 as over a meter had been lost from the lake which she water-skied on in the last 3 weeks alone. She then spoke about the importance of encouraging people to use water butts and conserving water and encourage residents to do the same.
Cllr P Fisher agreed that encouraging people to re-use water was important. He referred to point 4 of the motion and said he believed that this was already covered by the Highways Act 1991 which gave the County the power to ensure water was not discharged onto the highway.

Cllr H Blathwayt congratulated everyone for embracing the fact there was a climate emergency. He said that everyone should make every effort to save water and use it wisely.

Cllr V Holliday said that the Council should do everything in its power to save water, reuse it and reduce surface water run-off. The approval of reservoirs should be expedited to capture rainwater, and this should be emphasised in the new Local Plan as should policies promoting grey water use and promoting surface water infiltration of drives and hard surfaces.

Cllr C Rouse thanked the Opposition for bringing this item forward. He said that heatwaves were becoming increasingly common and everything needed to be done to explore all avenues. He wondered how effective the motion would be as several aspects of it were the responsibility of other bodies such as Anglian Water and Norfolk County Council. He suggested working with the Opposition to ensure it was as robust as possible.

Cllr W Fredericks commented that Anglian Water had information on their website offering advice for residents on how to deal with water restrictions and suggested that the Council's Communications Team could highlight this.

Cllr L Vickers said she was heartened to see that everyone was taking the motion seriously. She felt that the planning system could ensure that the motion's aims were achieved via approving more water storage solutions and prioritising the creation of new reservoirs, as well as introducing new water saving measures in new builds.

Cllr C Cushing said that he had recently read a report by the Rural Policy Group on water, food and economic growth and it highlighted how important the agricultural sector was to the Norfolk economy and how much it depended on water. He added that the point of the motion was to highlight the issue of water retention and reminded members how saturated the ground had been earlier in the year and how hard and dry it was now. Such extremes were becoming the norm and the Council should be exploring all possible ways of supporting initiatives which would help conserve water.

Cllr A Brown said that he welcomed the motion but it wasn't a straightforward matter. In terms of water storage and reservoirs, they tended to fall within the remit of the County Council's Development Committee and was not something that would be dealt with at district level. However, he went on to say that water storage was hugely important for local farmers, along with the use of abstraction licences during the winter period. Regarding domestic consumption, the lead for this would be NNDC's Building Regulation department for new builds. He reiterated the relevance of the Council's declaration of a climate emergency in 2019 and said that he lamented the decision in the 1980's to privatise the water industry as this had made things even harder.

Cllr L Withington complimented everyone on the debate so far and said how good it was to see everyone in agreement about the impact of climate change. She reiterated Cllr Frederick's comment about sharing the messaging from Anglian Water. She went onto say that members would be aware of businesses in their wards which may have particular water-related issues and suggested that they were directed to the Economic Development Team for advice and support. She concluded by saying that riparian rights were a key area of focus and she urged the Flood Alliance to undertake work on highlighting the importance of landowner and householder responsibilities in such matters. Digging out ditches was really important and fundamental to maintain the flow of rivers and becks.

Cllr L Shires urged twin-hatters to use their position at the County Council to encourage joint working on tackling water-related matters.

Cllr C Ringer paid tribute to the Norfolk Ponds Project and the excellent work that they had undertaken restoring ponds on farmland, including Bodham marl pit. They were important oases for wildlife. Restoring 'ghost' ponds was a key part of ensuring access to water.

Cllr S Penfold endorsed the comments made so far and said it was important to look at the wider effects of climate change and to consider how everyone could reduce their carbon footprint, otherwise the impact would continue to get worse in the long term.

Cllr M Gray welcomed the debate. He said it was important to near in mind the amount of waste that Anglian Water were responsible for. They encouraged the public to save water but 180m tonnes of water had been wasted by them.

Cllr T FitzPatrick then spoke as seconder of the motion. He said that in Norfolk it was a case of water and flooding in the winter and then drought in the summer. Everyone agreed that water was the key to life. The motion was about the importance of the local water cycle, and it was not someone else's problem and the Council needed to work together and with partners to address the issue. Solutions needed to be embedded in the planning process and issues such as impermeable driveways should be discouraged wherever possible. Using grey water should also be used more often and encouraged, along with water butts. Capturing water via reservoirs was vital to ensure it was available in the summer but also stopped rivers over-flowing. He concluded by saying that the nub of the motion was to promote and support public awareness and remediation schemes to support the water cycle.

Cllr N Dixon spoke last as proposer of the motion. He said he was heartened by all of the comments and the recognition across the chamber that everyone needed to work together to address the challenges of local water cycle stress. This motion was just the start of a piece of work that needed to be developed in detail. He urged everyone to think what they could do to save water and how they could encourage residents to the same. This approach had already been taken with carbon reduction and the use of solar panels. The Council had shown how it could influence and encourage uptake of these issues, and he believed the same could be achieved for addressing water shortages and flooding in North Norfolk.

The Chair thanked members for a very constructive debate.

When put to the vote, it was **RESOLVED** to support the motion unanimously

60 NOTICE(S) OF MOTION

61 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

62 PRIVATE BUSINESS

The meeting ended at 7.41 pm.

Chairman